



# THE BALANCE

## IN

### *Themes in Global History*

CANDICE L. GOUCHER

CHARLES A. LEGUIN

LINDA A. WALTON

# McGraw-Hill

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## IN THE BALANCE: THEMES IN GLOBAL HISTORY

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## About the Authors

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**Candice L. Goucher** (B.A. Visual Arts and Chemistry, University of California, San Diego; M.A. African Art History & Archaeology, Columbia University; Ph.D. African History, University of California, Los Angeles) is Professor of Black Studies and International Studies, Coordinator for African Studies, and Chair of the Black Studies Department at Portland State University. She has conducted historical, archaeological, and ethnographic field research on gender and technology in West Africa and the Caribbean, and is the author of numerous articles and reviews in African and Caribbean studies.

**Charles A. Le Guin** (A.B. Mercer University; M.A. Northwestern University; Ph.D. Emory University) is Professor of History Emeritus at Portland State University. He has been a Fulbright scholar in France, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences at Stanford University, and has taught at several universities. He is the author of articles, reviews, and two books, *Roland de la Platière* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1966) and *A Home-Concealed Woman* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1990).

**Linda A. Walton** (B.A. *cum laude* Wellesley College; Ph.D. University of Pennsylvania) is Professor of History and International Studies and Director of Asian Studies at Portland State University. She has conducted research in Japan, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China and is the author of several articles and book chapters on medieval Chinese social and intellectual history as well as a forthcoming book, *Academies and Society in Southern Sung China* (University of Hawaii Press).

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These labors are dedicated to our children and their worlds:  
*Kosa, Miranda, Elisabeth, Caroline, and Theodore.*

# Preface

This text had its genesis in a team-taught world history course developed at Portland State University more than a decade ago. The course aimed to supplement the perspectives available from either the required Western Civilization courses or the courses that represented individual regional history and culture fields, such as East Asian History or Africa since 1800. We began this project as a result of our failed attempt to find a suitable book with a global and thematic approach designed for university, college, and community college world history courses similar to ours. In developing both the course, and eventually our book, we also addressed the general education goals of our university's curriculum, including critical thinking, communication, the diverse human experience, and exploration of issues of ethical judgment and responsibility. Our principal aim remains: to expose readers to the rich diversity and complexity of human historical experience by selectively and thematically introducing the histories of societies and cultures in major world regions from early times to the present. Central themes are used to organize comparatively the vast array of events, peoples, and places, highlighting the diversity of human experience against the backdrop of common human concerns and endeavors.

We are convinced, on the basis of extensive reviews by our students and other university teachers, that our book is both timely and controversial in its embrace of a thematic and selective approach that departs from familiar textbook territory and charts a new course. Our approach is selective out of practical necessity, since we cannot cover everything in world history without sacrificing a reasoned structure for understanding the past. Second, we believe a thematic approach is essential for creating a truly global history that is meaningful from a variety of cultural perspectives.

The approach used by most world histories remains linear, narrative, and chronological, despite recent attempts by some authors to add topical essays that address themes such as women and the family. As one world historian has pointed out, "the traditional civilization course, western or world, is not working because it is based on nineteenth-century positivist epistemological and pedagogical assumptions which are untenable." We share the conviction that the endless recital of "facts" bombarding the hapless reader is not the way to approach the study of any history; such an approach is particularly inadequate as an organizational framework for the global past. A linear chronology recounting facts misrepresents the profound changes in the ways we in the late twentieth century think about and understand the construction of knowledge, its acquisition, and its meanings. An ancillary aim of our book, therefore, is to make readers aware of how historical knowledge has been constructed and to encourage critical thinking about the meaning of given "facts" and the relevance of accepted historical models, which may be rooted in the European, Asian, African, or other experience. We ask readers to consider the meaning of many distinct pasts for the world community in contemporary times.

Our attention to Africa, Asia, and Latin America as integrated parts of any meaningful world history is reflective of our determination to approach history with a balanced perspective, constructing a view of human historical experience free of Eurocentric (or other) biases.

Our themes here are broadly organized in a flexible chronology. These themes have been developed from what we believe to be a balanced approach that is equally inclusive of all human historical experience. This text tackles the new territory of making comprehensible the global reality we face at the end of the twentieth century.



## THEMATIC STRUCTURE

The degree to which this book is different from the majority of world histories currently on the market has already been suggested and will be reflected below in the summary of each section. The book explores key comparative themes in the human experience, ranging from the intimate ordering of family and daily life to cultural memory systems to the global politics of power and resistance. Our book is organized into four parts. Part One, "Emergence," presents the earliest human beginnings in various regions of the world, including migrations from one region to another, and explores the use of various kinds of sources for reconstructing the early human past. The origins of agriculture are presented as part of a discussion of human adaptation to the environment, which also includes gathering-hunting and other strategies of human survival. The question of origins is a universal human concern that we explore from the perspective of various early cultures. Finally, a discussion of the emerging complexity of human communities provides the context for examining the rise of urbanism in various regional and chronological settings.

