This course supports the assessments for Applications in U.S. and World History. The course covers 8 competencies and represents 1 competency unit.

Introduction

Welcome to the Applications in US and World History Course! This course is organized into 4 thematic strands, and each strand covers significant developments in both United States and World History.

In the Themes in United States and World History Course, you learned about the significance of these four themes:

- Geography and the Development/Diffusion of Human Society
- Individuals and Institutions as Mechanisms of Social/Governmental Change
- Historical Systems of Power, Governance, and Authority
- Science and Technology as Engines of Economic Growth and Development

This course of study will refresh your knowledge of the themes and guide you through the research and organization process. The end result will be a multimedia presentation highlighting your research and the corresponding themes.

Watch the following video for an introduction to this course:

Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose “Save as...”: download video.

Competencies

This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 8 competencies:

- **Competency 117.1.1 : Geography & the Development/Diffusion of Human Society**
  The graduate assesses how environmental/geographic factors such as location and availability of resources have affected and continue to affect the development, distribution, and diffusion of the human race over time.

- **Competency 117.1.2 : Societal Interaction**
  The graduate evaluates how economic, political, and social-cultural connections shape interaction among both historical and contemporary societies.

- **Competency 117.1.3 : Historical Systems of Power, Governance, & Authority**
  The graduate assesses the various ways in which power and authority have been and continue to be exercised and legitimized in historical and contemporary systems of government.

- **Competency 117.1.4 : Revolutionary Change**
  The graduate evaluates the importance of and differences between violent and non-violent political revolutions as a means of effecting mass social, political and economic change.
- **Competency 117.1.5 : Individuals as Mechanisms of Social/Governmental Change**
  The graduate assesses the role of individual agency in historical events by examining the role played by particular individuals in large-scale instances of social/governmental change.

- **Competency 117.1.6 : Institutions as Mechanisms of Social/Governmental Change**
  The graduate evaluates social movements as a catalyst of and mechanism for social and governmental change.

- **Competency 117.1.7 : Science and Technology as the Engine of Economic Growth & Development**
  The graduate analyzes historical change in terms of the reciprocal relationship between technological advancement and socio-economic systems.

- **Competency 117.1.8 : Economic Systems**
  The graduate analyzes wealth, distribution, and production in historical and contemporary societies through the application of fundamental principles of significant economic systems.

### Assessment Tips

Watch the following getting started video for information on the assessments, the course and task instructions that will help you complete this course:

*Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose "Save as...": [download video](#).*

### Weekly Webinars

Join the course instructors for Themes in U.S. and World History. Click the button to see our webinar calendar:

*Weekly Webinars*

### Pacing Guide

The pacing guide suggests a weekly structure to pace your completion of learning activities. It is provided as a suggestion and does not represent a mandatory schedule. Follow the pacing guide carefully to complete the course in the suggested timeframe.

*Pacing Guide: Applications in United States and World History*

*Note: This pacing guide does not replace the course. Please continue to refer to the course for a comprehensive list of the resources and activities.*

In this course, you will apply your knowledge of these themes using your own examples. You should not use examples from the GKE1 (Themes in U.S. and World History) course, but should
locate topics to research that were not covered in the GKE1 Learning Resource. To refresh your memory on what topics were covered and are off-limits, click the following button:

Off-limits Topics List

**Understanding the Themes**

Historians can use a number of different perspectives when it comes to understanding the past. Events and actors can be organized by location, chronological grouping, ideological terms, etc. Applications in U.S. and World History adopts a thematic approach to organizing past events. This approach identifies common threads in the actions of past actors, and it enables us to contextualize events in their own time, and to consider them in terms of the events that precede them, and those that follow.

These are the four historical themes that organize Applications in U.S. and World History:

**Geography and the Development/Diffusion of Human Societies**

The features of the physical world – including terrain, climate, and natural resources – have a profound influence on the location and development of human societies. One of the aspects of the Geography theme is the consideration of that influence. Terrain can determine how a city develops on the banks of a river in order to access running water for sanitation. Climate can dictate the kind of shelter that is necessary to live in an area. Natural resources can run the gamut from forests to minerals, and entire towns can rise and fall on the fortunes of a mining industry. The Geography theme also describes how those geographic features can contribute to the movement of people and ideas from one place to another. Trade routes, wars over resources, and natural disasters/climate change are just a few of the ways that geography influences diffusion of societies as well.

