Overall Course Goals and Objectives: This course gives you the chance to learn about major achievements in literature, music, art, film, architecture, theater, dance, and philosophy as they occur in Byzantine, Islamic, European, Indian, Asian, and North and South American medieval cultures. The goal of the course is to develop your ability to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and think creatively about complex cultural information while improving your thinking and writing skills. In addition, you should be better prepared to understand our contemporary world, and I hope you will be inspired to further explore new cultures.


Week 1

M, 27 Aug: Introduction to Course

Chapter Six: Islamic Civilizations

W, 29 Aug: Islamic Civilization (Religion: Islam, the Ottoman Empire, and Europe; Cross Currents): **pp. 234-240**

F, 31 Aug: Philosophy; Math, Science, and Scholarship; Critical Thinking; Islamic Art and Architecture; Then and Now: **pp. 240-246**

Week 2

M, 3 Sept: No Class

W, 5 Sept: Reading: *The Quran*: **pp. 252-253**

*F, 7 Sept: Ceramics and Miniature Painting; Cross Currents; Literature, Music; Connections; Cultural Impact; Key Terms: **pp. 246-251**

Week 3

M, 10 Sept: Readings: *The Thousand and One Nights*, Rumi, Three Ancient Tales, Rabai’a, Al-Khansa: **pp. 253-257**

Chapter Seven: Indian Civilization

W, 12 Sept: The Vedic Period (Hinduism, Literature: The Hindu Classics; Connections): **pp. 258-265**

**Week 4**

**M, 17 Sept:** The Maurya Period (Buddhism; Maurya Art), Mauryan to Bactrian to Kushan: pp. 265-269; Readings: Buddhist Sermons, pp. 281-283

**W, 19 Sept:** The Gupta Era (Gupta Art; *The Jataka* and *The Pancatantra*); The Hindu Dynasties (The Hindu Temple; Sculpture, Hindu Lyric Poetry, Then & Now, Drama, Music, Cross Currents, Critical Thinking, Cultural Impact, Key Terms): 269-277

*F, 21 Sept: Readings: Tales from the *Pancatantra*; Mahadeviyakka, Kalidasa, pp. 285-293

**Week 5**

**M, 24 Sept:** Catch-Up, Conclusion, Review

4023 Oral Presentation Topic Proposals Due

**W, 26 Sept:** Exam #1: Islamic and Indian Civilizations

**Chapter Eight: Early Chinese Civilization**

*F, 28 Sept:** The Early Dynasties (The Shang and Zhou Dynasties); Chinese Philosophy (Confucianism, Taoism): pp. 294-300

**Week 6**

**M, 1 Oct:** Readings: *The Book of Songs*; Confucius; excerpt from *The Tao Te Ching*: pp. 310-313

**W, 3 Oct:** Empire: The Qin and Han Dynasties; The Six Dynasties, Then & Now; The Tang Dynasty: pp. 300-302; Readings: Tao Qian; Wang-Wei; Li Bai; Du Fu: pp. 313-316

*F, 5 Oct:** The Song Dynasty (Connections, Critical Thinking, Cross Currents, Cultural Impact): pp. 302-309; Reading: Li Ch’ing-Chao: pp. 316-317

4023 Research Paper Topic Proposals Due

**Week 7**

**Chapter Nine: Early Japanese Civilization**

**M, 8 Oct:** Japan Before the Twelfth Century (Prehistoric Japan, Religion); Courtly Japan: Asuka and Nara Periods; The Heian Period; Connections: pp. 318-326

**W, 10 Oct:** Readings: Kakinomoto No Hitomaro; Ono No Komachi; Sei Shonagan, excerpt from *Pillow Book*; Murasaki Shikibu, excerpt from *The Tale of Genji*: pp. 330-337

Week 8

Chapter Ten: Early Civilizations of the Americas and Africa


Week 9

*F, 26 Oct: Catch-Up, Conclusion, Review

Week 10

M, 29 Oct: Exam #2: Early Civilizations in China, Japan, Africa, and the Americas

Chapter Eleven: The Early Middle Ages and the Romanesque

*F, 2 Nov: Readings: excerpt from Beowulf; excerpt from The Song of Roland: pp. 394-399

Week 11


Chapter 12: Gothic and Late Middle Ages

Week 12

W, 14 Nov: Sculpture, Painting and Decorative Arts, Cross Currents: pp. 418-424
F, 16 Nov: No Class

Week 13

W, F, 21-23 Nov: No Class

Week 14

M, 26 Nov: Reading: excerpt from Dante’s Divine Comedy: pp. 441-447
W, 28 Nov: Catch-Up, Conclusion, Review
F, 30 Nov: Exam #3: The Early Middle Ages, the Romanesque, and the Gothic Eras

Week 15

M, 3 Dec: Toward the Renaissance (Naturalism in Art, Realism in Literature, Secular Song, Cultural Impact, Key Terms): pp. 430-439; Reading: Boccaccio, excerpt from The Decameron: pp. 447-449
4023 Research Papers Due
W, 5 Dec: Reading: Chaucer, excerpt from The Canterbury Tales: pp. 449-459
F, 7 Dec: Reading: Christine de Pizan, excerpt from The Book of the City of Ladies: pp. 459-461; Course Conclusion
W, 12 Dec, 10:30-12:30: Final Exam

Course Requirements:

1. Exams (2023 and 4023, 15% each). There will be three exams during the semester. Each will cover material in the units indicated, using objective questions to test the student’s knowledge of cultural material (50%) and a major essay topic to allow the student to show mastery of content and the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information (50%).

