

## ORAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FINAL EXAM

### WORLD HISTORY I

Answer one of the following essay questions orally in class giving a brief summary of your answer to the question telling why you chose the one you did (20 points)

1. Considering that the use of tools and speech and our inborn need for sociability were practices and traits responsible for the growth of the human brain, explain how and why these same fundamental abilities still promote personal and cultural success in today's world.

2. The study of World History reveals many characteristics shared by all human beings. Since human origins we have seen that, completely independent of each other in different areas of the world, people developed some of the same institutions, products, patterns of life, and even ideas, and these examples of independent development provide considerable evidence for the universality of human nature. Describe 3 examples of how independent development occurred and how it reflects the unity of humankind.

3. Warfare arose in history with the beginning of civilization and has been most associated with the conquering of empires. Do you think warfare is inevitable or do you think humans will abolish it? If it disappears, who will make that happen and through what processes?

4. Patriarchy has been part of all civilizations since urban-imperial culture arose in each of the 4 river-valley civilizations. Do you think patriarchy will endure because it has such a long history and because it may be based in nature, or do you think equal pay for equal work, partnerships between men and women professionally and at home, and mutual respect between men and women will replace the 5,500 year-old systems of patriarchy in the future?

5. Some World Historians have concluded that one of human beings' strongest drives is to seek order, comprehend it, and establish it around them. Order is defined as a logical or specific arrangement of things. These historians think people thrive when they establish order and decline when they live in anarchy or chaos. Historian Eric Voegelin wrote, "Every society has the task of creating an order that will endow it with meaning." Cite several of the best examples you can think of of how human beings have tried to discover and establish order.

6. Spiritual beliefs have played a vital part in human societies from the Hunters and Gatherers to 1500 A.D. Whether nature worship, ancestor worship, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, these beliefs have framed people's lives and provided the basis for their worldview. Can you imagine a society without any religious basis? Do you think science (or psychology) are replacing traditional religions as ways for people to think about the world and structure their beliefs? Or do you think religion and spirituality are so basic that human beings literally cannot live without them? (DEFINITIONS: SPIRITUALITY is the human response to the harmony and beauty of the world around us. It is respect for what is greater than ourselves and awareness we are part of a universal order. It also consists of respect for life, for the mystery of life, and for the supernatural as it is revealed to us in many ways. RELIGION: Sacred books, doctrines, sacraments, rituals, temples, and ethical codes of an organized religion.)

7. Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed were reformers who tried to advocate for peace, equality, and respect for women, minorities, the poor, the orphaned, and the sick. In their times they preached visionary beliefs, but, in the aftermath of their lives, old discriminations persisted and their descendents were unable to sustain the original vision of these reformers. Why, ultimately,

despite their best intentions and higher standards, did their attempts fail with people lapsing back into old patterns of patriarchy, discrimination, and wars?

8. In most Asian cultures the individual is subordinated to the group. Asian people aim to create harmony in the group by submerging their own ego and trying to please others. Asians tend to extend hospitality to others, give gifts often, praise others, and enjoy helping others. In contrast, Western Europeans have a heritage of individualism where there's an emphasis on each person's individual characteristics, and each person's individual talents. Do you think the Asian emphasis on the group is a good way to live or do you think the Judaeo-Christian emphasis on the individual is a better way to live?

9. Now that you have studied World Civilizations I, has your view of human nature changed? If your view has changed, explain how it has changed citing at least 3 characteristics which you think are an integral part of human nature. If your view has not changed, explain what your view of human nature was and still is.

10. From the Neolithic Era until 1500 AD, humans increasingly used and exploited the natural world for their survival and sought to control natural processes to avoid pain and suffering. List 5 examples of their major accomplishments.

11. There has been tangible moral progress in human history with breakthroughs such as the abolition of slavery, women's right to vote, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the creation of the UN and its charter, and the fact that 73 countries have abolished the death penalty. Given this record for moral progress, what further advances would you like to see occur?