

# Promising the World: Surveys, Curricula, and the Challenge of Global History

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THE WORLD HISTORY SURVEY COURSE has experienced stunning success within American higher education. In the space of three decades, it has grown from an embattled alternative to the Western civilization sequence to a cornerstone of university history programs. Today, textbook options abound, online resources are abundant, and legions of graduate students enter the profession prepared to teach either the pre-modern or modern halves of the typical sequence. The survey has become standard not only as an introduction for the history major, but also as a requirement for general education. Its final triumph, of course, remains elusive. Western civilization offerings still inhabit college catalogs, and their supporters continue either to support the traditional liberal arts model or to seek new ways to understand the value of Western Civ.<sup>1</sup> But the terms of the debate have largely shifted since the culture wars of the 1980s. Advocates of world history have moved beyond criticisms of Western chauvinism to renewed arguments about readying students for the cross-cultural realities of globalization.<sup>2</sup> For many history departments today, the most important question concerns not the legitimacy of the world history survey, but rather the ways that professors might teach it best.<sup>3</sup>

Recently, this very question took center stage during a program review we conducted for the history program at Emory & Henry College, a small, private, liberal arts institution in Virginia.<sup>4</sup> In conjunction with an

ambitious transformation of the College's general education curriculum, the review offered a rare opportunity to redesign not only the history program, but also its strategy for supporting the College core. Both of these tasks naturally implicated the department's world history offerings. At first, the plan was to listen closely to the broader academic discussion over world history and apply its lessons to our classes. But after much debate, we reached an unexpected conclusion. For the good of teaching world history, we eliminated the world history survey course.

While our decision may not have been inherently unorthodox, our motives were somewhat unconventional. Especially noteworthy were the reasons that were absent from our deliberations. First, we did not see ourselves launching another salvo in the world-versus-western debate. We remained committed to the College's stated mission of promoting "global citizenship."<sup>5</sup> Our report endorsed the College's move to replace its core humanities sequence on the "Western Tradition" with a "Human Foundations" course that included readings from non-Western cultures. Second, we were mindful that our predecessors at Emory & Henry had long embraced world history in the small college setting. They had, after all, introduced the world survey during the last curriculum review in 1988, which was only three years after Joe Gowaskie described such a course in *The History Teacher* as the vanguard of a "revolution" towards world history in the classroom.<sup>6</sup> Third, we recognized that the world survey has become a standard course nationwide. As part of our review process, we studied the academic catalogs of one hundred of our peer and neighboring four-year institutions, both public and private. We found that two-thirds of the schools in the sample offer a world history survey; among public institutions, the course appeared in over eighty percent of the catalogs.<sup>7</sup> Thus, we did not make a choice based on false assumptions about institutional norms.

Finally, our decision did not signal a personal disinclination to teach world history. The truth is that we enjoyed taking our first-year classes through the panoply of the global past. We felt that doing so was important for students, who, in the words of William H. McNeill, "need to realize that they share the earth with peoples whose beliefs and actions are different from their own and arise from divergent cultural heritages."<sup>8</sup> In accepting McNeill's argument for teaching world history, we likewise embraced his support of global history as a research field. Indeed, over the last few decades, global history research and world history teaching have developed in tandem. As the Western civilization course came under fire in American curricula in the 1970s and 1980s,<sup>9</sup> researchers like McNeill and Philip Curtin created a viable alternative by bringing the Western narrative out of isolation and considering its impact on other parts of the

world.<sup>10</sup> The shift also opened the door for scholars like Marshall Hodgson, who in *Rethinking World History* showed how non-Western regions were essential to the study of the West.<sup>11</sup> Such scholarship not only charted new approaches to historical questions, but also reflected the academy's sense of a mission entailing on the one hand research in world history to inform policy and on the other hand a school curriculum to pass on to the next generation America's responsibilities on the global stage.<sup>12</sup> To quote McNeill again, "It seems to me obvious that beyond the national frame we must have a genuinely global history to offer the young—or else fall short of the imperatives of our time."<sup>13</sup>

In short, our conclusions were not a rejection of world history; rather, they reflected an earnest desire to teach more effectively the fruits of global history scholarship. Indeed, our different approach began with the argument that the normalization of global approaches has led to an unexpected divergence between the research field of global history and the teaching of world history. By breaking down barriers, emphasizing fluidity, and studying complex historical processes, global history is a genre predicated on a sustained challenge to stable boundaries. In other words, it has become an advanced and specialized type of research. As a survey course, however, world history is about the fundamentals. While it may rarely fail to challenge the preconceptions of undergraduates, its principal goals are to introduce the basics of history, and to provide broad coverage supporting the early stages of a college education. In other words, where one is designed to shake foundations, the other is tasked with erecting them. Of course, historical research by its very nature often goes against the grain, and teachers of American or European history inevitably see a distinction between the beginner's textbook and the advanced monograph. The difference, however, is that instructors of such regional fields have the benefit of treating their subjects both at the beginning and advanced levels, which means that they can first introduce the subject before revealing the more specialized research. The same cannot be said for world history.

