

**SABANCI UNIVERSITY**  
**SPS 101A / Humanity and Society I**  
**SPRING 2024**  
**Top Hat: 766201**

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**Lectures:** On campus on Mondays, 9:40 and 11:30, at FMAN 1099

**Discussion Sections:** A1-A5: Tuesdays 14:40-16:30  
A6-A10: Tuesdays 16:40-18:30

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**Office hours** with instructors by email appointment

**Coordinator:** Caner Hazar [caner.hazar@sabanciuniv.edu](mailto:caner.hazar@sabanciuniv.edu)

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**Technical Assistant:** Burhan İzgin [burhan.izgin@sabanciuniv.edu](mailto:burhan.izgin@sabanciuniv.edu)

**Course Description:** This course provides an introduction to the study of the human experience in the pre-modern world. It brings together various disciplinary approaches and major topics of the pre-modern world in a roughly chronological order. There are three central aims of this course. The first aim is to present our students the challenges and potential in the scientific study of human experience through the introduction of various analytical tools from disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology, and economics. The idea is to show to our students that the human experience is as much the realm of scientific inquiry and critical thinking as it is the case with the natural world. The second aim is to introduce the basic dynamics of the pre-modern world before the 19<sup>th</sup> century so that students would be adequately equipped to follow our consecutive course SPS 102 about the modern era and the concept of modernity. Finally, this course also aims to emphasize the structured use of language, in this case English, for the purposes of knowledge production and critical analysis. It accepts the role of language in humanities and social sciences as important as calculus is for physics. To that end, it pays special attention to critical reading and writing as evident from the course structure.

**Grading:** The components of the final course grade are as follows:

Midterm examinations:	50%	(1 <sup>st</sup> midterm 25%, 2 <sup>nd</sup> midterm 25%)
Writing Assignments:	30%	(Guided Summary: 15% + Synthesis Paper: 15%)
Discussion sessions:	20%	(eleven discussion ‘weeks’, of which six are graded, five best will count x 4% each)
In-lecture Top Hat bonus questions:	4%	(Four random <i>Top Hat</i> questions x 1% each)
Bonus video assignment:	6%	(Read, listen and record assignment)

**Course Requirements:** Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each lecture and actively participate in discussion sections, take two midterm exams, and submit a guided summary and synthesis paper. No mandatory attendance is taken for the lectures, but students who miss more than five discussion sections (or more than 10 discussion hours) will automatically get a zero from all their discussion section grades. In addition, those who miss five or more discussion sections and both midterm examinations without a valid excuse will fail the course and be considered NA. Attend your discussions on time, late attendance (10 minutes rule) will not be tolerated.

**Course Components:**

Midterm examinations: There will be two midterm examinations in this course to be conducted face-to-face on campus. Each midterm examination constitutes 25% of the course grade. In terms of the examination format, each midterm will consist of short questions and long essay questions. Students will be graded based on their comprehension of the content and their ability to formulate analytical arguments based on that content from the readings, lectures, and discussion sections.

Writing Assignments: Students are expected to complete two writing assignments based on the readings of this course. The first step of this component is the in-class submission of a guided summary (week 6), and the second step is the submission of a synthesis paper (week 13). Both writing assignments are considered as exams. Each step is graded separately. These assignments will prepare you for the more advanced academic writing assignments of our follow-up course SPS 102. Please make sure to read 'SPS 101 Writing Assignments guidelines' on SUCourse for more details.

Discussion sessions: Discussion sessions are student-centered learning hours conducted by SPS facilitators. There will be a total of eleven discussion sessions. Every discussion session will consist of two hours and of these eleven sections, six random sections will have graded exercises. To this end students are expected to bring their (fully charged) laptop or tablet (no phone!) to the discussion class. The five best of these six will be counted towards your grade. The other sections will be discussion and skills-learning based meetings. The graded weeks will be worth 4% each. Students are expected to watch the recorded tutorial videos before the discussion sections. Students may also be asked to finish one or more of the assigned readings before the discussion sections. Attendance will be taken regularly during each hour of the discussion sessions. Students who miss more than five discussion sections (or more than 10 discussion hours in total) will automatically get a zero from all their discussion section grades. Students will not be allowed into the discussion sections after ten minutes following the start of the section meeting. No exceptions will be made to this rule.