Part Two, "Order," treats the ordering of the world in religious and philosophical systems by human communities around the globe from earliest times through about 1500. It suggests that bringing order to the world through the construction of belief systems is common to all human historical experience. This section also presents various levels of human interaction in both social and political structures, from the most private and intimate—family and household—to larger communities: extended kinship units, patron-client relations such as those institutionalized in "feudalism," small-scale political communities such as city-states, and empires. This part considers the social and political aspects of historical experience, embracing both private and public spheres of action. It concludes with two chapters that suggest profoundly different ways of looking at history: one on cultural memory systems, and one on connections among world cultures before 1500.

Part Three, "Transformation," begins with a discussion of commercial revolutions in Europe and China, suggesting that European domination of the world after 1500 represented a shift of the world system core from east to west. The construction of an Atlantic world through European expansion and interaction explores the theme of continuity and discontinuity, as we look at how Europe influenced other parts of the world and was itself transformed by that experience. Finally, we discuss the realms of cultural and social change as they reveal continuity and discontinuity in the age of transition.

Part Four, "Balance," begins with the theme of European global dominance, focusing on the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. Included in this section are discussions of nationalism, the industrial revolution, imperialism, and colonialism. The impact of Europe on Asia, Africa and the Americas is treated as part of larger themes that integrate the colonial and noncolonial experiences of peoples throughout the world. Concerns prominent in the late twentieth century, such as ecology and family, bring us back to some of the central themes of earlier parts, such as human adaptation to the environment and historical views and voices of those sometimes silenced or neglected by traditional history. We thus consider the nature of

historical change as it constructs patterns of similarity and difference, resistance, revolution, crisis, uncertainty, and, potentially, the restoration of balance.

We believe that our book has a relevance beyond classroom walls. We hope that readers who may have never taken a world history course will be moved beyond a generally accepted Eurocentric view of history to construct a new vision of the human past based on multiple perspectives that integrate many world historical experiences into a common framework. This is the power and potential of historical construction in a global society embarking on a new millennium.



## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

*In the Balance*, while narrative in style, provides students with several features intended to help them keep their focus on the key concepts presented, and to enhance their interest in what they are studying.

### THREE HEADING LEVELS

By including three levels of text headings, we provide students with more pedagogical guidance while keeping the advantages of a compelling narrative. The third level of headings runs alongside the paragraphs of the chapters keeping students focused on key terms and concepts.

### PART OPENER WITH COMPARATIVE TIME LINE

Key themes in world history are organized under the titles of “Emergence,” “Order,” “Transformation,” and “Balance.” Part openers provide vivid, sweeping introductions to these concepts as they are explored in individual chapters. Because of the flexible nature of a thematic and comparative text, it may be more difficult for students to orient themselves with regard to when events happen comparatively in different cultures. Part-Opener time lines will provide an easy, conceptual way for students to look at key events in different world regions at a glance.

### CHAPTER-OPENER NARRATIVES AND PRIMARY SOURCE EXCERPTS

We use narratives—often first-hand accounts—to draw students into the theme of a given chapter. In Chapter 8, for instance, we see the differences in family structure across cultures through the eyes of two Venetian fishermen stranded on the coast of Norway in 1432. In Chapter 10, we are immersed in the smells and tastes of a thirteenth-century fast-food hang-out in the great Chinese city of Hangzhou. These accounts give voice to the theme of the chapter in a truly compelling way. The opening narratives, combined with liberal doses of primary sources interspersed throughout the text, give students an up-close look at the societies about which they learn. We also believe that by making primary sources a vital part of the narrative, we encourage students to become engaged with the material, think critically, and to develop their own impressions and conclusions about the world’s cultures.

### BOX FEATURE: DAILY LIVES

Where appropriate in every chapter, we include one or more Daily Lives boxes to more fully explore some aspect of the cultures and societies we write about. These boxes are denoted by a symbol of an abstract spider web, suggesting the Akan (Ghana, West Africa) story of Ananse,

the trickster spiderman who learned the hard way that knowledge is shared equally around the world. No single person knows everything and wisdom is to be found in the simplest experience. Often the Daily Lives boxes are substantial primary source excerpts that help to illuminate how ordinary people lived from day to day. Examples of this kind of box include the ancient Egyptian scribe Ramose in the Valley of the Kings (Chapter 3), fourteenth-century Muslim female scholar Umm Hani (Chapter 9) and the Zulu resistance fighter Matobana Mjara in 1929 South Africa (Chapter 19).

