Welcome

Congratulations! You’re in the Honors Program, and you have enrolled in Honors Survey of Civilization, 9 units of Honors GE in one class.

Team-taught and multidisciplinary, HSC gives you a coherent story of the monuments and movements of civilization. While you may be familiar with some of what we cover, you will come to see how what you know fits into a bigger picture.

We will share our Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings together. For the first hour, you may complete any quizzes, read new discussion board posts by your classmates, and comment. At 10 am, click on the class Zoom link on the Welcome page for class discussion, and we will talk about the readings and ideas of the course in what we hope to be a fascinating, lively, and comfortable way you will enjoy. Let’s all do our best for each other!

Preview of the Story:

We will begin our look at civilization with the millions of years of pre-civilization. In those millions of years, we became biologically differentiated from other primate species with our own innate human nature. Humans lived in little bands of hunters and gatherers—a way of life that sustained us as a species for almost 200,000 years.

We will move onto the momentous invention of agriculture that plummeted us to our current place in the world. By laboriously managing nature, humans could vastly increase their food supply and the number of people nature could support. Yet this caused some major problems: How were large urban agricultural societies to be fed, sheltered, and clothed? How were these urbanized humans to make socially important decisions and control themselves? How were they to feel and understand and find meaning in their new relationships to each other and nature?

After looking at The Epic of Gilgamesh and readings from The Hebrew Bible to see how the ancient Middle Eastern civilizations attempted to
answer these three questions, we will move onto Classical Greece and Rome to see the beginnings of distinctly western civilization which reached a level of material development that would not be achieved again for almost a thousand years.

Following the collapse of the Classical world, we will look at the rise of Christianity as it merges with Germanic traditions and the rubble of Classical civilization. A unique social, cultural, and political life begins to emerge in the Medieval era, complexified by increasing troubles between Christian beliefs, Jewish traditions, and the Muslim world, a collision that results in a perilous series of crusades for control of Europe and North Africa. The horrors of the Black Plague force further change to society, but also make way for cultural shifts including a rebirth of interest in classical culture and art, politics, and new economic advances.

A period of destruction and rebirth, the Renaissance opens up the entire world to the heights and depths of human experience and personality.

We will continue the story with the Enlightenment, the American and French Revolutions, the invention of free market economics, and the Neoclassical and Romantic movements.

Finally, through the Industrial Revolution, which enabled humans to make use of fossil fuels, masses of people are able to enjoy the material benefits of civilization, and for a time, in much of the western world, a politically and economically viable middle class emerges. However, competing political and economic ideologies begin to emerge in the early 20th century, and nationalistic conflicts bring about two world wars and the power to destroy our species.

We end with a brief look at where civilization might be headed and what new answers might be offered to answer civilization’s basic questions.

Some Tips for Doing Well in HSC

Select an appropriate study environment and study regularly
Psychological research on attention strongly suggests that multitasking is not consistent with focusing, the essence of studying.

Attend Class
Showing up is necessary to do much of the coursework such as contributing to class discussions and learning. If you are unable to attend a class session, let us know as soon as possible.
Attend in class

We expect you to focus on class discussion during class time. Listen and participate without distractions such as activities on phones. We start class discussion at 10 am and end at 11:50 am. When you need a break, you do not need to excuse yourself; turn off your video while you get your tea, and get back to us when you can. When you’re present, have your video on unless there is a technical problem that makes this impossible.

Read

HSC is predicated on the idea that reading great texts is essential to a university education. Prepare for a minimum of 5 hours of reading per week. “Doing the reading” consists of more than merely understanding the sentences as you read them. You may need to reread to see major claims, reasons for them, and conceptual connections. We recommend reading the material in hardcopy, so that you can underline and make marginal comments on the text. Quiz yourself on the material and talk to others about it. Read the poetry and plays aloud if you can. Read the literature, not online descriptions of it.