### **Identifying Dilemmas in World History**

To understand the dilemma, we might point to a recent global history text that was featured in our erstwhile modern world survey: Timothy Brook's *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*. Brook looks at the content of Vermeer's painting to show how the contacts between East and West began to transform the cultural landscape of the seventeenth century. We found this text useful because it reveals to a non-specialist audience some important trends in the contemporary study of global history. To help students recognize the book's conclusions, we

asked them to think about Brook's use of metaphor. Students considered the author's depiction of paintings as "windows" that reveal how the world had come to pervade the everyday life of the Dutch, or the locales described as "pearls" mirroring the image of other places. "This endless reflectivity..." he explains, "nods toward the greatest discovery that people in the seventeenth century made: that the world, like the pearl, was a single globe suspended in space."<sup>14</sup>

What an interesting way to think about world history. One glimpse at a Dutch painting is all that is needed to traverse thousands of miles and dislocate fixed notions of place and culture. It succeeds first because it highlights many of the powerful but overlooked economic and cultural connections between societies. Indeed, this same fusion of global trade and cultural change has become a common focus of global history research, as for instance in Robert Finlay's *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History*, which, like *Vermeer's Hat*, historicizes a transformative commodity and employs it as "a sort of organizing principle, a way to examine the tangled interactions that make up human history."<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Brook's global history maintains a sense of scale by stressing the impact of world trade in a single place. Such an integration of regional and global perspective has also become a feature of recent work in the field, as in Sebastian Conrad's *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*, which studies domestic and colonial patterns of work and migration to assess how the German nation "developed in a context of global interconnectedness."<sup>16</sup>

These approaches, though very different, share a preference for using snapshots of places and things as way of revealing larger historical trends. Just as Vermeer's painting provides a "window" to remarkable transformations, so, too, does the research content itself with glimpses. Finlay's study of porcelain hints at broader patterns of trade, while Conrad's revelations about nations are confined to one case study. For the historian, such narrow horizons are the consequences of intense research, which warrants tight parameters and depends on in-depth studies that are suggestive beyond the single example. What is satisfactory for the researcher, however, can be insufficient for the teacher, because the inherent limits of the research fall short of the students' need for a comprehensive understanding of the historical context. What, for example, was the culture of the Netherlands like before the arrival of trade goods from the New World? How did the experience of Delft in Holland compare with that of other areas in Europe? What historical precedents in China made it possible to establish a porcelain trade in the first place? It is for this reason that we might ask students to read a study like Brook's, but we would be far more reluctant to base a syllabus on his approach.

By recognizing the gap between the teaching and research fields, we can begin to appreciate three of the most persistent problems that confront world history surveys. The first stems from the training of the instructor. Even with the growth of Ph.D. programs in global history and a bevy of research projects considering trans-national and trans-cultural methodologies, historians by and large continue to be specialists—Americanists, Europeanists, etc.—focused sharply on specific nations, regions, and chronological periods. Even regional experts, of course, cannot hope to master the full scope of their chosen area of emphasis, but their training at least provides a foundation for confronting the unfamiliar and for integrating changes in their field of study. How, by contrast, do professors do justice to a world history course that compels them to go beyond their specialties, or even their sub-specialties, and to include Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas?

As one solution, Patrick Manning's *Navigating World History* makes a case for changing the way in which universities train graduate students to be world history teachers. Certainly, this is a laudable goal, but Manning's suggestions implicitly preserve the same problematic distinction between researching global history and teaching world history, since they lay out different paths for researchers and teachers. Moreover, Manning seems to affirm the inefficiency of the current undergraduate approach to teaching world history. He argues that effective teachers, even at the secondary level, should possess a minimum of a master's degree in world history, because the undergraduate training they receive is introductory rather than comprehensive. "[I] believe it is insufficient," he writes, "for a prospective teacher to take a freshman-level college world history survey course, then use that single, general course as the basis for teaching world history to middle-school, secondary-school, or college-level students."<sup>17</sup> Even the notion of mandating more advanced degrees is problematic, as Manning points out that only a few graduate programs are equipped to train graduate students effectively, while the rest lack a coordinated program of study.

