

SECAUCUS HIGH SCHOOL
WORLD CIVILIZATIONS HONORS

IMPORTANT: YOU MUST EMAIL ME IMMEDIATELY SO THAT I CAN REGISTER YOU FOR THIS COURSE!

EMAIL ME @: MGEHM@SBOE.ORG

First, allow me to welcome you to World Civilization Honors (WCH) here at Secaucus High School. Due to your extremely hard work in middle school and in a large part due to the recommendation of your Social Studies teacher, you have been selected to take this demanding, yet rewarding class. This class, with your continued hard work, will help set the stage for taking additional challenging courses (i.e., US History Honors I & II, AP US History, English Honors, AP Lit. and AP Lang, to name a few) throughout your high school career.

My name is Mr. Gehm (aka Lord Gehm by my dedicated students!). I have been teaching history for over 20 years. I teach World Civ Honors, US History Honors II and AP US History. I do not lie to my students and pretend that my classes are “easy.” If you wanted an “easy” class and an “easy A,” you came to the wrong class. What I can offer you is a challenge and I will promise you that I’ll do everything in my power to make it enjoyable while at the same time pushing you to your limits. My motto is simple: If it’s worth having, it’s worth WORKING for. My core classroom principal is “I DO NOT abide excuses.” If you make a mistake, admit it, take ownership of your own mistakes, and then move on – doing everything in your power NOT to repeat the mistake.

One of the best ways to impress me right off the bat come September is to have completed your Summer Project – correctly! Basically, that means following instructions – plan and simple. So, with all that said, let’s look at what that Summer Project consist of.

Course overview and summer reading assignment

Thank you for your interest in SHS’s ninth grade World Civilizations Honors course. I am excited to have you in my class and I’m looking forward to an enjoyable, challenging and rewarding experience in the 2018-2019 school year.

The World Civilizations Honors curriculum is designed to accomplish three objectives:

- Provide intensive study in the analytical framework of World History. While most social studies courses focus on a single geographical or cultural region, World History provides a single focus on the historical development of the world as a whole.
- Prepare students for our department’s tenth grade offerings in United States History Honors, which will lead you into AP US History your Senior year. This preparation involves independent reading exercises from an AP-level course textbook and frequent AP-style writing assignments.

- Engage students with hands-on historical research projects. Honors students are also expected to complete a 10-page Honor's level research paper by the end of the year which will count for 50% of their final exam score.

This course will offer a perspective on the craft of history that is most likely very different from any that you have previously experienced. The summer assignment will provide a glimpse of what this study involves, and will allow you to utilize some of the tools required for success in the year ahead. This assignment will require you not just to read, but also to think critically and to arrive at your own conclusions about the questions and issues raised in the material.

Again, if you have any questions about the course or the summer reading assignments, please do not hesitate to contact me!!! – mgehm@sboe.org.

The summer reading assignment is due by the first full-day of the first full week of class in September. I will not accept late assignments for any reason. You are welcome to submit your work before the deadline via email (later on, all assignments will be submitted via Google Classroom, but for now, you are to email me your completed essays).

The reading selections are in print and widely available through both traditional and online books sellers. I encourage you to look online for the best prices or visit the public library.

Assigned books:

1. Chistian, David *This Fleeting World: A Short History of Humanity* (Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2007) ISBN: 978-1933782041
2. MacGregor, Neil *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2011) ISBN: 978-0670022700

Assignment:

Though not required, it is highly recommended that you answer the questions in the attached reading guide to assist your comprehension and understanding of [This Fleeting World](#).

Your assignment, due on the first full-day of school, is to respond to each of the questions below with three separate two to three page essays. All essays must be written in Google Docs or Microsoft Word ONLY! (if you have a MAC and use Pages, you MUST save the file as a Word document...which you can do!).

FORMATTING:

- Essays must be standard formatting, double spaced and twelve-point font. Please limit your font selection to Times New Roman, Garamond, or Courier and submit your three essays as SEPARATE FILES via EMAIL (attached to a single email message – NOT EMBEDDED in the body of an email... if you are not sure how to do this, YOU MUST CONTACT ME!!).

- All files must be named as follows:
 - Last name_First Name_Prompt # (the # corresponds to the essay question (prompt) below)
 - Example: Smith_John_Prompt 1
 - **NOTE:** Again, if you are not clear on this – you must contact me.
- Each essay should have the following heading on the first page only (this is how you'll head all assignments for this class – so get use to it):
 - Name
 - World Civ. Honors 2018-19
 - Date
 - Pledge (This is required on ALL work in this class!)
 - SKIP 3 Lines (hit enter 3 times!)
 - Prompt (for this type of assignment only!)
 - EXAMPLE:
 - John Smith
World Civ. Honors 2016-17
September 8, 2016
I pledge my honor that I have not given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment / examination

How is the perspective of World History both similar and different from the history that you have previously studied? Why?
- Use parenthetical citations **with an author's last name and page number** to cite direct quotes or ideas taken from the book, as demonstrated below:
 - (Christian, 33)

Required Essay questions:

1. How is the perspective of World History both similar and different from the history that you have previously studied? Why?
2. Select two of the themes (“Beginnings,” “Accelerations” and “Our World”) found in This Fleeting World and identify and describe two objects from 100 Objects that best reflects each of the two themes. Explain in detail why you chose those objects and why they were the best examples of those two themes.
3. Select two other objects from parts 1-16 of 100 Objects that you find interesting, intriguing or historically significant. What do those objects tell you about the time period in which they were created? Do they tell you everything? Do they provide you with a complete picture of that time period? What is still missing and incomplete?