Lectures: Lectures constitute the backbone of this course. They are central to the design of the course and the content delivered in the lectures will be tested in the midterm examinations. Lecture attendance is not mandatory, but four random in-lecture questions will be asked at random lecture hours throughout the course through the Top Hat system. These are small quizzes that aim to test your comprehension of the lecture and they are not conducted for attendance. Cheating will not be tolerated. Students will not be allowed in the classroom after the first 10 minutes of the lectures. Those who are late to the class and are not admitted to the lecture hall can follow the second hour of the lecture after the break.

Reading assignments: Students are expected to do all the readings. Readings are designed to be complementary to the lectures and discussion sessions. A better understanding of any topic is only possible by completing the readings and they are a great source for the writing assignments. In addition, midterms will have questions based on the reading material.

Audio-Visual Media Sources: There are videos listed for each week in the syllabus. These audio-visual media materials are assigned to enhance both your understanding of each week's topics as well as your audio-visual media literacy skills. Parts of these media can be used in the discussion sections as well.

Bonus video assignment: Technical issues will not be accepted as excuses for not submitting any writing assignments or examinations on time. Additional time (with penalty) for such issues is already provided for some components of this course. To make up for any lost points a read, listen and record assignment will be provided for a total of 6 points. A video will be provided by the course lecturers commenting on one of the course readings accompanied by a set of questions. Students will be expected to record a 5-minute long response to the question provided in the lecturer's video. This assignment will be available on SUCourse by week 5. Please see the SPS 101 Bonus Assignment Guidelines on SUCourse for more details.

**Make-Up Policy:** Make-ups are only allowed for midterms and assignments to students with an official report from or approved by the University Health Center for the date of the exam / assignment in question and those with an official permission notice from the university for participation in a university event on the date of the exam / assignment in question. Students are not allowed to take any form of examination or submit assignments on the days that they have documented excuses. No exceptions will be made to these rules. The makeup exam will be cumulative, meaning that students will be responsible for the content of the entire course in the makeup exam. The format of the makeup exam may be different from the midterms too. There will be no makeup for the makeup exam. The makeup assignment for the writing assignments is cumulative. For the discussion worksheets, students with an official report from or approved by the University Health Center or an official permission notice from the university for participation in a university event for the date of a discussion section will receive the average points they have received in their other section worksheets throughout the semester only if less than 5 graded worksheets are present for the entire semester. Those who already have 5 worksheet grades will not have make-up adjustments in their grades.

**Objection Policy:** Students are only allowed to object to their midterm and writing assignment grades. Grade bargaining is absolutely not tolerated. All objections must have a solid basis. Objections must be submitted by email to the relevant facilitator and must be followed by an (online) meeting. The facilitators who graded the assignment in question initially assess the objections. The SPS course coordinator makes a second assessment if need be. All objections must be made within the announced periods of time.

**Assigned Readings:** The SPS 101 reader includes all the required readings listed below and these readings will be accessible from the SUCourse page of the course. Readings should be done before the lecture for which they are assigned. See the schedule of readings and lectures below.

**Grading Scale:** Final grades will be calculated using the following point distribution:

90-100	A
86-89	A-
82-85	B+
78-81	B
74-77	B-
70-73	C+
66-69	C
62-65	C-
58-61	D+
54-57	D
0-53	F

**Academic Integrity:** Cases of plagiarism and cheating will automatically be penalized with a 0 (zero) from the assignment/ examination and also the entire grade component related to that assignment/examination. In addition to that, these cases will be directly referred to the Dean's Office for disciplinary action. Students might be called for a random oral interview for any of the assignments of this course if deemed necessary by the instructors. It should be noted that using (a part of) an assignment or exam submitted before to this or another course is not allowed and is considered as self-plagiarism. Please also be informed that overreliance on external editing and proofreading will be penalized accordingly. This SPS course does not tolerate any breach of academic integrity. For the university's Academic Integrity Statement, see:

<http://www.sabanciuniv.edu/en/academic-integrity-statement>

**AI-based Technologies in Education:** In the SPS courses you are only allowed to use AI tools when explicitly stated in the assignment and indicated by your course instructors and facilitators. Please read "FDD's Position

Statement on AI-Based Technologies in Education” to guide you in deciding if and when to use AI tools in academic contexts:

[https://fdd.sabanciuniv.edu/peers/ai\\_statement](https://fdd.sabanciuniv.edu/peers/ai_statement)

NB: It is strictly forbidden to record, distribute or share course content (including the lectures) without permission from the course instructors.