HSC Expectations for You

In HSC we aim to teach you a very interesting and provocative story about humanity. We expect you to learn this story and the support for it, so you can retell it, question it, build on it, amend it, and contribute to it throughout your life. Play your part this semester and you will learn a lot and earn good grades.

Satisfying 9 units of your lower division Honors GE requirements, HSC actively strives to further many of the GE program’s Student Learning Outcomes including Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Personal and Social Responsibility, Sustainability, Diversity, and Global Engagement. In order to successfully complete HSC you will in your assignments, exams and classroom performance over the course of the semester show

1. “the ability to question, investigate and draw well-reasoned conclusions and to formulate ideas through effective written communications appropriate to the intended audience.”

2. the ability to identify “issues and problems raised in written texts, visual media and other forms of discourse, and assess the relevance, adequacy and credibility of arguments and evidence used in reaching conclusions.”

3. “the knowledge and skills necessary to take responsibility for one’s own life and actions, and to recognize the opportunities and responsibilities to become engaged in our various local, regional, national, and international communities.”
4. the ability to “describe and explain the environmental dynamics associated with human activities, and assess the value of balancing social and economic demands with the Earth’s ability to sustain physical and biological resources and cultural diversity.”

5. the ability to understand and work with “different intellectual viewpoints as well as the unique perspectives of others based on varied experiences, identities and social attributes.”

6. the “knowledge and skills to engage global cultures and peoples.”

**Grades**

The HSC grading system favors consistent, high-quality, day-to-day performance over short-term cramming for exams. Miss or do poorly on enough essays, assignments, and quizzes and you will be in academic trouble. This means that although we do have a final exam, if you take only the final seriously and blow off the daily assignments, you will be unpleasantly surprised by your final semester grades. In short, you will profit more from relying on doing as well as you can every day than from acing the final. Doing well on quizzes is overwhelmingly a matter of reading the material assigned.

Because of HSC’s interdisciplinary nature and flexibility in meeting GE requirements, you will get the same semester grade for each of the three honors courses that make up the 9 units of HSC: HNRS 200 C, D, and E.

Check your scores under My Grades on the class Blackboard site for HNRS 200C to help you determine what you may have missed and verify your scores.

Here is how we weight what makes up your semester grade:

- 10% Participation
- 40% Multiple choice quizzes and written assignments on history, art, philosophy, etc.
- 40% Literature quizzes and essays
- 10% Final
Participation
Participation includes coming to class through Zoom and being prepared to talk about ideas, ask questions, listen respectfully, and try out new ways of thinking with your classmates and faculty. Also, we will consider your participation on the discussion board when grading participation at the end of the semester.

Planning Ahead: How to Find When and What is Due
All online HSC materials can be found on the Blackboard Learn site for only HNRS-200 C. We won’t use the sites for HNRS-200 D and E. Look ahead through the sixteen weeks to see when there is a lot of reading due, when written assignments are due, and when we will have the final.

Since much of what we will post on Blackboard Learn will be in PDF format, your computer will need Adobe Acrobat Reader. You want to use a fast computer connection but not your phone since Blackboard Learn does not work well on phones. Call IT Support Services at 530-898-4357 or email itss@csuchico.edu for computer problems.

Although details of the course may be revised as we go along, we will let you know as soon as we can of any changes.

When you see readings—even lengthy texts such as novels—listed on a day of the weekly calendar, you should finish those assigned readings before class that day.

While due dates for written assignments are listed on the weekly calendar, more detailed information on the written assignments can be found under “Assignments” on the Welcome page. Also, under “Assignments,” you will find “Literature Study Questions” to guide your reading and help you prepare for the literature quizzes.

Quizzes will appear under the numbered weeks of the semester 24 hours before they are due. Typically, you will have one or two quizzes due every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning. Quizzes will cover the reading due that day or any previous material.
Literature quizzes will require you to write a few brief paragraphs in response. You will post your written response to a literature quiz on the discussion board by 9:15 am. After you post your quiz, you will be able to see how your classmates responded and comment on their responses.

