

# HIST 10400: Introduction to the Modern World

Fall 2025

Course Modality: Online Asynchronous (Brightspace)

Course Dates: Aug 25, 2025 – Dec 12, 2025 (Fall Break: Oct 13 – 14)

Instructor: Catherine Kerton-Johnson

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Office Hours: By appointment on Zoom (email to book)

## Course Description

Using a survey of global history since the sixteenth century, this course will challenge students to understand how the modern world's defining characteristics—the nation-state, global industrial economy, and unequal distribution of resources—emerged through interconnected transformations rather than isolated events. The main distinction here is that we won't simply learn what happened in the past, but rather how historians construct knowledge from primary sources, applying new methodologies and intellectual approaches that transform our engagement with historical events. Each week deliberately overlaps chronologically with preceding and subsequent topics, emphasizing that political upheavals, economic revolutions, and ideological shifts cannot be understood in isolation but must be examined through comparative and conceptual lenses that reveal patterns across time and space. Through these methods, it will become evident that understanding our contemporary world requires both the ability to analyze specific historical moments in depth and to recognize the broader themes that connect events from the Afro-Eurasian trade networks of the fifteenth century to the digital globalization of the twenty-first, ultimately demonstrating that no historical transformation happens without reverberating effects that shape subsequent generations.

## Learning Outcomes

- Explain major developments in global history from 1400 – present.
- Analyze primary sources using context, perspective, and corroboration.
- Evaluate historical arguments, including contingency, causation, and change over time.

- Communicate interpretations clearly in written discussion and short analytical essays.

## Required Materials

James Hugh Carter and Richard A. Warren. *Forging the Modern World: A History* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), Oxford University Press, 2022. E-text via Oxford Learning Link.

Richard Holmes. *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science*. HarperPress, 2008.

## Assessments & Grading

Assessment	Weight
Weekly Blog Post (13 @ ~3% ea.)	30%
Weekly Quizzes (13 @ ~3% ea.)	30%
Midterm Exam (Weeks 1 – 7 synthesis)	15%
Final Paper	25%

## Grading Scale:

A = 93 – 100; A- = 90 – 92; B+ = 87 – 89; B = 83 – 86; B- = 80 – 82; C+ = 77 – 79; C = 73 – 76; C- = 70 – 72; D+ = 67 – 69; D = 63 – 66; D- = 60 – 62; F = <60.

## Late Work Policy

Assignments are due Sundays by 11:59 PM Eastern Time unless specified. You have two automatic 48-hour grace passes for the semester (not valid for the midterm or final paper). Beyond that, late work may incur a 10% per day penalty up to three days; after three days, submissions close.

Documented university-approved absences are exempt from penalty.

Weekly Schedule (Subject to change. See Brightspace for updates.)

Week	Dates	Topic
1	Aug 25 – Aug 31	Introduction: Forging the Modern World
2	Sep 01 – Sep 07	A World Connected, 1347–1520
3	Sep 08 – Sep 14	The New Global Interface, 1486 – 1637
4	Sep 15 – Sep 21	The Paradoxes of Early Modern Empire, 1501–1661
5	Sep 22 – Sep 28	Production and Consumption in the First Global Economy, 1571 – 1721
6	Sep 29 – Oct 05	Global War and Imperial Reform, 1655 – 1766

7	Oct 06 – Oct 10	A New Order for the Ages, 1762 – 1839
8	Oct 15 – Oct 19 (Fall Break Oct 11–14)	The Engines of Industrialization, 1787 – 1868
9	Oct 20 – Oct 26	Modernity Organized, 1840 – 1893
10	Oct 27 – Nov 02	Globalization and Its Discontents, 1869 – 1915
11	Nov 03 – Nov 09	Total War and Mass Society, 1911 – 1933
12	Nov 10 – Nov 16	The Ongoing Crisis of the Global Order, 1930–1957
13	Nov 17 – Nov 23	Hot War, Cold Wars, and Liberation Movements, 1954–1991
14	Nov 24 – Nov 30	The Many Worlds of the Twenty–First Century, 1987–2021
15	Dec 01 – Dec 07	Synthesis & Contemporary Connections Richard Holmes, <i>The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science</i> , 2008.
16	Dec 08 – Dec 14	Final Paper & Course Wrap Up

## Course Policies

**Attendance & Participation (Online Asynchronous):** Your participation is demonstrated by weekly blog posts, and quizzes. Excused absences and extensions align with university policies, including the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS), Military Absence Policy, Jury Duty, Parenting Leave, and medically excused absences. See the Office of the Dean of Students: <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/support/students/absences.php>

**Academic Integrity:** Purdue values intellectual integrity and the highest standards of academic conduct. Cheating, plagiarism, and furnishing false information are prohibited. Course–level penalties may include grade penalties or failure; all incidents are referred to OSRR. See:

<https://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/>

**Generative AI Use Policy:** In this course, you may use AI tools for idea generation, planning, and formative feedback, provided you critically evaluate and revise AI-generated content so that your final submitted work is uniquely your own. Be aware that at college level, intellectual and critical engagement with assignments is expected at a high level of unique creative output, and AI-generated work will very seldom be adequate to pass the course. Submitting fully AI-generated work as your own, or using AI to complete graded work without disclosure, constitutes academic dishonesty and will be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR).

**Nondiscrimination Policy Statement:** Purdue is committed to an inclusive and welcoming community. See the full statement: [https://www.purdue.edu/home/ea\\_eou\\_statement/](https://www.purdue.edu/home/ea_eou_statement/).

**Accessibility and Accommodations:** Purdue University strives to make learning experiences accessible to all participants. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone (765-494-1247), as soon as possible. If the Disability Resource Center (DRC) has determined reasonable accommodations that you would like to utilize in my class, they will send me a course accommodations letter. Please discuss any concerns you may have with me over email.

**Student Support & Well-Being:** Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, please contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Visit [www.purdue.edu/caps/](http://www.purdue.edu/caps/) or call 765-494-6995 for services and urgent care; after hours, select the appropriate option to speak with a counselor on call. The Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) can also help you navigate challenges: [www.purdue.edu/odos](http://www.purdue.edu/odos).

**Emergency Preparedness and Course Continuity:** In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading policies are subject to change. Updates will be posted in Brightspace and sent via Purdue email.

**Religious & Other University–Approved Absences:** Religious, Military, Jury Duty, and Parenting Leave Accommodations: Students seeking accommodations for these reasons should notify the instructor as early as possible and provide the appropriate University documentation or notice so that reasonable adjustments can be arranged.

**Technology & Platforms:** Technology & Course Platforms: Brightspace (course hub) and Oxford University Press Learning Link for the e-textbook *Forging the Modern World*, 3e. Reliable internet access is required. If you encounter access issues, contact the instructor promptly.