**Important Disclaimer:** Amendments could be made to this syllabus. Please follow email and SUCourse announcements throughout the semester.

## Course Outline and Readings

### Week 1 – (19 February):

Lecture 1: What is SPS, why SPS and how does it work?

Lecture 2: The big picture: The transition from pre-modern to modern societies

\* Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, (E-book: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), pp. 20-48.

\* Clive Ponting: *A New Green History of the World* (London: Penguin Books, 2007): Chapter 3: “Ninety-Nine percent of human history”, pp. 17-35

\* Video: ‘What Happened Before History? Human Origins’ *Kurzgesagt – In a Nutshell*, last modified 2016 ([Click me](#))

### Week 2 – (26 February):

Lecture 1: The longest period of human history: Hunter and gatherers

Lecture 2: The great transition: Agricultural revolution and beyond

\* Peter Stearns et al., *World Civilizations, The Global Experience* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. 2011): Chapter 1: “The Neolithic Revolution and the Birth of Civilization”, pp. 10-26.

\* Video: ‘Origins of agriculture,’ *World History / Khan Academy*, 2017 ([Click me](#))

\* Video: ‘Catalhoyuk: The Story of the Oldest Civilization on Earth?’ *26 Dimensions*, 2020 ([Click me](#))

### Week 3 – (4 March):

Lecture 1: A man-made habitat: Emergence of cities and civilization

Lecture 2: Historicizing state: Theories on the origin of states

\* J. Donald Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World: Humankind’s Changing Role in the Community of Life* (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 30-51.

\* Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, (E-book: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), pp. 225-250.

### Week 4 – (11 March):

Lecture 1: Early Afro-Eurasian empires

Lecture 2: On cultural and material exchange in pre-modern societies: markets, trade and interactions

\* Peter Stearns et al. *World Civilizations, The Global Experience* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. 2011) Chapter 4: “Unification and the Consolidation of Civilization in China” pp. 80-100; Chapter 7: “Rome and its Empire”, pp. 146-162.

\* William J. Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008), pp. 20-42.

\* [Video](#), ‘The Silk Road and Ancient Trade,’ *Crash Course World History Episode 9*, 2012 ([Click me](#))

### **Week 5 – (18 March):**

Lecture 1: What is culture? How meanings shape human behavior.

Lecture 2: Religion as culture and practice. Early belief systems and world religions.

\* Yuval N. Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, (London: Vintage Books, 2014), pp. 22-44.

\* Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), pp. 33-44, 207-216.

\* Raymond Williams, “Culture is Ordinary” (1958), in Ben Highmore ed., *The Everyday Life Reader* (Psychology Press, 2002), pp. 91-100.

### **Week 6 – (25 March):**

Lecture 1: Afro-Eurasian macro systems

Lecture 2: A general outlook: Pre-modern economies

\* Peter Stearns et al., *World Civilizations, The Global Experience* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. 2011), pp. 328-349.

\* Clive Ponting, *World History: A New Perspective*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), pp. 250-257, 355-376.

\* Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nisancıoğlu, *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), pp. 67-77.

\* [Video](#): ‘Int'l Commerce, Snorkeling Camels, and The Indian Ocean Trade,’ *Crash Course World History # 18*, 2012 ([Click me](#))

<b>Guided Summary, during discussion sections</b>
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### **Week 7 – (1 April):**

Lecture 1: Stratification and gender in pre-modern societies

Lecture 2: Protest and rebellions in pre-modern societies

\* Peter N. Stearns, *Gender in World History (Second Edition)* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 10-19.

\* Carlo Ginzburg: *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (Baltimore, 1980), Preface to English Edition, Chapters 1-2, 7-8.

