

Connections: A World History

Combined Volume

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CONNECTING WITH WORLD HISTORY STUDENTS: WHY WE WROTE THIS BOOK

We are two professors who love teaching world history. For the past two decades, at our middle-sized college, we have team-taught a two-semester world history course that first-year students take to fulfill a college-wide requirement. Our students have very diverse backgrounds and interests. Most take world history only because it is required, and many find it very challenging. Helping them to understand it and infecting them with our enthusiasm for it are our main purposes and passions.

This is an exciting time to be teaching world history. In an age of growing global interconnectedness, an understanding of diverse world cultures and their histories has never been more essential. Indeed, it is increasingly apparent that students who lack this understanding will be poorly prepared to function in modern society or even to comprehend the daily news.

At the same time, the teaching of world history has never seemed more challenging. As the amount and complexity of the material increases, students can get bogged down in details and inundated with information, losing sight of the overall scope and significance of the human experience. Conveying world history to college students in a comprehensible and appealing way, without leaving them confused and overwhelmed, is one of the toughest challenges we face.

To help meet this challenge and better connect with our students, we have written a compact, affordable world history text that is tailored to meet their needs. In developing this text, we pursued several main goals:

First, because students often find it difficult to read and process lengthy, detailed chapters, we sought to write a text that is *concise and engaging*, with short, interesting chapters that focus on major trends and developments.

Second, since students often see history as a bewildering array of details, dates, and events, we chose a unifying theme—connections among world societies—and grouped our chapters to reflect the growth of such connections from regional to global.

Third, having seen many students struggle because they lack a good sense of geography, we included 223 maps—far more than most other texts—and provided a number of other features designed to help readers better understand and process the material.

A Concise and Readable Text

Since even the best text does little good if students do not read it, we endeavored above all to produce one that is concise and readable. We addressed ourselves to first-year college students, using a simple, straightforward narrative that tells the compelling story of the peoples and societies that preceded us and how they shaped the world. To avoid drowning our readers in a welter of details, we chose to take an introductory approach rather than an encyclopedic one. With this text, students will become familiar with the most important trends, developments, and issues in world history, and they will gain an appreciation for the vast diversity of human societies and endeavors.

To make our book less overwhelming and more accessible to students, we have limited most chapters to about 10,000 words, and divided each chapter into short topical subsections. By writing concise chapters, we have enabled average students to read them in an hour or so. By keeping subsections short, we have partitioned the text into manageable segments, so that readers can process material before they move on. By furnishing an outline at the start of each chapter, marginal notes that highlight our main theme, and a perspective section at the end, we have kept in sight the overall trends and developments, without interrupting the narrative's basic flow.

Connections in World History

In our teaching we have found that many students find world history confusing and overwhelming, in part because they have no overall framework for understanding it. To help them sort things out, we have focused our text on a central theme of connections among world societies. By stressing this theme, we have sought to maintain a sense of coherence and purpose, and to give our readers a framework that will help them to make sense of history.

Rather than dividing our text into ancient, medieval, and modern eras, an arrangement that works for Europe but has limited value elsewhere, we have instead grouped our chapters into two overlapping ages: an Age of Regional Connections, lasting until about 1650 C.E. and an Age of Global Connections, dating from roughly 1500 to the present. Each age is then subdivided into three sections, reflecting the expansion of connections from regional to global levels. This framework, summarized in our table of contents, is designed to give students the “big picture” of world history that they often lack.

Within each section are chapters that provide both regional and global perspectives, stressing not only each culture’s distinct features but also its connections with other regions and cultures. Readers thus can readily appreciate both the diversity and the interconnectedness of human societies.

Within each chapter, on almost every page, are **marginal notations** that summarize material and highlight our connections theme. Readers thus can easily keep sight of the overall context.

An Extensive and Consistent Map Program

Many students approach world history with only a rudimentary understanding of world geography, and maps are a crucial tool in understanding world history. Our text contains a copious abundance of carefully crafted maps, designed within each chapter to build one upon another. With over 220 maps throughout the book, *Connections* offers one of the most extensive map programs of any world history survey textbook.

Each chapter begins with a **foundation map**, positioning chapter events in global context or highlighting a key part of the world under discussion.