In the absence of robust training programs, textbooks written by teams of experts can help overcome such deficiencies. But they, too, are limited by the difficulties of explaining cross-cultural patterns while providing broad coverage of world regions. This is true, for example, of Robert Strayer's popular textbook, *Ways of the World*, which is one of our favorites. Strayer's text is praiseworthy for the innovative ways in which it ties together global history for undergraduate readers, but its attempts at synthesis nevertheless leave students and professors challenged to reassemble inevitable disruptions in chronological flow or manage gaps in comprehensive coverage. Thus, a brilliant chapter on global communism forces readers to backtrack over the Second World War, while a chapter on

the modern “Global South” provides a fitting alternative to the conventional decolonization narrative—but at the cost of omitting recent developments in Latin America.<sup>18</sup>

This serves to remind us of a second overarching dilemma for survey instructors, which is the tension between a comprehensive approach and a need for depth and coherence. The same diversity and vastness of world history that stretch the abilities of faculty can be even more daunting for students. Many recognize the need to push beyond Eurocentrism, but complain about the difficulties of mastering such a broad range of material in a single course or even in two courses. Professors often attempt to compensate for these hurdles by being intentionally selective in their syllabi. Some may emphasize a specific world region or simply teach a Western civilization course clothed in world history attire. Others may select a specific theme, such as imperialism or gender relations, as a means of centering the course and integrating a number of regions. Such approaches suggest that surveys can still have a substantial impact, retain syllabi with coherent structures, and thereby surmount their inherent flaws. But professors must nevertheless choose between delivering the benefits of global history research methods and staying true to comprehensive pedagogy. Surveys that stick closely to the narrative of Western history deny students some of the benefits of cross-cultural learning, while those that are overly selective forgo the survey’s task of introducing the fundamental contours of history needed for advancing to more specialized topics.

The choice confronting professors stems in no small part from a third perennial dilemma, which concerns the survey model itself. In the current approach, world history courses are essential to a didactic progression within a history curriculum moving from broad learning at the beginning level to more in-depth study at the advanced level. In terms of regional coverage, a survey of the world would logically rest at the foundation of the program. The world, simply put, is the largest unit to be covered. But global history concerns itself more with the connections between societies and less with the internal dynamics within them, and so depends just as much on prerequisite knowledge as any in-depth national history. Consequently, it is worthwhile to ask whether world history does not also deserve treatment at the advanced level, and in fact might be more appropriate for experienced students. Unfortunately, advanced courses on global history are exceedingly rare. Of the schools we surveyed, only twenty percent offer some kind of global theme for junior and senior undergraduates. Some, such as Eastern Kentucky University, offer surveys at the junior level, while others, like Lindsay Wilson College in Kentucky, include upper-level courses on global themes. Only a very select few,

including Lees-McRae College in North Carolina and the University of Kansas, have specific courses on globalization. Finally, only one school we examined, Arkansas State University, offers a major track in world history. To be sure, there are other notable examples outside our survey group. California State University at Long Beach, for example, offers an impressive array of advanced global courses and relates its departmental subfields to their global context in its list of student outcomes. For the vast majority of programs, however, history majors are not required to study global history at the advanced level.

### **Outlining a Curricular Approach to Global History**

As an alternative solution to these problems, history programs should begin by recognizing global history as a discrete field of study alongside American or Asian history. Schools should no longer be content to broaden students' horizons and break the grip of Euro-centrism by mandating surveys and by stocking up on non-Western regional courses. They are needed, of course, but now institutions must take one more step. They should first recognize the unique challenges of global history research, and second implement its principal lesson that world regions do not exist in isolation. Above all, universities and colleges, in order to demonstrate a true commitment to world history, must find a way to cultivate its presence across the curriculum. Certainly, it is no small change. As Patrick Manning has commented, "While it is possible that, over time, undergraduate history curricula could develop a comprehensive focus on interactions and global patterns in history, such a curriculum would be far different from the present circumstance in which courses become steadily more specialized as one approaches the senior year of college."<sup>19</sup>

At Emory & Henry, we sought to create such a curriculum. As a starting point, our new history program replaced the world surveys with a revised area studies approach. In addition to the U.S. history sequence, the program added new surveys of China, South Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. The department now offers these courses on a rotating schedule and requires all history majors to enroll in at least three surveys, at least one of which must be a U.S. history course. By beginning the curriculum in this way, we sought to erase the false distinctions between the U.S. and the world and between "the West and the rest." At the same time, the approach encourages students to think about global patterns, because one of the goals of the new courses, including the U.S. surveys, is to emphasize the history of the region in global context. For Americanists, in particular, this approach affords a chance to incorporate some new research in their own field, such as the work produced by the Project on Internationalizing the