Multiple choice quizzes will be due by 9:30 am. Once you start a multiple choice quiz, you will have fifteen minutes to complete it.

Completing the quizzes on time will prepare you for class discussion at 10 am through Zoom. Late multiple choice quizzes will not be accepted except under extraordinary circumstances, but your two lowest multiple choice quiz scores will be dropped. Late literature quizzes, essays, and written assignments will be accepted with points deducted for lateness.

**Books**

You can purchase the following texts from the AS Bookstore in the section labeled Honors Survey of Civilization or Honors 200C.

Lectures covering the art history, history, and philosophy components of HSC are posted on the class Blackboard Learn site for HNRS 200C. These Text-Lectures should be treated as a textbook.

The following texts are **required**:

- *Twelfth Night* by Shakespeare
- *Candide* by Voltaire
- *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte
- *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe
- *Oryx and Crake* by Atwood
- *The Worldly Philosophers* by Heilbroner (WP)
- Text-Lectures (TX)

Supplemental Readings, denoted by S in the syllabus calendar, are found in the folder labeled “Supplemental Readings” in Blackboard Learn for HNRS 200 C.

(The underlined abbreviations appearing after some of the texts above are the ones used in the weekly calendar.)
Other Supplies
In addition to the texts listed above and paper for downloading material off Blackboard Learn, you will need a computer with a good internet connection that will enable you to Zoom for class discussion.

HSC Office Hours
Office hours for Tricia and Heather appear on the Welcome page of the class website. Also, we can meet by appointment. Please let us know if you want to talk or need some help. We would be happy to help you with your writing or any other challenge.

University Policies and Campus Resources
Academic Integrity
Students are expected to be familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. Your commitment to learning and CSU, Chico’s Academic Integrity Policy require you to be honest in all your academic coursework. The policy on academic integrity and other resources related to student conduct is at http://www.csuchico.edu.sjd/integrity.shtml.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please talk with ARC (Accessibility Resource Center) as soon as possible. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the ARC Office to establish a record of their disability. Disability Support Services are at 530-898-5959 or arcdept@csuchico.edu.

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting
As instructors one of our responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. We hope you will feel able to share your life experiences in classroom discussions, your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. We will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, we are required to share information regarding sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking with the university. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting the Counseling and Wellness Center (530-898-6345) or Safe Place (530-898-3030). Information on campus reporting obligations and other Title IX related resources are available here: www.csuchio.edu/title-ix.
A Parting Word

We have tried to give you an accurate picture of HSC. We have told you what you need to know to get started. We are all going to work hard, learn a lot, and have a great semester. We are off and running!

PS: A bit about your instructors

Heather Altfeld has degrees in Anthropology and Writing and has been teaching at CSU, Chico for fifteen years now. She is a poet and essayist, and has two books of poetry, “Post-Mortem” (out in November 2020!) and “The Disappearing Theatre” (2016). You can find some of her essays in the 2019 Best American Essays, Orion Magazine, Aeon Magazine, Conjunctions, Narrative Magazine, and on her website at www.heatheraltfeld.com When not teaching, she spends time with her daughters, gardens, cooks, reads weird books on medical history, goes hiking and tries to write.

Kirk Monfort went to the University of Oklahoma to kill a year while he awaited an appointment to West Point. But he discovered he loved college so much he never wanted to leave. There was so much to learn. Curious about everything, he couldn’t pick a major, so he triple majored in history, literature, and philosophy. Still undecided, he went to Stanford for a Ph.D in Philosophy and Humanities. He still cannot make up his mind about a major. Sixty years after his first college semester, he still hasn’t left.

Tricia Sweet grew up in Paradise, the town that burned. At Chico State, she studied English literature, and her husband studied painting and sculpture. Currently, her son is a history and political science major at Chico State. Her favorite writers are Shakespeare, Jane Austen, and Thomas Hardy. She likes rabbits and killer whales. This will be her 25th year of teaching.