HH4016 Topics in World History
[Seminar: 52 hours; Pre-requisites: nil; Academic Unit: 4.0]

Seminar meeting: Monday, 09:30-13:30  
Venue: LHR-TR+41  
Instructor: A/P Goh Geok Yian

Office: HSS-05-09  
Office hours: Monday, 14:00-15:00; or by appointment (request via email)

Learning Objective
To provide students with an advanced knowledge of:

a) the range of topics examined in world history
b) the approaches, methodology, and scholars of world history
c) the continuing relevance and significance of world history in the historical discipline

Content
This advanced level seminar introduces students to the various approaches, methodology, and themes examined by world historians through the careful reading of key works by world historians, and seeks to engage them in discussions about the assumptions underlying the various approaches used by these scholars. The course is divided into six parts, each of which encapsulates a major theme which forms part of the foundation for the world history discipline. Students will read major texts related to these six themes, and will be prepared to analyze them in class.

Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to the course: background, key themes, key scholars, key approaches, and key geographical foci</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2   | Webs and Networks 1:  
| 3   | Webs and Networks 2:  
| 4   | Environmental History 1:  
| 5   | Environmental History 2:  
<p>|     | Pyne, Stephen J. <em>World Fire: The Culture of Fire on Earth</em>. Washington: University of |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6 | Diseases and Pathogens 3:  
| 7 | Diseases and Pathogens 4:  
| 8 | Cross-Cultural Encounters and Trade 1:  
| 9 | Cross-Cultural Encounters and Trade 2:  
OR  
| 10 | Migrations and Diasporas:  
| 11 | Technology and Social and Intellectual Transformation 1:  
| 12 | Technology and Social and Intellectual Transformation 2:  

**Learning Outcome**
Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the key themes examined in world history. At the end of this course, students will possess a firm grasp of the approaches utilized by world historians and will have been exposed to a range of major publications in the sub-discipline.

**Student Assessment (100% CA)**
Students will be assessed by:

a. **Precis (20%)**
   Students are required to submit four (4) short precises (500 words each) during the semester. Each précis must not be merely a summary of the week reading; it must show the student’s attempt to relate the reading to each week’s topic. Students will submit the précis on the day of the meeting in class. The précises must not be on the readings the students choose to present.

b. **Individual Presentations (20%)**
   Students are required to give a total of two (2) 30-minute presentations over the course of a semester (12 weeks excluding the first seminar which will be a full-length lecture-cum-discussion by the instructor). The presentations can be on the books, which students have selected to write their book reviews on. Each 30-minute presentation will be followed by a 10-15 minute question and answer session. Students have to prepare powerpoint slides for their presentations. Student presenters are expected to lead class discussions.

c. **Review Essays (20%)**
   Students are required to submit two book review essays (1,000 words each) on the two books they elect to do their presentations. The review essays should reflect students’ critical analysis and discussion of the issues examined in the books.

d. **Participation in class discussions (10%)**
Students are expected to participate in class discussions and any activities conducted within the classroom.

c. Research Paper (30%)
   Students are required to submit a final research paper of 5,000 words, exclusive of citations and bibliography. The topic of this paper must be related to one or several themes examined in this course.

*Note 1: students who are presenting on specific books must identify four chapters from these books which will be required readings for the rest of the class. If presenters found relevant articles which can be used, the article can constitute one of the four chapters, which means that the rest of the class will read the article plus three chapters. The choice of chapters should be made at least one week in advance and should be scanned and sent to the rest of the class (adventure or google drive can be used for sharing of these documents).

*Note 2: should students encounter difficulties locating the books, please contact me. Alternative readings can be considered for book reviews, preces, and presentations. These can come from the list under “Other Books of Interest”, or individually sourced by students. In the latter case, please get approval from me before proceeding.

Other Books of Interest
