

History At Our House

The Ultimate History Resource for Homeschoolers



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Asian History

Junior High and High School Syllabus

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Scott Powell

Introduction

This syllabus presents the general objectives for an academic year of Asian history with HistoryAtOurHouse for the Junior High and High School classes. Its purpose is to give parents and students an overview of what will be covered during the year, and thus to facilitate the purchase or borrowing of books and other resources (both non-fiction and historical fiction) to match with your students' studies in the program. Importantly, the 2012-13 academic year is the first year that HistoryAtOurHouse will be offering an Asian history program, thus, inevitably, the curriculum at this point is a work in progress, and the material presented may not exactly mirror the sequence indicated herein.

Another important feature of the Asian history program is the partial pairing of the Junior High and High School classes. The two groups will convene together for the lecture segment of the course, which will amount to 3 hours/wk jointly. However, the High School class will stay on for 20-30 minutes each day, four days a week, for additional work. This will consist of some combination of readings of “primary” and “secondary” sources, such as the modern Japanese constitution, or review of ancient, European, and American history, and more advanced world history integration exercises. In addition, within any particular historical period, it is possible, given the additional time and the higher abilities of the students, that we will discuss certain topics which are more intellectually demanding. For instance, when discussing the rise of the Japanese Empire, it is possible at the High School level to discuss the pivotal internationalist agenda of President Theodore Roosevelt in greater depth, and to examine if and how it might be related to subsequent developments such as current American foreign policy, and the evolution of America's relationship to Asia's major civilizations.

Both groups will have narrative writing assignments resembling those associated with the “Facts Practice.” For the High School group, there will also be readings assigned as homework that are not required for the Junior High. A list of anticipated readings in the program is also included in this document, in the section entitled “Course Readings.” (It will not be necessary for parents to purchase most of these readings. They are all either available for free on-line, or I will make them available to students via the class web page.)

Some of the additional in-class time for the High School group may be dedicated to individual study projects that the students will be tasked with, possibly including the preparation of a number of short essays, called “pearls,” over the course of the year, in addition to regular paragraph writing assignments, and periodic essays and tests.

Evidently, all the differences discussed in the foregoing are reflections of one general truth: the level of difficulty of the High School program will be higher. Although the core material presented will be the same, the High School students will be asked to study it in greater depth and to integrate it with their wider context of knowledge.

In addition to all the things that the High School program will include that the Junior High class does not, there are some things that the Junior High program includes but that the High School program will *not* include. First, there are no geography lessons at the High School level. Students will be expected to know their present-day political geography ahead of time, and if they are in need of a refresher, this will primarily be their own responsibility. There will also not be any class notes provided to students at the High School level. Students will be expected to take notes independently in class. They will receive guidance from me on how to do so, and I will perform periodic checks on their note-taking to assist them in this area as well. Finally, High School students will not receive “test preparation sheets” for tests. There will be in-class review for quizzes and tests, and students will be given explicit guidance on what the tests will contain and how to prepare for them, but they will have to prepare for them independently. (It will also be necessary for parents to coordinate with me in conducting the tests and submitting them to me, to insure the integrity of the testing process. This will be addressed as the school year proceeds.)

I am very excited about the year to come. In creating the HistoryAtOurHouse curriculum, I have striven to offer world-class history instruction for my homeschooling students. I believe the connected Junior High and High School programs of Asian history will meet that standard as well, and I look forward to working with you to make this academic year a terrific success.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scott Powell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Best regards,".

Mr. Powell

Course Outline

The History of the Islamic Middle East, c.600AD – Present (Week 1-9)

- The importance of the Middle East in world history and modern world affairs
- Survey of the ancient Middle East: From the Persian Empire to the Rise of Islam
- The Birth of Islamic Civilization
 - The life of Mohammed
 - The Islamic conquest of Arabia, North Africa, Persia, and Central Asia
 - Overview of Islamic Sectarianism: Sunni and Shi'a
 - Penetration of Islam into India and Europe and early political divisions of the Islamic World
- The Seljuk Turks
- The Crusades (1095-1291), from a Middle-Eastern perspective
- The Ottoman Empire (1299-1922)
 - Turkish conquest of the Middle East
 - Conquest of Constantinople and Penetration into Europe
 - Egypt under the Mamelukes
- The Safavid Empire of Persia (1501-1722)

