

2011

Global History to 1500 (HIS 151) City as Classroom Project Report

Michael McInneshin PhD

La Salle University, mcinneshin@lasalle.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/city_as_classroom



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

McInneshin, Michael PhD, "Global History to 1500 (HIS 151) City as Classroom Project Report" (2011). *City as Classroom Projects*. 10.

http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/city_as_classroom/10

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Community Engaged Learning at La Salle University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in City as Classroom Projects by an authorized administrator of La Salle University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact careyc@lasalle.edu.



City as Classroom

Extra-Credit Project

History 151 (Global History to 1500)

Michael McInneshin

Course Description

This course will explore some portions of the development of global history from about a million years before the present to the voyages of Columbus. We will analyze different aspects of history including the more standard histories of governing and political ideologies, empires and states, and warfare and diplomacy. We will examine humans in motion, stories of migration, sea-faring, evangelizing, trade, and the cross-cultural encounters those all engendered. We will also look at the past via social history, the study of the stuff of every-day life: work, families, sex, religion, social hierarchies, legal systems, and technology. Because humanity has essentially organized itself around eating, the central theme of the course will be food in global history.

Project Description

This project was an extra-credit assignment used to test out the feasibility of creating class-wide assignments of this nature in the future. Therefore, it was optional and done independently by the students who participated. The students (potentially those who are a little less enthusiastic in classroom settings, hence the need for extra credit) would get a chance to see actual artifacts (or occasionally replicas) produced by the people they'd studied during the semester. The experience was intended to make the lives of historical subjects more real in their minds, and allow them to do their own independent analysis using models established in the classroom.

Assignment Instructions to the Students

Visit the UPenn Archaeology and Anthropology Museum. It will cost \$8.00 with your student ID; save your receipt and I will reimburse you. I can also supply you with two SEPTA tokens for your trip there. Explore the museum and find two different sections that depict areas from eras and places (before 1500 CE) that we have studied in class so far. What sort of artifacts are displayed that reveal the daily life experiences of regular people from these two times and places? What do these objects tell you about producing, preparing, and consuming food in the past? Take notes in the museum and organize your thoughts in an essay of 2-4 pages.

Outcomes

Ten students (from a possible 60) undertook the assignment, went to the museum and wrote an essay, and eight of those claimed a refund for the assignment. (Half who participated also requested and received SEPTA tokens.) Because I offered the assignment at the end of the semester (and returned the graded essays during the final exam), I did not systematically collect feedback other than some verbal questioning while taking up receipts. The bulk of the feedback, then, was the results as written in the essays. Three of the ten essays produced were precisely the type of work I wanted from the assignment. A couple of the essays barely addressed the questions proposed, and the remainder fell somewhere between those two poles. Thus I regard the assignment as a moderate success.

Lessons Learned

Offer a bit of coaching for the participants, walking them through the steps of the assignment, so that they do not waste their time on the trip. Require completion slightly earlier in the semester, for better feedback. Reduce the value of the assignment slightly, as it rescued a couple of semester-long lackluster efforts from grade unpleasantness. I am re-running the same assignment this semester, and will be able to re-evaluate the project after the second go-round.