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Reflective Statement and Revised Syllabus For Large Lectures

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Q2S Enhancing Pedagogy

Timothy Pytell

In order to improve the experiences and effectively engage students I decided to teach Hist 144 instead of Hist 142. I did this since I am a modern European Historian and therefore my training is more closely aligned with course content. I had just finished a stint as Department Chair and hadn't taught the large lecture for a few years. Since it was a new prep the course was challenging for me and the students.

In addition to the course's challenge I made a mistake on the textbook. It was inadequate and also lacked a strong web support. In short it was a flop in terms of dwfi rates since mine went up. So I went back to teaching Hist 142. In the Hist 142 I also added a student assistant to the course and numerous students found that opportunity very helpful. I originally adopted clickers in large lectures when they first arrived on campus - when they were no longer in use (when I returned from being chair) I thought about Top Hat. But when I spoke with professors about it many found the system flawed. So instead I adopted a series of questions that are posted on power point lectures on Blackboard. I ask the students the questions in lectures to initiate short in class discussions, and then I post them on a general discussion blog on BB that the students can earn extra credit for posting. This seems to help the students engage the material as well as other students. It also gives them confidence they can do well in the class. My philosophy is to make the students work to earn a grade but if they do all the work it is almost impossible to fail. I also have them do 600 word blogs on worldviews, time travel and what civilization most impacted the way they see themselves and the contemporary world. These opinion pieces seem to keep the students engaged. My DWFI rates are back to normal – 10% to 15% which is to be expected in such a large class. Finally as department chair I initiated an MA in History thinking we would be able to use grad students to conduct discussion sessions in our large lectures. Alas this is not going to happen but the SI seems to help. Just a handful of students attend the sessions but my sense it is those students who need the extra guidance to be successful in the course.

I pasted the Hist 144 syllabus below. When semesters come I may try again with the course.

History 144: World Civilizations III

California State University San Bernardino, Spring 2017

Professor Timothy E. Pytell email: tpytell@csusb.edu Tues and Thurs. 4:00 – 5:50 pm.
Office hours: TT 2:15 to 3:30 pm. Or by appt. 537-3789 Office: SB 337

History 144 expects to students to meet the following learning outcomes:

I. Knowledge and Skills

- 1.1 Students will demonstrate knowledge of relevant historical facts and context
- 1.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to frame historical questions
- 1.3 Student demonstrates awareness of historical interpretative differences

This course surveys the rise of Western Civilization and the key issues in the period historians conceptualize as modernity (1350 to the present). Given the spatial and temporal expanse of the course, we are limited to covering the main themes and key events in a general survey of this period. However these key events and themes are central for your education. The aspiration is that students will develop their historical understanding of the human condition, the roots of our current dilemmas and insight into the question of “What is Modernity?” Ideally, students will discover some aspect of history that intrigues them to pursue a deeper understanding of the past.

In order to be successful in this course, students need to do the readings before each class session and attend lecture. Without doing the reading beforehand, students will likely have difficulty with the material presented in the lecture. In addition, taking timeout each week to reflect upon your notes from both the lectures and the readings will make exam preparation easier. There are three exams and three discussion logs (around 800 words) required. Each exam will count for 25% of your grade, and the discussion logs will be averaged together and count for the remaining 25% of your grade. In order to be successful in this course you must do ALL of the course work. In order to earn 10% extra credit you have the opportunity to post short (three or four sentences) weekly reflections on the course material or lecture. This forum is on Blackboard under discussions. Each post will add 1% to your overall grade. After ten posts you will earn the 10% of extra credit to your overall grade!

Unless you have an emergency that you can document (doctors note or police report) there will be no makeup exams. Discussion logs are electronic and will not be accepted after the designated date and time.

Your education is about your own personal achievement. Do not cheat yourself. Plagiarism is the act of presenting ideas and writing of another as one’s own. Cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means.

If you are in need of an accommodation for a disability in order to participate in the class, please inform me ASAP and also contact Services for Students with Disabilities at UH – 183, 537-5238.

Required readings:

Backman, Clifford *The Cultures of the West*

Primary Documents on Powerpoints and on Blackboard

September 21 **Introduction: Civilizations and Historical Periodization in the “West”**

September 26, 28 **Discovery, Renaissance and Reformation**

Backman Chapters 12 & 13

BB Readings Columbus, Sepulveda/De Las Casas debate, Aquinas, Renaissance Writers (Mirandola and Erasmus), Machiavelli, Erasmus and Luther on Free Will

October 3, 5 **Scientific Revolution, Religious Turmoil, Absolutism**

Backman Chapters 14 & 15

BB Readings Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Descartes

October 10 **English Civil War and World Trade**

Backman Chapter 15

BB Readings Hobbes

October 12 First Exam

October 16 First Discussion Log Due by Midnight

October 17, 19 **Enlightenment, French Revolution, Napoleon**

Backman Chapter 16 & 17

BB Readings Locke, Smith, Diderot, Rousseau, Napoleon

October 24, 26 **Industrialization, Conservatism, 1848**

Backman Chapter 18, 19, 20

BB Readings Industrialization docs, Burke, Paine, Marx, Mill, German Unification Readings

October 31st (No Class Work on Extra Credit Assignment)

November 2 **Feminism, Modern Consciousness**

Backman Chapters 21, 22

BB Readings Nietzsche, Darwin, Freud,

November 7 Second Exam

November 9 Second Discussion Log Due by Midnight

November 9 **Imperialism**

Backman Chapter 23

BB Readings Livingstone

November 14, 16 **World War I, Bolshevism, Fascism, Nazism**

Backman Chapter 24 & 25

BB Readings War Poetry, Lenin, Treaty of Versailles, Mussolini, Hitler

November 21 **World War 11, Holocaust, Existentialism**
Backman Chapters 26 27
BB Readings Sartre, De Beauvoir,

November 28, 30 **Post-Modernism, Decolonization, Cold War, 1989, Globalization**
Backman Chapters 28, 29
BB Readings Havel, Terrorism

Final Exam December 7th
December 7th Third Discussion Due by Midnight