\* Patricia Crone, *Pre-Industrial Societies: Anatomy of the Pre-Modern World*, (London: Oneworld Publications, 2014), pp. 124-143 (ePub edition).

\* [Video](#): ‘When did civilisation begin to restrict women's rights?’ Clip from “The Ascent of Woman”, 2015 ([Click me](#))

<b>First Midterm: 6 April</b>
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### **Week 8 – (15 April):**

Lecture 1: Expanding frontiers and the Columbian Exchange I

Lecture 2: Expanding frontiers and the Columbian Exchange II

\* Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, (London: Praeger, 2003), pp. 3-34.

\* Video: 'The Columbian Exchange,' *Crash Course World History* #23, 2012 ([Click me](#))

### **Week 9 – (22 April):**

Lecture 1: The Renaissance

Lecture 2: The Reformation

\* Richard W. Bulliet et al., *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History* (2011), pp. 449-455.

\* Gerard Delanty, Chapter 6: "The Renaissance and the Rise of European Consciousness," *Formations of European Modernity* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 109-131.

\* Video: 'Political Theory - Niccolò Machiavelli,' *The School of Life*, 2015 ([Click me](#))

### **Week 10 – (29 April):**

Lecture 1: On early modern transformations: Maritime empires and resilient empires

Lecture 2: Atlantic Trade: Proto-globalization and the new economy

\* Richard W. Bulliet et al., *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History (Fifth Edition)* (Boston MA: Wadsworth-Cengage Learning, 2011), pp. 446-468.

\* Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, (London: Vintage Books, 2014), pp. 341-373.

\* Video: 'The triangle trade and the colonial table, sugar, tea, and slavery,' *Smart History*, 2018 ([Click me](#))

\* Video: 'Impact of the Slave Trade: Through a Ghanaian Lens,' *World History Project*, 2019 ([Click me](#))

### **Week 11 – (6 May):**

Lecture 1: Scientific Revolution I

Lecture 2: Scientific Revolution II

\* R. R. Palmer, Joel Colton and Lloyd Kramer, *A History of the Modern World*, Vol. 1 to 1815 (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2007), pp. 225-255.

\* Video: 'The Scientific Revolution,' *Crash Course History of Science Episode # 12*, 2018 ([Click me](#)).

### **Week 12 – (13 May):**

Lecture 1: Enlightenment I

Lecture 2: Enlightenment II

\* Kieron O'Hara, *The Enlightenment: A Beginner's Guide* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2010), pp. 1-22.

\* Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (New York: McClelland & Stewart, 2014), 'The Ideal of Progress' and 'And They Lived Happily Ever After'.

\* Video: 'The Scientific Revolution and the Age of Enlightenment,' *World History | Khan Academy*, 2017 ([Click me](#)).

### **Week 13 – (20 May):**

Lecture 1: The Age of Revolutions: Concepts and Frameworks

Lecture 2: The Age of Revolutions: The American and the French cases

- \* Jack Goldstone, "The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 8, 1982, pp. 187-207.
- \* Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution* (Vintage, 1996), pp. 117-131.
- \* Video: '1750-1900: Enlightenment and Revolution,' *Khan Academy*, 2019 ([Click me](#))

<b>Synthesis Paper during discussion sections</b>
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**Week 14** – (27 May):

Lecture 1: The Age of Nationalisms  
 Lecture 2: The Nation State

- \* Bonnie G. Smith et al., *World in the Making: A Global History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 910-949.

<b>Second Midterm (in the final exam period, date will be announced on SUCourse)</b>
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**Suggested optional readings**

- \* **Week 1:** Brian M. Fagan and Nadia Durrani, *World Prehistory: A Brief Introduction* (London & New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 175-204.
- \* **Week 2:** Michael Cook, *A Brief History of the Human Race* (New York - London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), pp. 3-37.
- \* **Week 6:** Lynda Shaffer, 'Southernization,' *Journal of World History* Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1994) pp. 1-21.
- \* **Week 8:** Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, (E-book: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), pp. 306-325.
- \* **Week 10:** Ben Teensma and John Anderson, *Navigator: The Log of John Anderson, VOC Pilot-Major, 1640-1643* (Leiden: BRILL, 2010), pp. 3-9.
- \* **Week 12:** Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment," *Berlinische Monatschifte*, 1784.
- \* **Week 13:** John Coatsworth et al., *Global Connections: Volume 2, Since 1500: Politics, Exchange, and Social Life in World History* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 202-211.