Study of American History coordinated by the Organization of American Historians.<sup>20</sup> Europeanists, meanwhile, are developing their own body of literature on globalizing the history of the continent, and Bonnie Smith's recent textbook, *Europe in the Contemporary World: 1900 to the Present*, is already bringing these advances into the classroom.<sup>21</sup> In the same way that Timothy Brook and Sebastian Conrad approach the Netherlands and Germany, these courses allow students to explore particular world areas in much greater detail while gaining perspective on broader world trends. Furthermore, such classes are ideal for first-year students, who may come out of high school ready to work with primary sources and to assimilate information but may not be ready to gather and contextualize evidence from different global areas. In this system, students develop the needed skills by working more intensively in a limited number of areas and then integrating their learning at the advanced level. Along the way, they continue to benefit from exposure to diverse cultures and to be challenged with the interconnected nature of world history.

After students have had a couple of years of college under their belts, they are ready to engage in a required advanced course on "Approaching Global History." This junior-level seminar allows students first to assess critically various synthetic approaches to world history, such as those proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein or Arnold Toynbee, and second to undertake cross-cultural comparisons of important themes in global history, such as trade, contact between religious groups, colonization, imperialism, genocide, and monarchy. Finally, students are asked to make comparisons across societies, particularly in the pre-modern context. The overarching goal of the course is to provide students with the opportunity to analyze problems in global history in a way and at a level not possible in freshmen world surveys. The range of topics is narrower and thereby more manageable than in a survey, and the class allows students to build upon the information they gained in their area studies courses and to look at recurring historical themes in cross-cultural contexts. It is thus in their third year that students can first accomplish the goals suggested by the American Historical Association's Committee on Internationalizing Student Outcomes in History, which include the following:

- Ability to see contacts among societies in terms of mutual (though not necessarily symmetrical) interactions, benefits, and costs.
- Ability to look at other societies in a comparative context and to look at one's own society in the context of other societies.
- Ability to understand the historical construction of differences and similarities among groups and regions.
- Ability to recognize the influence of global forces and identify their connections to local and national developments.<sup>22</sup>

What students may lose in the program is a guarantee that they will be introduced to all of the major civilizations and cultures that have developed around the globe, which the first-year survey theoretically provides (but rarely delivers).<sup>23</sup> What they gain, however, is a much more detailed study of multiple world areas, experience in making cross-cultural studies of world regions, and, therefore, the ability to approach global historical problems at a more intellectually advanced level.

One of the immediate challenges for this curriculum was implementing it with a department of only four historians, which included two American specialists and two Europeanists. To elide the obvious Western orientation of the faculty, each professor agreed to develop a new course by drawing on his or her secondary field training. The two Americanists, for example, already had experience teaching in their secondary areas. One is a scholar of colonial slavery in the Atlantic colonies and the Caribbean who already had developed and taught a course on the history of Africa. The other focuses on U.S. economic history and the cultural history of the New South and has expertise in the history of Latin America. The two Europeanists in the department also possessed secondary training, in global history and Asia respectively, but received further funding to convert that experience into new courses on South Asia and modern China. Both spent over a year reading major works in the field and writing lectures before teaching the new courses in the classroom. To strengthen these offerings, the department also received College support to seek periodic external course evaluations from recognized experts.

We are aware that specialists in world areas might be skeptical, perhaps even offended, that a program would endorse having non-specialists teach area studies in the classroom. We would suggest, however, that this has already been the case in world history surveys and that advocates of teaching world history long ago realized that specialists in one world region could train themselves to teach introductory material in areas outside their specialty.<sup>24</sup> In this case, the difference is that the instructors prepare in a targeted and in-depth fashion to take on a more limited topic outside their primary field. Indeed, the faculty agreed that they found themselves better suited to provide a survey of one particular area than they had ever been to teach the history of the entire globe.

Some might object that an area studies approach undermines one of the strongest parts of the world history survey: cross-cultural comparison of various sections of the globe. If, so the argument runs, the regions of the world are once again separated from each other in the curriculum, then students lose the ability to see the larger patterns of global history and to draw lessons from the similarities and differences in development of societies around the world. We maintain, however, that proper course

design can ameliorate the problem, above all by helping students see how global history entails both a study of *connections* and *comparisons*. The task is to move beyond a disjointed presentation of world historical events in favor of an approach stressing not only the global linkages of the modern era, but also the patterns evident in the pre-modern world.