**Individuals and Institutions as Mechanisms of Social/Governmental Change**

People can change the world. While it is an often-cited aphorism, the innovations, sacrifices, and overall contributions of significant individuals can have far-reaching and long-lasting influences on human societies. The Individuals and Institutions theme concentrates on the contributions of those significant individuals, from politicians, to military leaders, to artists and scholars, to humanitarians, and everything in between. The Individuals and Institutions theme can call our attention to not only the deliberate actions of individuals, but also the symbolic nature or unintended consequences of their actions. The Individuals and Institutions theme also encompasses how people get together to form institutions from school boards to corporations to NGOs. These groups can have the same profound and far-reaching influence and be considered using the same tools.

**Historical Systems of Power, Governance, and Authority**
Human society organizes itself in a multiplicity of forms – from the overt control of a police state to the subtle influence of media and social pressures. One of the aspects of the Power, Governance, and Authority theme is the consideration of how power is exercised. Power can be exercised directly, such as the violent overthrow of a political regime. Religious and ethical codes of behavior can have a less obvious, but no less profound influence on determining the acceptable actions of a society. The Power, Governance, and Authority theme also encompasses the kinds of government that emerge from that exercise of power, including constitutional republics, imperial and colonial experiences, and international or trans-national organizations. Authority does not exist in a vacuum, and the systems of authority can be challenged in revolution or other kinds of crisis, and the Power, Governance, and Authority theme also considers how those events can lead to the creations of new systems.

Science and Technology as the Engine of Economic Growth and Development

While the narrative of technological progress is rarely without its bumps, technological innovation – whether through inventions or the application of technological to know areas – can have considerable influence on economic growth. Whole industries have been created or made obsolete by the invention of the internal combustion engine, the semiconductor, and the printing press. The Science and Technology theme is not limited to the last couple of centuries, but in our recent past we can see very clearly the rapid innovations in many different fields, and the synergistic progression from technology to technology. Economic growth is often accompanied by political or social realignment, and the Technology theme also considers how technological innovations can have social consequences.

As you prepare for the Applications in U.S. and World History Performance Assessment, you will be using these historical themes to organize your own work.

Researching Your Topics

This project requires you to become the historian. It gives you a great opportunity to learn some research skills as well as study topics that are interesting or meaningful to you. Now that you have learned about the four themes, it is your task to discover examples that represent each theme. Those examples should not be the same as those that you used for the four Themes in U.S. and World History tasks nor should they be found in the Themes in U.S. and World History course. Instead, you must do your own historical research about four topics that fit the themes and that you want to learn more about. (Remember: you should have two examples from United States history and two examples from World history, so keep that in mind as you are choosing your topics.)

In this section, you will learn how to conduct your research for this project. Research can be an exciting but tricky thing. You want to make sure that the sources that you choose are appropriate, so you will learn how to be selective with your Internet searches. You will also discover tips for researching in the WGU library—which has a treasure trove of resources that will be useful for this presentation. This section will also guide you to some sample websites that are found outside of WGU but that offer quality information about a variety of topics. Finally, you will find some strategies here for collecting information. In the next section, you will learn how to
organize the information that you have discovered through your research.

Selecting Sources

Historians study primary sources (documents created during a particular historical event or time period produced by people who actually lived then) and gain knowledge from secondary sources (resources—for example, textbooks or monographs—written by someone at a later date analyzing an event or time period) in order to examine the past. You are welcome to use either kind of source in constructing your presentation. Here are the uses you’ll find for these types of sources:

Primary sources are letters, diaries, films, photographs, newspaper articles, and any other artifact that was produced during the historical period that you are studying. You can use these as images in your presentation. You can also use them to learn more about how people at the time viewed the events you are describing or the people you are investigating.

Secondary sources are books, articles, and websites that historians and other authors write about the past. These are written well after the historical period you are researching and are usually an academic reading and interpretation of those events. Historians use primary sources to create secondary sources to help others understand what happened at a particular time. You can use secondary sources for evidence about your examples and for facts and details to include in your presentation. Rely on secondary sources to better understand how historians view past events and peoples.

Source Evaluation

Sometimes it’s difficult to determine if a source you find on the Internet is reliable or not. Is it objective or biased? Is it written by an expert or just somebody with access to a computer and too much time on their hands? You want to make sure that your secondary sources are unbiased and scholarly. Please read over the questions offered on this website to determine what the standards are for academically acceptable Internet sources:

- “Is it scholarly? Tips for critically evaluating your information resources.”

