

**Advanced Placement World History
Summer Assignments
Mr. Brosnahan**

Welcome to AP World History for the 2012-2013 school year. If you haven't realized it yet, you will be doing an astonishing amount of work in preparation for the May 2013 AP World History Exam. This begins NOW. That is, your summer reading begins your quest for a "5" on the AP World Exam!!!

Summer Reading:

Jared Diamond's ***Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*** (1999)

This book prepares you to confront and evaluate history as it relates to the Five AP World History

Themes:

Theme 1: Interaction Between Humans and the Environment

Theme 2: Development and Interaction of Cultures

Theme 3: State-Building, Expansion, and Conflict

Theme 4: Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems

Theme 5: Development and Transformation of Social Structures

Guns, Germs and Steel

PBS Video: Also available at many libraries is a National Geographic/PBS video narrated by Jared Diamond entitled *Guns, Germs and Steel*. The website with information and resources can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/gunsgermsteel/>. You may be able to find it on the internet somewhere and it should also be available in most of your local public libraries.

Assignment:

As you read *Guns Germs and Steel*, you will answer the focus questions based on your reading of the chapters in an organized informal written journal. Each of these questions should be answered with reference to the book (meaning quote from the book or just write the page number where the answer is) and explain with your own thoughts. This is to help you through the book, this will be checked during discussion in the first days of class.

Focus questions for journal:

1. What are the other commonly espoused answers to "*Yali's question*," and how does Jared Diamond address and refute each of them?
2. Why does Diamond hypothesize that New Guineans might be, on the average, "smarter" than Westerners?
3. Why is it important to differentiate between proximate and ultimate causes?
4. Do you find some of Diamond's methodologies more compelling than others? Which, and why?
5. What is the importance of the order of the chapters? Why, for example, is "Collision at Cajamarca"— which describes events that occur thousands of years after those described in the subsequent chapters—placed where it is?
6. How are Polynesian Islands "an experiment of history"? What conclusions does Diamond draw from their history?
7. How does Diamond challenge our assumptions about the transition from hunter-gathering to farming?
8. How is farming an "auto-catalytic" process? How does this account for the great disparities in societies, as well as for the possibilities of parallel evolution?
9. Why did almonds prove domesticable while acorns were not? What significance does this have?
10. How does Diamond explain the fact that domesticable American apples and grapes were not domesticated until the arrival of Europeans?
11. What were the advantages enjoyed by the Fertile Crescent that allowed it to be the earliest site of development for most of the building blocks of civilization? How does Diamond explain the fact that it was nevertheless Europe and not Southwest Asia that ended up spreading its culture to the rest of the world?
12. How does Diamond refute the argument that the failure to domesticate certain animals arose from cultural differences? What does the modern failure to domesticate, for example, the eland suggest about the reasons why some peoples independently developed domestic animals and others did not?
13. What is the importance of the "Anna Karenina principle"?

14. How does comparing mutations help one trace the spread of agriculture?
15. How does civilization lead to epidemics?
16. How does Diamond's theory that invention is, in fact, the mother of necessity bear upon the traditional "heroic" model of invention?
17. According to Diamond, how does religion evolve along with increasingly complex societies?
18. How is linguistic evidence used to draw conclusions about the spread of peoples in China, Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and Africa?
19. What is the significance of the differing outcomes of Austronesian expansion in Indonesia and New Guinea?
20. How does Diamond explain China's striking unity and Europe's persistent disunity? What consequences do these conditions have for world history?
21. How does Diamond refute the charge that Australia is proof that differences in the fates of human societies are a matter of people and not environment? In what other areas of the world could Diamond's argument be used?
22. What aspects of Diamond's evidence do lay readers have to take on faith? Which aspects are explained?
23. Diamond offers two tribes, the Chimbu and the Daribi, as examples of differing receptivities to innovation. Do you think he would accept larger, continent-wide differences in receptivity? Why or why not? How problematic might cultural factors prove for Diamond's arguments?
24. How, throughout the book, does Diamond address the issues he discusses in the last few pages of his final chapter, when he proposes a science of human history?

Critical Review Essay

After reading the book, incorporate answers to the following questions in an essay. Your essay must have a thesis statement, support paragraphs that include EVIDENCE from the book that must be **properly cited**. DO NOT answer these questions in sequence, but address them together in an essay that both ANALYZES and EVALUATES Diamond's book. Avoid just re-summarizing the book. This is due on the first day of class.

The paper should be at least **4 full, typed, double-spaced pages in length**.

1. What is the thesis of the book---what is the author arguing or trying to prove? How do you know this?
2. Does the author prove his argument?
3. Are there examples of bias in the book? How do you know this?
4. With what particular period(s) does the book deal?
5. Is the account given in broad outline or in detail? How do you know this?
6. What types of sources are used to support the book? Would you consider these valid sources? Why?
7. Is social, political, intellectual, technological or economic history the emphasis of the book? Why?
8. Are dates used extensively and if so, are they used intelligently-can you follow what has transpired, are they helpful?
9. Are maps, illustrations, and charts used and how are these to be evaluated? Are they helpful?
10. What is your opinion of the book (reflect before you answer)? Discuss two aspects you liked and two aspects you did not like. Why?

Geography: The second week of school, there will be a world geography quiz. You must study all of the countries of the world, major land forms (oceans, mountains, rivers, deserts, etc...) There are many online resources to help you with the geography of the world. If you do not know world geography, there is no way you will succeed in AP World History. It would be a good idea to periodically review your geography knowledge!!!