SUMMER READING GUIDE

NOTE: This reading guide is optional and the questions are NOT required to be submitted. I do HIGHLY recommend using this reading guide, for we will be discussing these questions the first full week of school in September. The vocabulary for each unit are terms you should know by September – especially in light of the topic that these books cover.

This Fleeting World: A Short History of Humanity

By David Christian

This Fleeting World is your launch pad for a year of historical exploration; these questions and suggestions will help to guide you. Feel free to meander through the book at your leisure, lingering on the “thought experiments” or following a tangent of an idea or link that interests you within this guide. The first thing you’ll notice about This Fleeting World is that it moves fast! But don’t worry; it’s not meant to tell you everything you need to know about human history. Rather, this book provides broad brushstrokes, noting the most significant “threshold moments” that changed the way we have lived on Earth.

We’ll have time to discuss this together in September. Until then, enjoy the journey!

Sincerely,
Lord Gebm!

P.S. The Comprehension Questions, Vocabulary, and Further Exploration sections below are optional and meant to guide your understanding. You MUST respond to the essay questions given above and be prepared to discuss your responses when school begins.

Prequel: Before the Beginning

Prequel (pp. xx-xxviii); pp. 1-92

Planets spinning through space, The smile upon your face, Welcome to the human race!
Isn't it a lovely ride? -James Taylor, American songwriter

Comprehension Questions: Jot down brief answers here to ensure that you are getting key information (2-4 sentences max, or bulleted points if you’d like). I’d suggest creating a Google Doc (or Microsoft Word file), copy/paste the questions there and then write down some brief answers or a bulleted list for each question. Of course, feel free to handwrite it, as well.

1. How did planets form, and what was Earth like in its first 500 million years of existence?
2. Christian describes life as “a new form of complexity” (xxiv). How did oxygen and

- photosynthesis cause life to begin on Earth?
- Eventually, multi-celled organisms emerged from water, to land, and eventually (about 7 million years ago) into human ancestors. What were some stages in the development to our species, homo sapiens?

Unit Vocabulary

Cosmology	Quarks	Interstellar space	Natural selection	Homo sapiens
The Big Bang	Fusion	DNA	Photosynthesis	“Lucy”

For Further Exploration:

American Museum of Natural History “Hall of Planet Earth”:

http://www.amnh.org/rose/hope/?src=e_h

American Museum of Natural History “Hall of Human Origins”:

http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/humanorigins/?src=e_h

Beginnings: The Era of Foragers (250,000-8,000 BCE)

Ceaselessly the river flows, and yet the water is never the same, while in the still pools the shifting foam gathers and is gone, never staying for a moment. Even so is man and his habitation.

- Kamo no Chomei, Japanese poet (1155-1216)

Comprehension Questions:

- What are some leading hypotheses (informed theories) about how our species emerged? How are humans different?
- What was the relationship among human foragers and the environment/nature, and how was it different from our relationships to other humans today and to our environment?

Unit Vocabulary:

Paleolithic	Archeology	Animism	Creation myth
Indigenous	Kinship	Migration	Extinction

For further exploration:

Mark Twain’s 1903 essay, “Was the World Made for Man?” reprinted here:

<http://smcgrat.blogspot.com/2007/12/mark-twains-was-world-made-for-man.html>

UW’s Burke Museum archeology resources:

<http://www.washington.edu/burkemuseum/collections/archaeology/index.php>

View resources from the Archeological Institute of America, including articles from

Archeology magazine: <http://www.archaeology.org/>

On the World History for Us All site from San Diego State University, check out the short video “A History of the World in Seven Minutes”: <http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu/>

Acceleration: The Agrarian Era (8,000 BCE—1750 CE)

Arjuna saw all the universe in its many ways and parts, standing as one in the body of the god of gods. -
From the Bhagavad-Gita

Comprehension Questions:

1. Why can the Agrarian Era be considered a time of acceleration (speeding up)?
2. What changes to human life were caused by settled agricultural development?
3. Where did cities first emerge, and what was earliest urban life like?
4. What were some of the most influential faith systems that developed during this time?

Unit Vocabulary:

Agriculture	Global climate change	Imperial state	Faith system
Overpopulation	Irrigation	Epidemics	Prehistory

For Further Exploration:

World History Connected, a collection of articles and resources promoting global citizenship and world history teaching: <http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/index.html>.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has a fascinating art history timeline with overviews of specific eras and images from the Met’s vast collection: <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>.

Our World: The Modern Era (1750-present)

Dare to know!

Have the courage to use your own reason! This is the motto of the Enlightenment.

- Immanuel Kant, German philosopher (1724-1804)

Comprehension Questions:

1. What are the major features and trends of the Modern Era?
2. What were the main causes of humanity’s revolution from agrarian societies to modernity?

3. Why is the 20th century considered a century of crisis?

Unit Vocabulary:

Nationalism	Industrialization	Consumerism	Capitalism
Democratic government	Commercial society	The Enlightenment	Communism

For Further Exploration:

Gapminder, a site founded by Hans Rosling, allows you to examine global changes in the modern era through a variety of interactive statistical tools. See its “Health and Wealth of Nations” in particular: www.gapminder.org.

To hear the author David Christian explain what big history is, watch his TED talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/david_christian_big_history.html.