To meet the challenge, one of the most significant course design elements in the new curriculum involves working with models of historical development. The program encourages faculty to introduce various models to first-year area studies courses and review them in the advanced global history course. The goal is to teach students to make much more sophisticated comparisons and draw more reliable conclusions from historical data than they might otherwise be able to accomplish in a world history survey.<sup>25</sup> The advantage of models, as Neville Morley has pointed out, is that they make it “possible to identify underlying regularities, and to distinguish between more or less important causative factors” because they offer “simplified, abstract approximations of reality.”<sup>26</sup> A number of these models are available, such as the world-systems analysis developed by Wallerstein. One particular model that we have had some success with, both in world history surveys and the area studies courses described in this discussion, is Patricia Crone’s, presented in her work *Pre-industrial Societies*.

Crone argues that the economic structure of settled, agrarian life shapes the development of politics, culture, and society throughout the world. The small surpluses of pre-industrial agriculture meant that virtually everywhere on the globe, between eighty and ninety percent of a community had to be involved in food production, which limited the amount of material goods a community could produce and restricted the amount of wealth and trade that was available. Crone also points out that, in virtually every such society, settled agriculture led to social stratification, while the limitations on the amount of surplus wealth available resulted in weak governments that focused their efforts on revenue collection and warfare and that based their legitimacy on religious authority. Furthermore, almost all such societies were monarchies.<sup>27</sup>

The universal applicability of the Crone model can be debated, but the advantage of using such a model in a global history program is that it integrates the various peoples of the globe into a coherent analytical framework. When such a model is introduced to the students, it allows them to evaluate every culture they encounter through the lens of the model, determining the extent to which it is applicable in a particular situation and therefore sharpening the critical thinking skills that so many history programs pledge to cultivate. Models also give students a way to compare societies with each other. Because Crone’s approach stresses certain

features of pre-industrial societies, such as social stratification, connections between religion and politics, and scope and power of governments, it helps students avoid nebulous comparisons such as “How is Imperial Rome like Han China?” and focus instead on questions where multiple items are compared with each other, with respect to a specific characteristic: “Were Roman emperors more similar to Han Chinese emperors or to Egyptian Pharaohs in the ways in which they used religion to legitimate their rule?” Notice that this approach encourages students to look for similarities among various societies, allowing them to use the knowledge employed elsewhere in the course or the curriculum, and enables them to discover what features of each community are unique. They thus get the chance to explore both commonality and diversity.<sup>28</sup>

Using models further encourages the development of critical thinking by offering students the opportunity to critique the model itself through exploration of primary evidence. As Morley puts it, “In theory, the relationship between model and evidence is always two way,”<sup>29</sup> because, quoting Moses Finley, “It is in the nature of models that they are subject to constant adjustment, correction, modification, or outright replacement.”<sup>30</sup> Questions like “When we look at the structure of government institutions, why does Tang Dynasty China fit Crone’s model better than the ancient Roman Republic does?” open the door to all sorts of discussions of the value and problems of cross-cultural comparisons and the use of models as guides to historical analysis.

We believe our curriculum can get the most out of using models if students work with them not only in first-year area studies courses, but also in the junior-level course. It is, after all, at this advanced level that students can use models to accomplish genuine intellectual syntheses. Because the advanced course is largely free of the burden of providing a lengthy narrative to students who are unfamiliar with the history of world civilizations, it can spend more time facilitating intra- and cross-cultural analyses. A junior-level global history course also enables students to continue learning about the different regions of the world after they graduate and go into their various chosen careers. It does this because it aims not just to present a selection of facts about the world, but also to teach a method of studying and analyzing that will remain useful to students long after their college years.

Furthermore, this type of course can help instructors surmount the superficiality that often attaches to the study of world history subject matter. Where students in a world history course might find themselves facing a bewildering array of peoples, cultures, and societies, with very little sense of how the disparate peoples of the earth fit into a larger framework,<sup>31</sup> those in our program encounter the world by engaging in more detailed

overviews of select world regions and by mastering methods of research and models of historical development that they can then employ when studying other regions around the globe. In this way, our students are more comfortable with the range of lessons they explore in class and are prepared to continue their encounter with the world beyond the classroom.

### **Implementing World History across Institutions**

What are the implications of a curricular approach for other institutions? Our experience has convinced us that such a program can work at colleges and universities of almost any size. Larger schools generally have a more complete complement of regional specialists who can be placed comfortably into the appropriate first-year area study. Graduate students at these schools profit by being able to make that occasionally awkward transition into the classroom while teaching material with which they are familiar. Faculty at medium and small departments, meanwhile, may think the transition will be a struggle or feel uncomfortable going into a classroom presenting a topic outside their primary field.<sup>32</sup> But, in our experience, students at these sorts of colleges know the score: they get to know their professors very well, and when they hear their instructors present their case for why the area studies course is beneficial, even though the topic is a secondary field for the teacher, they are willing to give the instructor the benefit of the doubt. In fact, the learning environment becomes more energized when the students realize that they need not be passive recipients of knowledge, to be filled up like buckets at the well of the expert, but that they and the instructor are working together to learn more about peoples and cultures in heretofore unfamiliar places in the world.

Despite these possibilities, our specific suggestions are not meant to be prescriptive, but seek to generate a different type of discussion about how to teach world history. We recognize that individual schools have their own unique needs and processes for curriculum development. Emory & Henry had the advantage of a small faculty willing to work together to create a tightly connected program. Such a level of cooperation might appear daunting in a large doctoral institution, where the historians are no less collegial, but where the logistics of change are much more complex. There is consequently no formula for success, and each program must find the most productive ways to use its resources and personnel. Indeed, one might argue that we should apply the same thinking to the world surveys and continue improving them as they are. Just because we eliminated the surveys at Emory & Henry College, it does not necessarily follow that this is the right choice for other institutions. Moreover, we should not minimize the tremendous work that has been devoted to making these courses work

or diminish the innovations of professors and textbook authors. Yet we would at least argue that it is worthwhile to ask whether a department's commitment to teaching world history should be measured by a single course or a two-course sequence and whether those surveys are really indispensable to college history programs.

Consider for a moment the reasons commonly forwarded for including them. First, it is often the case that the first-year world history course is an integral component of an institution's core curriculum. Over two-thirds of the institutions in our peer study include world history within their general education requirements. This is significant because the courses provide an important way for history departments to contribute to a college core. Specifically, they help universities fulfill missions to encourage cross-cultural learning and meet diversity requirements. A closer look at the numbers, however, challenges the integral role of the course. Among all the four-year colleges we examined, both public and private, only thirteen percent actually require students to take world history during their college careers. Half include world history in the core, but most do so only as an option, meaning students can select it from a menu of other choices. At the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, for example, the menu in which world civilization is included is not a list of global studies courses, or non-Western courses, or even cultural experience courses; rather, it is presented as an option for meeting a social science requirement. This means that students can opt out of world civilization in favor of U.S. history, or general psychology, or rural sociology, or something else. The emphasis is more on disciplinary affiliation than on content. The original purpose for world civilization—helping students gain a more diverse perspective and a global education—is lost in this case, and in other cases, the same could be achieved with a more area-specific or thematic course.

Beyond their place in the core, world surveys are also critical for training teachers. Much of the course content should ideally prepare future teachers for competence with state standards, and world civilization courses are, again, convenient for demonstrating how colleges meet these standards. In linking world history standards to a single course, however, it is important to recognize that these standards do not always cover historical events, figures, and ideas evenly across the globe. The truth is that many standards are heavily geared towards Western history.<sup>33</sup> Our own assessment of the learning standards in our home states of Virginia and Arkansas, as well as the National Standards for History, showed that only fifteen to thirty percent of the standards include content dealing with multiple regions or implicating broader global trends. Moreover, in all three examples, the histories of Africa and Latin America receive on average only about eleven percent of the coverage combined.<sup>34</sup>

Without entering the ongoing debate about the utility or content of world standards, we would argue that a curricular approach might be the most feasible means of training students to meet the realities of existing standards. Not only does the sheer number of standards make it impractical to include them all in a two-course sequence, but their uneven distribution across geographic areas suggests that students preparing for teaching careers are not as well served by a course that attempts a balanced approach to world coverage. Rather, a selection of area studies courses that reflect the weighted preferences of the individual standards might be a more effective solution, while advanced courses on global history may help teacher trainees comprehend the more difficult cross-cultural connections that routinely appear among the standards.

### **Conclusion**

As Emory & Henry implements its program over the next few years, we hope that a curricular approach fulfills the ambitions of those who first advocated world history as essential for a history education. The revised area studies courses provide students with exposure to world cultures outside the U.S. and Western Europe. The closer analyses of regional histories demonstrate to students that different historical processes shaped different areas of the world, and that humans developed a variety of intellectual responses to the material conditions and environments around them. They teach students to understand the development of America (and, by extension, themselves) as intimately connected not only to the history of Europe, but also to those of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Furthermore, the junior-level advanced course gives breadth to the program by allowing students to make connections and comparisons in a global historical context while adding depth to the students' understanding of global themes and patterns. In short, it accomplishes what the current system does not. It teaches students by bringing together the latest findings and the latest methods of research into global history.

