

Department of History & Political Science
College of Arts & Sciences
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, MI 49104

HIST110. Worldviews, Cultures and Gods (3 hrs)
(Fall Semester 2015)

CLASS: MWF 9:30–10:20, Buller Hall 149
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MWF 10:30 –11:20; F 12:30 –14:00; Th 14:00–15:20
(other times by appointment)

MOODLE

This syllabus and the Readings & Assignment Schedule is posted on Moodle. To access the course material go to <https://learninghub.andrews.edu>.

NOTE: If you have problems to access Moodle and need help, or, if username and password do not work, or you have any other question regarding the technology of Moodle, please, contact Marsha Beal at 471-6200 or email at dlit@andrews.edu.

TEXTBOOKS:

History Through the Eyes of Faith, by Ronald A. Wells, ISBN 0-06-069296-0

The Epic of Gilgamesh, by an unknown author(s), ISBN 0-140-44100-X

The Book of Job, from NKJV or NIV Bible

Darkness at Noon, by Arthur Koestler, ISBN 978-1-416-54026-7

Additional handouts related to the topics under discussion will be posted on Moodle. I may recommend a book, a documentary, or a movie, and those would be either for your own class portfolio or you will be asked to read it.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE:

This is an interdisciplinary history course, heavily drawing from theology, religious studies, and philosophy; yet, the attention is on history and existential issues rather than theology and philosophy. Through a selected readings the course we will survey the history of humanity and ideas since the ancient times up to the present. The issues and topics addressed pertain to the fundamental questions of life.

The system of writing was invented approximately 5,000 years ago, and human societies produced various civilizations, traditions, customs, religious beliefs and practices, ideas and bodies of knowledge, arts and architecture, laws, forms of governance, social structures and other forms of socio-economic interchange.

The coverage of the course material is both topical and chronological. The course work is clustered around a limited number of works and documents from the past (for example, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, is from the ancient world, whereas *Darkness at Noon*, by Arthur Koestler, is from the modern world).

From a pedagogical aspect, *Worldviews, Cultures and Gods* involves a variety of teaching and learning methods. Teaching is through lectures, online material and video presentations, class discussions, and, if workable, guest-speakers, all of which should provide ample opportunity to discuss topics from various perspectives. Learning is student's responsibility, and students are expected to do their home work, consisted or reading, writing essays, and being ready and willing to participate constructively in the class discussion.

Although this course offers a survey and an analysis of political, economic, social, and cultural developments; its primarily emphasis is on the history and application of ideas and beliefs. The major aim is to sort out assumptions and presuppositions, concepts, ideas and ideologies, and consequently formulate a healthy worldview. *Worldviews, Cultures and Gods* is designed to provide you with a broad intellectual and spiritual foundation for your future academic and life development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

At the end of the semester, you should **understand the concept of *worldview***, its origins and history, its implications, and how you should apply it in your life.

You should acquire a ***body of knowledge (factual information)*** of the past events, influential men and women, and major developments (such as, social, religious, intellectual and philosophical trends and movements), as to enable you to critically and intelligently analyze the events and developments of our contemporary world.

You should acquire and learn to appreciate the ***historical context*** of past and the contemporary events and issues (such as, respect for human life, racism and slavery, genocide, economic exploitation, the expression of human sexuality, science and spirituality, and so forth) that will help you master the subject matter in your own major(s) and/or minor(s).

You should develop ***both analytical skills and spiritual and philosophical discernment*** that will enable you to make wise choices in your life. In the current worldwide/web of information, where your peers, unscrupulous media, politicians, preachers, and others, contend for your attention and the control of your mind, this course should empower you to recognize truth from falsehood. History tells of many individuals and societies who ignored the lessons of history, as well as the wisdom offered to humanity in the Word of God, only to end up being duped into following lies, bigotry, variety of destructive isms, and so forth.

YOUR PERSONAL GOALS:

Personal goals are beyond the course objectives. They are precious stones or nuggets we as individuals find along and at the end of this intellectual journey. For them we have to continually keep working toward, so as to develop the habit of learning and thinking analytically — for it is the learners who learn from the mistakes of the past, whether those be their own or the mistakes of others. You as a student ought to identify and set your own goals in this course. I, as a teacher, cannot make those choices for you, though I can help you in reaching them. I expect you to develop a healthy attitude and set high goals. I expect from you to excel in this class. I expect from you to formulate a *worldview* that will enable you to *glorify* God to the fullest of His dreams for you.

ATTENDANCE:

Students are expected to attend the classes regularly, and to be on time. Learning is an active process, and you must be present to participate in it. If you were employed, your employer would not tolerate tardiness and absence from work. Occasionally, you may be late, and in such a case, please come in, but take one of the empty seats near the two entrances. I would rather you come in

and attend the class than miss the class discussion altogether.