2. Regular Assignments (2023, 15%; 4023, 10%): Readings may be accompanied by short reading quizzes or brief writing assignments. Reading quizzes cannot be taken early or made up, but other assignments may be turned in early for full credit or late for partial credit. For short writing assignments, a thoughtful answer of about 100-200 words based on the reading is required.
3. **Participation (2023, 10%; 4023, 5%)**: You will get the most out of class and improve the formulation of your thoughts if you participate in the discussions and in-class activities. I encourage you to speak with all of your classmates and respond to one another’s ideas, rather than addressing your thoughts only to me.

4. **Wikispace Postings (2023, 10%; 4023, 5%)**: We will have a course wikispace, where we will be posting images and other media related to our readings. Every Friday, on the dates marked by asterisks on the syllabus, you must post something related to the material we have covered in the previous week. This may be a work of art or architecture from the period, a video on any aspect of the culture of the period, or anything else you feel is relevant. You should include a brief description of what you post, including the date (or approximate date, if the exact date is unknown), the provenance (where it comes from, if known), and the maker of the work (if known). You should also provide a brief description of the work and why you have chosen it. You must post something that has not already been posted on the wikispace; this means that you will have to look at everyone else’s posts before adding your own. You will receive a √+ if you provide all of the requested information and do the assignment on time. If some of the information is lacking and/or the assignment is late, you will receive a √ or √-. You will get no credit for posting a duplicate. I can tell who posted first! Choose the most interesting media you can find, because at the end of the semester we will vote for the best posts. In addition, you will get extra credit for everything you post in addition to the assignment, including longer descriptions of your posts and all additional images or other media.

Once you have joined the wikispace, you can sign into it at [www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com). You may want to bookmark this address for convenience. I will also post a link on Blackboard.

**Final Wikispace Contest Rules**: Review all of the posts and vote for at least five and at most ten favorites. Send me your vote by email, including the students’ names and the titles or descriptions of their posts. You may cast a “double vote” for any posts you especially like. The winners will receive extra credit, which may raise their final grade. However, you cannot win if you do not vote!

5. **Attendance and Punctuality (2023 and 4023)**: You are permitted three unexcused absences. Other absences will be excused on the basis of a note from a doctor, dean, or coach. If it is not possible for you to get a note but you feel your absence is justified, you must inform me of your situation and I will decide whether or not to excuse you. **Communication is absolutely essential!** If you are absent and do not tell me why, your absence will be counted as unexcused. Repeated lateness may add up to an absence. **If you have more than three unexcused absences, your final grade will be lowered by one point for every additional unexcused absence.** If you are absent for any reason, please see me, as you may have to do some extra work to make up for your absence.

6. **Final Exam (2023, 20%; 4023, 15%)**: The final exam will be comprehensive, and it will be similar in format to the unit exams.

7. **Research Paper (4023, 12%)**: Students in 4023 must submit a 10-page research paper on a topic within the course’s medieval time frame and approved of by the professor (topic proposals must be submitted in writing no later than Oct. 5). The paper must show independent research and give evidence of an ability to synthesize information. Modern Language Association (MLA) style should be used for documentation. These papers will be due Dec. 3. You are welcome to submit your paper
early, and you may wish to do so to avoid too much work at the end of the semester (the third unit exam, the paper, and the final exam).

8. Presentation (4023, 8%): Students in HUMN 4023 will also present to the class an eight-to-ten-minute oral report on an agreed-upon topic following consultation with the professor. Topic choices should be submitted in writing to the professor no later than Sept. 24. The professor will then assign a presentation date in consultation with the student. A typed outline of the report and a bibliography (both in MLA format) using at least three sources must be turned in to the professor on the day of the report.

Course Policies:

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: If you plagiarize on any assignments or tests, or engage in any other form of academic dishonesty as defined by the MSU Student Handbook and the Columbia University Academic Dishonesty Policy, you will get an F in the course and disciplinary proceedings will be initiated, as described in the MSU Student Handbook.

Cell Phones: No cell phones should be visible in class at any time! If you try to hide your phone under your desk or behind your bag, don’t think I won’t see it. If I see you use your cell phone during class, you will be marked late or absent without any warning. You may not leave class to use your cell phone except under exceptional circumstances, of which you have informed me beforehand. The same policy applies to iPods and other electronic devices. If I see your cell phone during an exam, you will get an F (zero) on the exam.

Food and Beverages: You may bring only bottled water to class, in accordance with the building rules.

Computers: You may bring your computer to class to take notes only with my explicit permission. If you take notes on your computer, you must show them to me at the end of class. If you use your computer for any other purpose during class, you will be marked late or absent without warning.

Full Attention: Please be alert and do not lay your head down on your desk during class, or I will mark you late or absent without warning.

Class Dismissal: Please do not start to pack up your things or leave until I have dismissed the class. If you believe I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.

Email Communication: The only way I can communicate with you outside of class is through email. You are responsible for checking your “preferred” email daily for any reminders, clarifications, or other communications from me.

Safe Zone Statement: This classroom is a “safe zone” in which all students will be treated and will treat one another equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is encouraged.
REPEATED AND/OR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF ANY OF THESE POLICIES WILL RESULT IN A LOWERED GRADE WITHOUT WARNING, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR GRADE IS BORDERLINE.

Additional Information:

PowerPoint Presentations and Film Clips: Links to presentations and clips shown in class, if possible, will subsequently be posted on Blackboard so that you may review them. Additional recommended and required materials will occasionally also be posted on Blackboard.

Office Hours: My office hours are given above, and I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have, whether they are about the texts we are reading, assignments, absences, or anything else—or you may just come by to talk. If you can’t make my office hours, we can make an appointment or even have a live chat on Blackboard!

Academic Accommodations: If you require special accommodations, please contact Disability Support Service, 168 Clark Student Center, 397-4140, at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements cannot be applied retroactively.