We believe our curriculum satisfies these goals without falling into the common pitfalls of the traditional world history survey. It is not a "Europe plus" approach to world history, because it requires students to explore world regions outside of Europe on equal terms. Nor does it suffer from the "cameo appearance" criticism, where certain regions of the world show up briefly on a syllabus only to disappear from view until the exam. Nor does it support a "U.S. and them" curriculum. The United States survey courses are as much a part of a global history curriculum as any other. While American students obviously need a strong dose of American history, in this system, their encounter is shaped by an understanding of

how America is integrated with other parts of the world. What each class offers is a genuine look at the macro-historical forces that shaped major world regions, with the expectation that students will make connections both to other parts of the curriculum and to other parts of the globe. In the end, we feel that this approach will help students grasp the promise of world history without unrealistically promising them the world.

## Notes

1. The most notable recent remnant of the traditional debate was the controversy surrounding the proposed gift from the John William Pope Foundation to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to support the University's Western Civilization courses, which took place between 2003 and 2006. See, for example, Jane Stancill, "Conservative Group Angers Many at UNC," *Raleigh News and Observer*, 25 November 2004, <<http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/11/26/3410566/unc-ch-faculty-members-complain.html>>. For a more contemporary take on Western Civ, see Lynn Hunt, "Reports of Its Death Were Premature: Why 'Western Civ' Endures," in *Learning History in America: Schools, Cultures, and Politics*, ed. Lloyd Kramer, Donald Reid, and William L. Barney (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 34-43. Hunt defends the value of the Western Civilization course in different terms, arguing, "They provide us with an excellent arena for ongoing discussion and debate about the fundamental values of our culture," 42.
2. Association of American Colleges and Universities, "College Learning for the New Global Century" (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007), 19-23, <[http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/GlobalCentury\\_final.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/GlobalCentury_final.pdf)>.
3. Patricia Lopes Don, "Establishing World History as a Teaching Field: Comments from the Field," *The History Teacher* 36, no. 4 (August 2003): 512-517.
4. At the time of the curriculum review, both authors were teaching at Emory & Henry College. Jack Wells is currently Associate Professor at Emory & Henry and director of the Core Curriculum, and Laurence Hare is Assistant Professor and director of Undergraduate Studies in History at the University of Arkansas.
5. "Mission Statement," *Emory & Henry College Academic Catalog, 2013-2014*, <<http://www.ehc.edu/academics/academic-catalog>>. The statement reads in part, "These traditions provide the context for our pursuit of excellence, as we engage a diverse group of well-qualified men and women in educational experiences that lead to lives of service, productive careers, and global citizenship."
6. Joe Gowaskie, "The Teaching of World History: A Status Report," *The History Teacher* 18, no. 3 (May 1985): 365.
7. For this article, we revised our sample to include one hundred public and private four-year schools that stand as peers of our current home institutions at Emory & Henry College and the University of Arkansas. We also used the more recent 2010-2011 academic catalogs of each of these colleges. Although the numbers changed slightly, the percentages were virtually unchanged and affirmed our previous findings.

8. William H. McNeill, "Teaching World History," *AHA Perspectives* 29, no. 3 (March 1991): 49.
9. Gilbert Allardyce, "The Rise and the Fall of the Western Civilization Course," *American Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (June 1982): 695-725.
10. Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 55-78.
11. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *Rethinking World History*, ed. Edmund Burke III (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
12. We see this sentiment just after World War I, as for instance in Calvin O. Davis, "A Course in World History," *Historical Outlook* 10, no. 8 (November 1919): 451-454; See also Werner J. Cahnman, "Outline of a Theory of Area Studies," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 38, no. 4 (December 1948): 233-243. As Cahnman explains, "To mention area studies is another way of saying that the United States of America has become mindful of its interests," 233.
13. William McNeill, et al., "Beyond Western Civilization: Rebuilding the Survey," *The History Teacher* 10, no. 4 (August 1977): 514.
14. Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), 23.
15. Robert Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 11.
16. Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 21.
17. Manning, 339.
18. Robert W. Strayer, *The Ways of the World: A Brief Global History, Vol. II*, first ed. (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008). To his credit, Strayer is not trying to be comprehensive. In his chapter on the "Global South," Strayer selects South Africa and India as examples of decolonization and uses Iran and Turkey as case studies of the problems of modernization in the developing world.
19. Manning, 339.
20. The results of the Internationalizing American History project were published in Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).
21. Bonnie G. Smith, *Europe in the Contemporary World, 1900 to the Present: A Narrative History with Documents*, first ed. (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007). Much of this shift in European historiography has occurred in the realm of colonial studies. See Antoinette Burton, ed., *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking through and with the Nation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003). For theoretical considerations on the expansion of conventional European history, see, for example, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, eds., *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn, 2009).
22. American Historical Association, "Internationalizing Student Learning Outcomes in History: A Report to the American Council on Education," September 2005, <<http://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/classroom-content/internationalizing-student-learning-outcomes-in-history>>.
23. We thus agree with the sentiment expressed by John Rothney in "Developing the Twentieth Century World History Course: A Case-Study at Ohio State," *The History Teacher* 20, no. 4 (August 1987): 472. Referring to a decision not to include discussion of Latin America in a team-taught survey of the twentieth century, he said, "'Coverage' ... was an historian's mirage, becoming ever more unattainable as the twentieth century lengthens and the nations of the globe proliferate." The difficulty of providing coverage does not lessen when the course focuses not just on the twentieth century world, but on the entire world before (or since) 1500.

