

Introduction to World History (A000455)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 3.0

Study time 90 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Slotman, Dineke Riët

LW03

staff member

Ryckbosch, Wouter

LW03

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Arabic and Islamic Studies)	3	A
Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject China (China Track))	3	A
Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject China (UGent Track))	3	A
Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject India)	3	A
Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Japan)	3	A
Bachelor of Arts in African Languages and Cultures	3	A
Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology	3	A
Bachelor of Arts in History	3	A
Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences	3	A
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy	3	A
Bachelor of Science in Communication Science	3	A
Bachelor of Science in Political Science	3	A
Bachelor of Science in Sociology	3	A
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject African Languages and Cultures)	3	A
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies)	3	A
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject East European Languages and Cultures)	3	A
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Oriental Languages and Cultures)	3	A
Linking Course Master of Arts in Gender and Diversity	3	A
Linking Course Master of Arts in Language, Diversity and Policy	3	A
Elective Set History	3	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

History, global processes, globalisation, big history

Position of the course

This foundational course familiarizes students with the broad outlines of human history from a global perspective. This is achieved in four stages:

- Providing an overview of the key issues and debates within world history.
- Offering insight into how perspectives on the past are shaped by historical change, and how national and global historiography are formed as a result.
- Introducing students to the various approaches and methodologies through which a history from a global perspective can be constructed.
- Teaching students to reflect critically on the place of global society within

historical and socialscientific explanatory models.

Contents

The structure of the course illustrates that it aims to be both an “introduction to” and a “concise overview of” world history. On the one hand, the lectures follow a chronological survey of the major processes of change in human history; on the other hand, each lecture highlights a theme that is central to interpreting history from a global perspective:

- How humans, as the only surviving hominin species, spread across the entire globe and the social processes that underpinned this expansion.
- How humans learned to manipulate nature, and conversely how nature shaped human societies.
- How contrasting forms of human organization, and their interactions, have shaped the past 10,000 years of history.
- How cultural and religious transformations emerge and form part of broader processes of globalization.
- How, over recent centuries, the trajectories of the “West” and the rest of the world diverged.
- How, at the same time, the world became increasingly global.
- How this world came to be marked by diverging patterns of wealth, poverty, and inequality.

These questions constitute the key nodes around which the course is structured. The overall setup is therefore both chronological and thematic, with each lecture adopting a broad geographical and chronological scope. In the introductory and concluding lectures, the very idea of world history itself is critically examined.

Initial competences

Outcomes secondary school

Final competences

- 1 To have proficient knowledge of historical conceptual frameworks (also in another language than Dutch), and of the most important historical facts, and historical explanations.
- 2 To have a reference frame for various historical periods: the ancient Near East, classical antiquity, the Middle Ages, the early modern period, and modern and contemporary history.
- 3 To have the ability to critically reflect upon the role of global perspectives, the dynamics of processes, and patterns in historical situations.
- 4 To have the ability to contextualize historical research and one's own historical practice, and interpret these within a societal reference frame.
- 5 To have the ability to critically assess social issues and contemporary views and contextualize these historically.
- 6 To have the ability to interpret contemporary developments from a historical-comparative perspective.
- 7 To demonstrate cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity, and the ability to reflect on continuity and change from a long-term perspective.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures with presentations, recordings conditional (cf. FOER).

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Wouter Ryckbosch, Inleiding tot de Wereldgeschiedenis (titel onder voorbehoud), 2026

Indicative price: € 33

Optional: no

Type: Slides

Name: Slides lectures Wereldgeschiedenis

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

References

Tignor, Robert (et al), *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart. A History of the World from the Beginnings of Humankind to the Present* (2021).

Course content-related study coaching

- Specific questions can be asked during the lecturer's office hours.
- Ufora
- Teaching assistant, see Ufora

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Assessment moment

Periodical (100%).

Assessment form

Evaluation based on lecture sessions and syllabus. Written exam with four/five open questions (questions on insight)

Calculation of the examination mark

100% periodical evaluation

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

- 1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given by email or during an appointment during office hours

Extra information:

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy