

EARLY MODERN PERIOD –  
1450-1750

- Critical era – Stearns likes.
- MOST transformed by world history.
- Most dynamic debates.
- Start: Chinese expeditions have ended, Fall of Constantinople, end of Mongol rule.

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Themes that are not as important:

- Still spread of religions but less important than P.c.
- Spread of civilization NOT a sweeping theme.
- Islam not as strong.
- No changes in women’s conditions
- Interactions btwn. Societies continues but gets redefined.

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Problems with the 1750 closing date:

- “ending this sucker not easy.”
- Period moves to a period we are more familiar with in Western world.
- Dare to omit: the Renaissance.
- This period is not the “West and the rest.” – West not calling all the shots, but more than in P.c.

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**Major Themes**

1. Re-balancing of major societies / power positions – West rises – military and economy.
  - Naval power – navy, guns, motivation gives West power on the seas – should not be overstressed, though.
  - International commerce.

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**Theme 1 continues...**

- Rise of Russia – becomes a major player.

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**Theme 2 – Rise of the Americas.**

- Columbian exchange between old world and new world.
- Food, disease, etc.
- American tuber crops affected China.
- Amer. Corn affected Africa and India.
- Europe slower to pick up American crops.

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Theme 2 cont.....

- Trade routes: American potato to Spain to Philippines to China.
- Most of Europe picks up later.
- China was NOT isolated during this period – they just picked and chose what they wanted from others (tea).
- Americas hurt in 15-1600's by Columbian trade.

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Theme 3 – Rise of the Gunpowder Empires.

- Political developments loom larger this period.
- Sea based: Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English.
- Land based: Russian, Mughal, Ottoman.
- These are major Empires / political units / social system.

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Theme 3 – Gunpowder, cont..

- Major change in the Americas and these empires.
- Formation of Asian Empires more important because they had the biggest cities and the strongest political structures.

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Theme 4 – Redefinition of world trade.

1. West becomes more dominant.
2. Americas included in the world trade system.
3. Not only was the West more important, but it had a superior trade position to the subordinate Americas.

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Theme 4 cont...

- Europe: made manufactured goods, controlled ships, companies were European craft producers.
- Americas – subordinate – raw materials, exports cheap stuff, import expensive goods – losing money.
- Americas rely heavily on slavery and forced labor.

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Theme 4 cont...

- Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century: West trades with Russia (after Peter the Great) tries to avoid but can't.
- Side note: European population in the 16<sup>th</sup> century – grows a little. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century – stays the same.

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🏠 Questions from period ⏪ ⏩

1. Why was the West so much greedier than the Arabs and others?
  - Mercantilism only practiced by Europeans.
  - Europeans greedily getting silver and precious metals from Americas to trade with China and India for porcelain, silk, spices, and perfumes.

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🏠 What is not happening this period? ⏪ ⏩

1. No global cultural theme – only regional.
2. Besides navy – not a huge period for technological advances.
3. New global historians – proto-global but not yet global trade / cultural diffusion.

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🏠 How does one explain the rise of the West? ⏪ ⏩

- The “West is best” idea – the West rose because a new Renaissance and culture became more individualistic, secular, and started exploring. More effective political units.

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How does one explain the rise of the West?

- Global perspective – The West borrows ideas from Asia thanks to:
  - Mongols who open trade routes but doesn't destroy Western Europe.
  - West wanted new technologies because of constant warfare.
  - West faces economic problem – how is it going to pay for all of the goods from Asia?

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How does one explain the rise of the West?

- West had to go through Muslim merchants to get to Asia – Europeans didn't want to do that – wanted a way around them.
- Comparison – Europe and Africa are about equal during p.c. era.
- 1500's – Euro. Population begins to expand (break out from Black Death).

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How does one explain the rise of the West?

- Early Modern Period – Asian merchants flourish – strong production.
- Europeans desire a way to fix this balance of trade problem but don't really do so until 1845.

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