We have worked very hard to make the maps clear and to place them where readers can refer to them without turning pages. As much as possible, the maps use colors, fonts, labels, and other markers consistently, so that students will find these features familiar from one map to the next.

Finally, the map captions were carefully written to clarify the maps, to connect them with surrounding text, and to guide the students’ attention to the most important elements in that map. Each map caption includes a question to help students consider critical issues.

Features

We have incorporated in our text a carefully selected set of features, each chosen with this basic guideline in mind: Will it help students to better envision, understand, and process the material they are reading?

VISUALS We provide an ample array of photos and other visuals, selected to illustrate developments explicitly discussed in the text. To ensure that students will connect the text with the images, we have placed them in the margins near the passages that they illustrate.

PRONUNCIATION GUIDES Since students often struggle to pronounce unfamiliar names and places, we have placed parenthetical pronunciation guides immediately following first use of such names and places in the text.

CHAPTER-OPENING VIGNETTES Each chapter opens with a vignette designed to capture the reader's interest and introduce the chapter's main themes.

PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT EXCERPTS To acquaint students with primary sources and illuminate materials covered in our text, we have provided concise excerpts from selected historical sources, in feature boxes placed where the document is discussed in the text.

CHAPTER REVIEW SECTIONS Each chapter has a comprehensive end-of-chapter review section that incorporates the following features:

- **Putting It in Perspective.** This feature provides a concise overview of the chapter's main themes, highlights key connections, and puts them in historical perspective.
- **Key Concepts.** Key concepts are highlighted in boldface in the text, defined in the text when first discussed and also in an alphabetic glossary, and listed at the end of each chapter with page references to facilitate review.
- **Key People.** Important individuals mentioned in the text are also listed at the end of each chapter, followed by page references to facilitate review.
- **Ask Yourself.** A set of questions at the end of every chapter encourages further reflection and analysis of topics, issues, and connections considered in the chapter.
- **Going Further.** A list of books at the end of each chapter provides resources for teachers and students interested in delving more deeply into topics covered.
- **Key Dates and Developments.** Each chapter contains a comprehensive chronology that lists the key dates and developments, helping students to see at a glance sequence of important events.

A Student-Centered Textbook

For several years, we and our colleagues have used a draft version of our text, with highly encouraging results. Since the book is affordable and portable, we find that most students buy it and bring it to class. Since chapters are concise and engaging, we find that students actually read them before coming to class and thus are better prepared to understand and discuss key issues. Students who completed questionnaires or wrote reviews of our chapters said they found them clear and compelling. By pointing out passages they found dry or confusing, these students also helped make the book more readable. We went to great lengths to create a text that is useful, accessible, and attractive to our students. For they, after all, are the reasons we wrote this book.

Ed Judge and John Langdon

SUPPORT MATERIALS

VangoBooks are innovative course materials created to better meet the needs of today's college students. They are portable, convenient, student-oriented texts that present essential information and issues in a compact form at a much lower price than traditional textbooks. Designed to make world history more meaningful and accessible, this VangoBook comes with an extensive package of support materials for instructors and students.

For Instructors

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL For each chapter of the text, the Instructor's Manual provides lecture outlines, chapter summaries, learning objectives, discussion questions, Connection Questions, and suggestions for audio-visual materials.

TEST-ITEM FILE Written and extensively class-tested by Connie Brand of Meridian Community College, the Test-Item File Includes over 3000 questions (multiple choice, essay, short answer, true/false, and map questions).

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A Note on Dates and Spellings

In labeling dates, like many other world history teachers, we use the initials B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and C.E. (Common Era), which correspond respectively to the labels B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (*Anno Domini*, “The Year of the Lord”), long used in Western societies. In spelling Chinese names we use the Pinyin system, internationally adopted in 1979, but we sometimes also give other spellings that were widely used before then. (In Chapters 32 and 35, for example, Chinese Nationalist leader Jiang Jieshi is also identified as Chiang Kaishek.) Our spelling of names and terms from other languages follows standard usage, with alternative versions given where appropriate. (Chapter 17, for example, notes that Central Asian warrior Timur Lenk was also called Tamerlane in Europe.)