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**Discussion Session Outline and Important Dates**

**Week 1 - (20 February):** Introduction & The big picture

- Two-hour discussion session.

**Week 2 - (27 February):** Hunters & gatherers and the Agricultural Revolution

- Two-hour discussion session.

**Week 3 - (5 March):** Cities, civilizations & states

- Two-hour discussion session.

**Week 4 - (12 March):** Early Afro-Eurasian empires & exchange



- Two-hour discussion session.

<b>Voluntary Guided Summary, online submission, Sunday 17 March (5pm)</b>
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**Week 5 – (19 March):** Culture and religion

- Two-hour discussion session.

**Week 6 - (26 March):** Afro-Eurasian Macrosystems

- 1-hour discussion session before Guided Summary.

<b>Guided Summary, during discussion classes</b>
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**Week 7 - (2 April):** Gender and protest

- Two-hour discussion session.

<b>First midterm: 6 April</b>
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**Week 8 – (16 April):** The Columbian Exchange

- Two-hour discussion session.

<b>Feedback sessions on Guided Summary</b> through feedback sessions this week
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**Week 9 – (23 April):** no DS (national holiday)

**Week 10 – (30 April):** Maritime Empires and Atlantic Trade

- Two-hour discussion session.

**Week 11 – (7 May):** Scientific Revolution

- Two-hour discussion session.

**Week 12 – (14 May):** The Enlightenment

- Two-hour discussion session.

**Week 13 – (21 May):**

<b>Synthesis Paper during discussion sections</b>
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<b>Bonus assignment deadline Sunday 26 May, 11:55 pm</b>
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**Week 14 – (28 May):** No DS

<b>Feedback sessions on the Synthesis Paper</b> with SL facilitators during finals period
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<b>Second midterm (In the finals week, date will be announced on SUCourse)</b>
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<b>Golden rules for Discussion Sessions</b>
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**- Don't be late**

No students are allowed into the classroom after the first 10 minutes. Be punctual and respect the classroom etiquette.

**- Communicate in English**

Language is best learned with practice. Discussion sessions are safe environments to make mistakes and ask questions. Use this opportunity and communicate in English.

**- Be patient and follow the instructions**

You will be writing, listening, reading and talking a lot in an academic environment. It will initially feel intimidating and hard. Be patient, follow the instructions and work hard. Your language skills will improve throughout the semester, and you will find things easier as you get used to the assignments, the terminology, and the overall logic of the course.

**How to follow your grade performance**

Freshman year can be overwhelming and demanding. It is always wise to keep a close track of your own performance throughout the course. Below is a simplified formula that will help you predict or calculate your grade. This formula is just a helping tool. It is not definitive and subject to change. Please make sure to consult the actual grading rubric and/or the course coordinator for more accurate information. The formula is as follows:

MT: Midterm examination

$$(\text{Sum of best 5 discussion worksheet grades}) + [(\text{MT1} \times 0.25) + (\text{MT2} \times 0.25)] + (\text{Sum of writing assignment components}) + (\text{sum of bonus Top Hat}) + (\text{bonus video assignment})$$

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. All University Courses contain certain themes that overlap with these goals.

This chart shows how **SPS 101** course content relates to these goals.



Week	Course Content	Sustainable Development Goals						
1	What is SPS?	13	16					
2	Agricultural Revolution	3	4	5	12	13	15	
3	Cities & States	1	2	6	11	12	15	
4	Empires, Money & Trade	1	10					
5	Culture and Religion	10						
6	Afro-Eurasian macro systems & Medieval Asia	8	14	15				
7	Stratification, gender and protest	2	5	10	16			
8	Columbian Exchange	12	13					
9	Renaissance & Reformation	4						
10	Atlantic Trade & Maritime Empires	2	8	12				
11	Scientific Revolution	4						
12	Enlightenment	5						
13	Age of Revolutions	16						
14	Nationalisms & Nation State	10	16					