Primary sources are usually biased because they were written at the time of the event and they are good to use to understand the perspective of people living at that time. Keep in mind that what they are saying is not absolute fact, but one person’s version of events from the perspective of the time. There are many different ways to view an event; think of all the different ways Americans have written or talked about 9/11. Please read the following website for information on how to interpret primary sources:

- “Evaluating Primary Sources on the Web”

Watch this video on evaluating sources to get a better idea as to what sources are appropriate to use in your presentation:

- Academic Research Evaluating Sources

This video discusses the difference between scholarly and popular sources, as well as providing
an introduction to critically analyzing sources.

**Using the WGU Library**
The WGU Library is a wonderful place to research your topics. We have databases with journal articles on various subjects as well as full-text books. You can even start a bookshelf where you can keep all of your books and highlight them as you find relevant information!

Watch the following recordings to familiarize yourself with how to search the different areas of the library:

- [WGUNLibrary](#)

This video provides a very brief overview of the available library resources/services including where to access the E-reserves, federated database search, and ask-a-librarian reference service.

- [E-brary full text e-books](#)

You may want to use books for information in your presentation. This video discusses the E-brary full text E-books platform. It includes instructions for highlighting, taking notes, and saving books to a bookshelf.

- [Graduate Research Fundamentals](#)

This video discusses rhetorical analysis, subject specific language, and other necessary components of graduate level research.

**Sample External Websites for Research**
If you’d like to look outside of the WGU Library for primary sources and secondary literature, you might try some of these external websites. These are all well-respected by historians and will hopefully spark some ideas and interest for you to carry forward into your own research. Feel free to use these sites in constructing your presentation and to examine them as examples of appropriate sources to use for historical investigation.

**Primary sources:**

- **The Internet Archive**
  A very extensive archive of primary source documents with basic and advanced search options. It includes letters and newspapers, historical books, as well as music.

- **History Matters Many Pasts**
  A primary source website with documents from U.S. History.

- **Discovering Women’s History Online**
  A database of documents relating to women’s history in the United States.

- **The Avalon Project at Yale**
A document collection that includes sources related to law from ancient history through the 21st century.

**Library of Congress**
One of our nation’s most extensive digital collections, the Library of Congress has a searchable database of primary documents, many of which relate to popular culture in the United States.

**Secondary Sources:**

**Exploring Ancient World Cultures**
A site that explains the major characteristics of ancient civilizations created by the University of Evansville.

**Country Studies**
This site gives overviews of different countries, including major geographical features and governmental structures.

**Global Connections**
PBS has put together this overview of Middle Eastern history.

**The Price of Freedom**
An exhibition by the Smithsonian of Americans at war.

**The Smithsonian’s Encyclopedia**
An online Encyclopedia with resources on history and culture with exhibitions related to various topics in American history.

**The History Channel Online**
The History Channel is a source for popular history (not purely academic). This site does have a lot of information constructed by academics to give you insight into the past.

**Digital History**
A site that provides multimedia to examine different subjects in the American past, including timelines and primary sources as well as images.

**BBC History**
The BBC is a well-respected source of historical information, with a website that has constantly rotating exhibitions.

**Citations and Academic Honesty**
No matter what sources you use, you should cite them throughout using APA formatting. Please watch the following video on APA citations and formatting. Be aware that presentations follow the same guidelines as papers.

- Academic Research Citation and Formatting
This video provides an overview of WGU's policies on plagiarism, and proper citation. It also discusses APA style, and offers suggestions for additional resources which can be valuable when working on a research project.

Organizing Your Presentation

Your presentation must include four examples, one for each of the four themes represented in this COS. Two of those examples must be from United States history and two must be taken from World (non-US) history. This project requires outside research and the examples you select should not be replicated from the Themes in U.S. and World History course.

Presentation Guidelines

Please review these guidelines for what should be included in your task:

- Applications in US and World History Presentation Guidelines

This presentation can be a little challenging for students to conceptualize, because it does not directly follow the rubric in structure. That means that you must meet all the items in the rubric, but you will not be able to address each part of the rubric in sequence, as you did with the Themes in U.S. and World History essays.

For each theme, you will need to present one example. You can think of each of your examples as following an “hourglass” pattern, broad at the beginning and end, and narrow and focused in the middle.

Start out broad by clearly identifying and explaining the theme and identifying your example. Then you will need to narrow down your focus and present the specific facts of your example that demonstrate how it fits the theme. Once you have presented your example in detail, you will want to broaden your discussion out again and explain how the theme helps you understand your example and understand history in general better.

In addition to your four examples, you will need a basic introduction (like the cover page on a paper) and conclusion section for your presentation, as well as a section that lists your sources for the information on your examples.

Beyond this basic organizational structure, you are free to use your creativity to make your points and enhance your presentation.