

**DEPARTMENT: SOCIAL STUDIES**

**NAME OF COURSE: FRESHMAN HISTORY SEMINAR**

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:**

Freshman History Seminar is a seminar style, discussion-intensive approach to the first year of World History. A humanities approach to learning offers an integrated and contemplative approach to history and literature. Classroom discussion is in large part devoted to historical, philosophical and literary reflection. Adhering to the NYS curriculum, the course proceeds from primitive man and early civilizations to 18th century absolutism and the scientific revolution. Because the course relies heavily on discussion, the student must be prepared to actively engage in these classroom conversations on a regular basis. The course includes a Philosophy Friday component in which students learn about philosophers and philosophies which have impacted human events.

**MAJOR TOPICS COVERED:**

**Units:**

1. Culture, History and Related Disciplines
2. Prehistoric Man
3. Civilization, River valleys and the Bronze Age
4. Ancient Middle East to 400BCE
5. Qin and Han China
6. South Asia: 1500BCE-420CE
7. Ancient Greece
8. Ancient Rome
- Midterm
9. Islam and Arab Civilization
10. East Asia to 1350CE
11. The Bosphorus (Byzantines, Early Russia, Ottoman turks)
12. Middle Ages in Western Europe
13. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas Prior to 1500
14. European Renaissance and Reformation
15. Exploration and Commercial Revolution
16. Scientific Revolution
17. Absolutism
- Final Exam

**Philosophy Symposia:**

1. Justice and Law
2. The Power of Myth and Storytelling
3. Social Class
4. Body and Spirit: The Role of Asceticism
5. Mortality and the Afterlife
6. The Forgotten Virtue of Reverence
7. The Beautiful
8. The Good Life

**Relevance of Art and Architecture:**

The Freshman History Seminar seeks to integrate a component of art and architecture to learning about world history. Through the study of art and architecture, students can gain insight into the creative expression of peoples and cultures. Students will study and analyze the expression of social realities and ideals through images and visualization.

The Cave Paintings of Our Paleolithic Ancestors  
The Shang Bronze Vessels  
The tomb Army of the First Qin Emperor  
The Classical Ideals of Greek Art  
Roman Art and Architecture  
Hagia Sophia and Byzantine Iconography  
Islamic Design  
The Metalwork of Ife and Benin  
Landscape Painting in Traditional China  
The Hindu Temple  
The Gothic Cathedral  
The High Renaissance in Italy

**Concepts and Themes:**

Human/Physical geography  
Movement of Peoples and Goods  
Scarcity  
Environment  
Change  
Needs and Wants  
Conflict  
Cultural/Intellectual Life  
Diversity  
Human Rights  
Justice  
Interdependence  
Science and technology  
Decision making  
Political Systems  
Economic Systems  
Belief Systems  
Nation-states  
Urbanization

**Textbook:** *World History: The Human Odyssey*, Jackson Spielvogel west educational Publishing

**Research papers:**

*Students will be required to write a research paper in both the Fall and Spring terms. The research paper will be a minimum of 5 pages in length and must use proper format and citations. Papers will include a revision process.*

**Assessments:** *Students will be assessed in terms of their performance on multiple choice and essay exams, research papers, DBQ essays, presentations, homeworks and active engagement in class discussion.*