I don't like to worry about your attendance, and prefer instead to teach, assuming that students paying for a class will have common sense to prepare, attend and participate. Nationwide research and experience shows that absences are a growing problem, and students who skip classes earn lower grades. My objective and desire is that all of you learn the material and earn high grades. Absences and tardiness may definitely affect your final grade up to one full letter grade. If you miss 10 percent of class appointments, your grade will be reduced by one letter grade (for example: from A- to B-); and if you miss 20 percent of class appointments, you are advised to drop the class, or receive F for the course. Exception to this rule are prolonged illness, in which case I, the instructor, will decide the appropriate remedy.

ATMOSPHERE IN THE CLASSROOM:

A productive and open discussion involves personal exposure, meaning you or other students are taking a risk when make a comment or an observation. Your ideas may not be in accord with those of the others, but your point—as long as it is honest, supported, and sensible—need to be respected by all in the class. The same applies to each of you toward other students. Questions, discussion, humor, cheer, and laughter are a part of the class, but scoffing, jeer, or any other form of contempt for the opinions of others is not.

Bad manners in the classroom (such as: foul language, disrespect of the classmates, whispering, derogatory remarks reflecting disrespect of other ethnic and cultural groups, etc.) will not be tolerated.

ELECTRONICS:

Turn off cell phones. Also, please remove all electronic devices from around your neck or out of your ears. The use of electronic devices are not allowed during the class period, except the laptops and tablets when used to retrieve the reading material. Even in such cases, it is preferable that you print out the reading material and bring to class the hard copies. In regard to notes taking, learn to take notes by hand. It is more beneficial and conducive to learning.

INVOLVEMENT:

As a good Andrews student, you are expected to be involved in the classroom discussion. You should inquire, ask questions, explore alternative explanations for humanity's creative and destructive impulses, and when necessary challenge the existing notions. You should also be aware that some questions may be out of place and inappropriate, or impossible to answer. Some questions may lead us into a dead-end path. Some questions may produce unpleasant answers about our ancestors and ourselves; whereas others may encourage respect. Together we may come to accept that some of our questions may never be answered, or that some of our previously held assumptions are not worth holding. I hope this journey through *Worldviews, Cultures and Gods* will be exciting and full of surprises. Therefore, buckle up, good luck, and enjoy the trip.

READINGS:

Complete the readings (see Readings & Assignment Schedule, posted on Moodle) assigned by the instructors — **on time**. The readings are assigned from the above listed textbooks. The assigned reading will be discussed in the class, and you should always be prepared to respond to questions posed to you by the teacher.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

You are welcome to study with friends and even proofread each other’s work. You are not allowed to turn in *someone else’s work* as yours. Share your knowledge, but guard your work. If two papers, or a section of them, is found to be the same by me, the teacher, both papers will receive F. Guard your work, and do not steal from other authors. All work, papers, reviews, exam essays, quizzes, critical essays, must be your own work. Notice, every time you directly quote — direct quotations are always placed within quotation marks — or indirectly paraphrase someone else’s words or ideas, you must acknowledge and credit the source. If you don’t, you are stealing. This type of “borrowing” from others without giving credit is known as plagiarism, and it is the most grievous sin in the academic world. Both cheating and cooperation with cheating are subject to punishment with an F for the course, accompanied with letters to your parents, the Registrar and the Vice-president for Academic Affairs.

FEES:

None, unless we go on the trip, or some unplanned contingency occurs.

DISABILITIES:

If you qualify for accommodations under The American Disabilities Act, please see me (the teacher) as soon as possible for referral and assistance in arranging such accommodations. Students with diagnosed disabilities may request accommodations from the Office of Student Success.

GRADING SCALE:

Letter grades for the course will be based on the total number of points earned for the entire semester, and will be calculated on the basis of the following percentage intervals.

A	93%	C+	77%
A-	90%	C	73%
B+	87%	C-	70%
B	83%	D	60%
B-	80%	F	below 60%

The weight of the assignments (subject to adjustments by the teachers’ discretion:

- 50% first, second and final exam
- 30% essays, all other assignments
- 20% quizzes

CUTTING CLASSES:

Students cut class for two general reasons. They have things to do that **appear** more important than the class, or they wish to avoid what they fear will be painful consequences if they attend. In regard to the first, nursing a serious illness or attending the funeral of a close relative are good—or should I say, legitimate—excuses for missing a class. But other excuses—the demands of your job, social engagements (including recovering from the night before), completing assignments for other courses—are, at best, questionable.

The other general reason is more disturbing and perhaps less recognized. When asked what they most dislike about the way the course is taught, students answer—“**Anything that produces sustained tension or anxiety.**” We believe cutting is a result of that aversion. The response of students to feelings of personal inadequacy, **fear** of humiliation, or a threatening professorial personality or teaching style, is often to avoid class. This response feeds on itself, as frequent absences make attending even more threatening.