QUIZ: Ancient and Medieval Middle East

- Western Ascendancy
 - From the “Reconquista” to the failed Ottoman siege of Vienna (1683)
 - Western advances until Napoleon
- Western Supremacy
 - 1798: the year everything changed
 - The “Eastern Question” for Europe / the “Western Question” for the Islamic World
 - World War I and the birth of the modern Middle-Eastern state system
 - British Power in the Middle East (c.1763-c.1956)
 - The Birth of Israel
 - American Supremacy (c.1956 – present)
 - The Middle East in the Cold War
 - Middle Eastern Oil in the Global Economy
 - Nationalism in the Modern Middle East
 - Reactionary Islamism and the “War on Terror”

TEST: The History of the Modern Middle East (1683-Present)

The History of the India, c.1500 BC – Present (Week 10-18)

- The importance of India in world history and modern world affairs
- The Indian Subcontinent and the ancient Indus “river valley civilization”
- The “Hindutva” Question
 - Roots of Cultural Nationalism
- Origins of the Caste System
- The Vedas, India's key religious texts, and Hinduism
 - The Upanishads
 - Beliefs: Karma and Reincarnation
- Buddhism
- Alexander the Great and his impact on India
- The Unification of India under the Mauryan Empire (c.322 BC – 185 BC)
 - The Connection between India, Egypt, and Rome
 - Political Disintegration and Re-unification
- The Gupta Empire and the “Golden Age of India”
- The Islamic Invasion and the Delhi Sultanate (c.1206-.c1526)
- The Mongol Threat

QUIZ: Ancient and Medieval India

- The Mughal Empire and the medieval Indian state system c.1500
- Western Ascendancy
 - Vasco da Gama (1498) and Portuguese naval dominion
 - The Dutch Empire in Empire
 - The French and British in India
 - The British East-India Company
 - The Seven Years' War (1756-63) and the fate of India
- Western Supremacy
 - The Collapse of Mughal Power and the rise of the Maratha Empire
 - The Napoleonic Threat and the Growth of British Power
 - The Failed Indian Rebellion and the British Raj (1858-1947)
 - The Anglo-Russian Rivalry for Central Asia: the “Great Game”
 - Queen Victoria: Empress of India
- Indian Independence
 - The Awakening of Indian Nationalism
 - Gandhi, the “Indian National Congress,” and the Partition of 1947
 - Pakistan and East Pakistan (Bangladesh)
 - The “Nehru” Dynasty and India's Modern Challenges

TEST: The History of the Modern India (1498-Present)

The History of the China, c.2200BC – Present (Week 19-27)

- The importance of China in world history and modern world affairs
- The “Heroic Age” of the Xia (c.2200-c.1700 BC) and Shang (c.1700-c.1045 BC) dynasties
 - The Origins of Chinese Writing
 - The Rise of Chinese Feudalism
 - The “Mandate of Heaven” (China's unique system of “divine right”)
- The Zhou Dynasty (c.1045 BC – 221 BC)
 - The cyclical pattern of Chinese history
 - The “Warring States” period and the Hundred Schools of Thought
 - Confucianism, Legalism and Daoism
- The First “Imperial Period”: The Qin and Han Dynasties (221 BC – 220 AD)
 - The origins of the “Great Wall of China”, Spread of Buddhism into China
- Anarchy of the Three Kingdoms and the Re-integration of the Second “Imperial Period”
 - The Sui and Tang dynasties
- The Anarchy of Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907 – 960 AD) and the Re-Integration of the Third “Imperial Period”: the Song and Liao (907 – 1279 AD)
- Mongol Rule of China (1279 – 1368)
- The Culmination of Chinese Imperialism: The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD)
 - Zheng He and the Aborted Chinese Age of Discovery (1405-1433)