24. Gowaskie, 367-368, reviews criticisms of the world history survey, noting that the implementation of world history in curricula means, "Everyone is expected to become a generalist." He does not see this as an insurmountable problem.

25. A point made by Lawrence J. Chase, "Teaching All there is to Know: The *Annales* 'Paradigm' and the World History Survey Course," *The History Teacher* 18, no. 3 (May 1985): 410, "Nothing raises the hackles of most historians more than a sweeping theoretical framework; yet it is as essential to the world history survey as names and dates are to the western civilization course. For one thing, a general conceptualization is needed to establish periodization, which otherwise would be elusive without the designation of broad relationships and an interpretation of far-reaching change through time. A construct also serves to clarify the spatial as well as temporal dimension of world history. It can produce geographical distinctions and emphases that respond to the enigma of what in the world should be examined, and how the globe should be divided for that purpose. Finally, the theoretical framework presents objectives that stimulate analysis, comparison, and selectivity; it defies the trap of 'endless' or 'interminable' history into which narrative is prone to fall."

26. Neville Morely, *Theories, Models and Concepts in Ancient History* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2004), 17.

27. Patricia Crone, *Pre-Industrial Societies: Anatomy of the Pre-Modern World* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell, 1989), esp. 1-57.

28. Jonathan Z. Smith in *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 51, warns against falling into the trap of trying to compare two things without stating the subject of the comparison and against the idea that we are making direct comparisons when what we are more logically trying to state is that "x resembles y more than z with respect to...." For example, the statement "The Athenian democracy of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE resembles the American democracy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century CE" does not tell us much and is arguably false, whereas the statement "The Athenian democracy of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE resembles the American democracy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century CE more than it resembles Charlemagne's Frankish Kingdom, with respect to the right of citizens to participate in government decisions" is a sophisticated, logically coherent statement that can be analyzed and defended using historical sources.

29. Morley, 22.

30. *Ibid.*; Moses Finley, *Ancient History: Evidence and Models* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 66. Morley notes on page 22 that "because the evidence is open to interpretation, the model tends to become fixed, the point around which arguments revolve."

31. Gowaskie, 367, memorably sums up such criticism in the following way; he says critics of world history suggest that it is "treacherously vague, ill-defined, too general, too unwieldy, too diffuse and too complex. Unlike Western Civilization, world history has no organizing principle, no coherent framework, no agreed upon criteria for what is of world importance and what is not. Consequently, world history simply cannot be done, at least not with any degree of rigor or legitimacy. It ends up being superficial, shallow and even 'schlock.'" Similarly, Gilbert Allardyce, "Toward World History: American Historians and the Coming of the World History Course," *Journal of World History* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 23, states, "Historians have been death on world history. Most believe the subject is too vast and visionary for academic study and too alien to the modern temper of the profession."

32. Gowaskie, 369, suggests that small departments might adjust to the absence of a faculty with broad expertise by narrowing the chronological focus of a survey course to, for instance, the twentieth century, though he recognizes that this approach "ignor[es]

a huge amount of world history including some of the great non-Western civilizations.” We believe that our area studies courses, by restricting topics geographically rather than chronologically, provide a reasonable alternative for smaller faculty.

33. See for example Melissa Amy Maestri, “The Myth of a Multicultural Curriculum: An Analysis of New York State U.S. History,” *The History Teacher* 39, no. 3 (May 2006): 381-402.

34. In our review of world history teaching standards, we limited our assessment to standards for history after 1500 and categorized individual standards by asking whether they applied either specifically to one world region (e.g., Latin America or Europe) or dealt specifically with global trends or multiple regions.