But what accounts for frequent cutting where the teachers try to make the material interesting, know the students by name, and approach them with respect, care, help, and affability? We take that question as one you and we cannot answer. We simply tell our students: Attend our classes regularly or drop the course.

UNDERSTANDING HISTORY: HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW?

Only a part of what was observed in the past was remembered by those who observed it;
only a part of what was remembered was recorded;
only a part of what was recorded has survived;
only a part of what has survived has come to the attention of a historian;
only a part of what has come to his attention is credible;
only a part of what is credible has been grasped; and
only a part of what has been grasped can be expounded or narrated by the historian.

Louis Gottschalk, *Understanding History* (1950)

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

There are undoubtedly significant differences among various peoples and nations of the world (in terms of outlook and "general characteristics"), but these are nearly always the result of accumulated historical traditions, not biological (genetic) differences.

The possibilities for manipulating the human mind, in order to get people to believe what you want them to believe, are tremendous and must never be underestimated.

WHAT IS HISTORY? WHY STUDY HISTORY?

Why study history has become an important issue for many. The simple and true answer is that the study of history makes people more discernable, more intelligent. Since history is an investigation of *what* and *why* events happen; without history we would end up losing our orientation. Without history we would lose our collective memory—similar to the loss of personal memory. On an intellectual level, it helps people intelligently analyze the causes and forces behind events, and on the practical level, it helps people know what is going on around them. Without knowing what happened in the past, and how and why it happened, people in various contexts have been duped by unscrupulous politicians into destructive and even suicidal behavior—the Nazis, the Bolsheviks, racists, religious bigots, and so on. History enables people to formulate their thoughts, to analyze the developments and social affairs, and to provide context for policy decisions in whatever problematic context they find themselves in. In other words, human life depends on the past experiences to give itself coherence and meaning. Yet, no matter how carefully we study history, it is not a sufficient guide. But it is all we have—except the special revelation—and even as such, it is still fascinating. History is a living discipline.

CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE
(Fall Semester 2015)

M	Aug 24.	Introduction to the Course Why Study Worldview? Objectives of the Course
W	26.	The Use of <i>Worldview</i> in Contemporary Literature
F	28.	The Problems Concerning Definition and Meaning
M	Aug 31.	Confusion Surrounding <i>Worldview</i>
W	Sept 2.	The Concept of <i>Weltanschauung</i> / <i>Worldview</i>
F	4.	The Fundamental Questions of Life
M	Sept 7.	no class: Labor Day holiday
W	9.	How Does One Develop Own Personal Worldview?
F	11.	no class: (use the time to write a four-page essay that would include the answers you give to the FQL. Submit the essay on Monday Sept 14, 2015)
week of prayer, class meets: 9:00-9:40		
M	Sept 14.	Discussion
W	16.	Naturalist-Scientific Worldview
F	18.	Monist-Scientific Worldview
M	Sept 21.	Prophetic-Apostolic Worldview
W	23.	Tri-Polar Spectrum of Worldviews
F	25.	FIRST EXAM
M	Sept 28.	Prehistory
W	30.	The Ancient World: Mesopotamia and Egypt
F	Sept 2.	<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> (Prologue and chs. 1-3) http://www.aina.org/books/eog/eog.pdf
M	Oct 5.	<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> (chs. 4-7) http://www.aina.org/books/eog/eog.pdf
W	7.	The Book of Job (chs 1-21)
F	9.	The Book of Job (chs 22-42)
M	Oct 12.	no class: Mid-semester recess
W	14.	Hinduism
F	16.	The Classical Age: Buddhism
M	Oct 19.	The Classical Age: the Greco-Roman World
W	21.	Plato and Aristotle
F	23.	Stoicism and Epicureanism
M	Oct 26.	The Post-Roman Age
W	28.	The Christendom
F	30.	SECOND EXAM
M	Nov 2.	The Rise of the Common Man
W	4.	The Renaissance Age & the Protestant Reformation / Rebellion
F	6.	The Scientific Revolution: Turn to Nature
M	Nov 9.	The Enlightenment: the Autonomy of Human Reason
W	11.	The Age of Progress: Confidence in and Certainty of Progress
F	13.	The "Sin" of Modernism
M	Nov 16.	Totalitarianism (<i>Darkness at Noon</i> , <i>The First Hearing</i>)

W	18.	“The End Justifies the Means” (<i>Darkness at Noon</i> , The Second Hearing)
F	20.	“The Party Knows the Best” (<i>Darkness at Noon</i> , The Third Hearing & The Grammatical Fiction)
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M	Nov 23.	The Post-Modernism
W	25.	no class: Thanksgiving recess
F	27.	no class: Thanksgiving recess
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M	Nov 30.	The Second Vatican Council
W	Dec 2.	Emergence Christianity
F	4.	no class: Dead Friday
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M	Dec 7.	FINAL EXAM at 10:30 – 12:30