QUIZ: Ancient and Medieval China

- The Qin Dynasty (1644-1911 AD): China's Last Empire
- Western Ascendancy
 - Portuguese, Chinese, and Dutch traders (1540 -) and Chinese mercantile expansion
 - The Enlightened Monarchy of the Kangxi Emperor and the new Western Learning
 - China and Russia's Westward Expansion
- Western Supremacy
 - The Turning Point: The Macartney Embassy of 1793
 - The British East-India Company and the Opium Trade
 - The First Opium War (1839-42) and Western Hegemony
 - The Boxer Rebellion, the United States and the “Open Door Policy” (1899 -)
- The Chinese Response
 - Sun Yat-sen and the Failed Republic (1911-1949)
 - Communist/Maoist China (1949-) and the Separation of Taiwan (1945-)
 - Post-Maoist China
 - Deng Xiaoping and the new “Market” Economy
 - China and the United States, the temporary economic alliance

TEST: The History of the Modern China (1644-Present)

The History of the Japan, c.645AD – Present (Week 28-35)

- The importance of Japan in world history and modern world affairs
- Japanese Pre-History (-645 AD)
 - The Origins of Japanese Identity: The Yamato Clan
 - The Importation of Buddhism and Confucianism
- The “Ishi Incident” (645 AD) and the birth of historical government in Japan
 - The Taika Reforms and the Yamato Polity
 - The Japanese “Emperor” and Japanese Feudal System
 - Shintoism
- Japan's Medieval Feudal Anarchy
 - The rise of the “Shoguns”
 - Japan and China: Early Relations; The Attempted Mongol Invasions
 - Yoshimitsu and Japan's hated perceived subordination to China
 - The Samurai and “Bushido” (“The Way of the Warrior”)
- The Three Great Unifiers and the Rise of the Tokugawa Shogunate

QUIZ: Ancient and Medieval Japan

- Western Ascendancy
 - Portuguese, Chinese, and Dutch traders (1540 -) and Chinese mercantile expansion
 - “Splendid Isolation” and “Dutch Learning”
- Western Supremacy
 - Admiral Perry and the Treaty of Kanagawa (1854)
 - The Unequal Treaties with the Western Powers
 - The Meiji Restoration
 - Japan's Frenetic Westernization and Industrial Modernization (1868-1912)
 - The Rise of Reactionary Nationalism
- The Failed Japanese Empire
 - The Awakening Empire: The Sino-Japanese (1894) and Russo-Japanese (1904-05) Wars
 - Japan as a “Great Power” : The Versailles Treaty of 1919 and the Washington Conference of 1922
 - Japan in WWII
 - Invasion of Manchuria
 - The Rape of Nanking
 - The Atomic Bombing of Japan
- Post-War Japan
 - The Japanese Constitution and its Subordination to the United States during the Cold War
 - The Illusory Economic Miracle and the New Identity Crisis

TEST: The History of the Modern Japan (1644-Present)

Course Readings

The following is a list of possible readings to be used over the course of the year. Not all the listed items will necessarily be used, nor is the list exhaustive. It is merely offered as an indication of the types of materials that students will be working with at the high school level.

The Middle East

Camron Amin, *The Modern Middle East: A Sourcebook*
Arthur Goldschmidt Jr, *A Concise History of the Middle East*
Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?: The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*
Norman Bancroft Hunt, *Historical Atlas of Ancient Mesopotamia*
Akram Fouad Khater, *Sources in the History of the Modern Middle East*

India

Bayly, Allen, and the National Portrait Gallery, *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947*
Bhagavad Gita
Law Code of Manu
Norman Brown, *Mythologies of the Ancient World*
Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*
Michel Danino, *The Riddle of India's Ancient Past*
Theodore de Bary, *Sources of Indian Tradition*
Mohandas Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*
The Penguin Gandhi Reader

China

Patricia Ebry, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*
John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*
The Travels of Marco Polo
The Analects of Confucius
Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*
Mao Zedong, *Collected Writings of Charmain Mao*
Tony Zurlo, *The History of Nations - China*

Japan

The Constitution of Japan
Theodore de Bary, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*
John Lewis, *Nothing Less than Victory: Decisive Wars and Lessons in History*
Roger Davies and Osamu Ikeno, *The Japanese Mind*
John Treat, *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*