## BOX FEATURE: ENGAGING THE PAST

History is seldom “cut and dried,” but in the course of reading textbooks often students do not get to see what historians do. Nor do they see the problems of interpretation that historians sometimes confront in plying their craft, or the evolution in ways of thinking historically. In keeping with our goal to help students to think critically about history and evidence, we include an Engaging the Past box at the end of each chapter. These boxes are denoted by the symbol of a bird looking backwards, suggesting the Akan (Ghana, West Africa) proverb meaning *sankofa*, literally to reach back and use the past. They provide students with a thought-provoking exposition of some of the problems and issues that confront historians. In Chapter 7, we discuss the problems inherent to historical generalization through a discussion of the concept of feudalism as it is applied to both European and non-European historical experience. Chapter 9 looks at how new evidence can radically alter received historical understanding by looking at changes in the way the Inca *quipu* system of knotted strings has been interpreted. In Chapter 19, we explore humor and history in political cartoons.

## EXTENSIVE MAP AND ILLUSTRATION PROGRAM

This text includes a wide selection of two-color maps that visually demonstrate the global and comparative nature of historical themes and relationships explored, and over 300 illustrations depicting art, archaeology, people, and places. Each photo carries a caption that ties it in with the text and provides students with another visual source for learning about the global past.

## FULL COLOR PHOTO ESSAYS

Each volume contains an illustrated essay highlighting universal themes in the history of world art. In Volume I, we discuss views of death expressed in world art before 1500. In Volume II, we explore the meaning of borrowing in the cultural crossroads of world art since 1500. These essays provide another way of visually examining the themes of the book: the thematic and comparative nature of human experience as seen through the eyes of individual artists. The essays are accompanied by full color photographs representing the important artistic achievements and compelling images of key world regions.

## OTHER PEDAGOGY

Concise chapter summaries recapitulate the most important comparative thematic aspects of the chapter, and also provide a transition to the theme for the next chapter. Finally, a list of suggested readings provide students with further resources for learning about world history.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We find our debts during the making of this book are also global: the gentle, but enthusiastic guidance from our sponsoring editor, Leslye Jackson, and her assistant, Amy Mack, inspired our confidence and directed our labors. Bobbie Fishman, our development editor, became soul-mate and inner voice, seeing us through the seemingly endless process of revision. Expert handling of permissions, production, copyediting, and art and map manuscripts was provided us by the McGraw-Hill team and we are grateful for their careful work and patience. We particularly thank Deborah Bull of Photosearch for her contributions to the project. Students and colleagues in history, anthropology, archaeology, and black studies endured our enthusiasm and entered into countless fruitful discussions, sharing their knowledge and ideas as well as resources; among these Kofi Agorsah and Katherine Sadler deserve special note. Thanks also to Jon Mandaville and Joseph Scholten, who taught world history with us in the early years and helped to develop the concepts that shaped this book. Gary Leiser's contributions on West Asia provided essential support at a critical stage. Thanks to Ursula for sharing her beach house on the Oregon coast for memorable writing retreats. We also want to thank the many reviewers who contributed to the development of this manuscript.

Karl F. Bahm  
*University of Mississippi*

Robert Blackey  
*California State University, San Bernardino*

Edward Davies  
*The University of Utah*

Lane Earns  
*University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh*

Jerry Gershenhorn  
*North Carolina Central University*

W. Travis Hanes, III  
*University of North Carolina, Wilmington*

Gerald Herman  
*Northeastern University*

Catherine M. Jones  
*North Georgia College*

Thomas K. Keefe  
*Appalachian State University*

Richard D. Lewis  
*St. Cloud State University*

John J. Little  
*St. Augustine's College*

Noel-Joseph Ku-Ntima Makidi  
*Paine College*

Art Marmorstein  
*Northern State University*

John A. Mears  
*Southern Methodist University*

Wayne S. Osborn  
*Iowa State University*

James L. Owens  
*Lynchburg College*

Melvin E. Page  
*East Tennessee State University*

Dennis Reinhartz  
*The University of Texas at Arlington*

Lynda Shaffer  
*Tufts University*

Douglas P. Sjoquist  
*Lansing Community College*

Juanita Smart  
*Washington State University*

David R. Smith  
*California Polytechnic University*

Kimberly Welch  
*St. John's University*

Robert H. Welborn  
*Clayton State College*

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## SUPPLEMENTS

We are especially proud of the package of ancillary materials we have assembled to accompany this text. These supplements include a *Study Guide*, *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank* (which is available in either paper or computerized versions). Overhead *Map Transparencies*, including all the maps in the text, our unique *Presentation Manager CDRom* for instructors, and our *World History Web Page* are specifically designed to complement the text and provide an integrated program of learning and teaching global history from a thematic point of view.

The *Study Guide*, authored by Robert H. Welborn of Clayton State College, nicely complements the narrative text, providing excellent assistance to students. It contains learning objectives, chapter summaries, identification of significant individuals, map exercises, objective multiple-choice questions (with correct answers and page references provided), analytical essay questions, evaluation of documentary evidence, and chapter glossaries. The *Study Guide* will also include distinctive timelines, which will help students organize the culturally specific information discussed in each chapter. The *Study Guide* is available in a two-volume format.

The *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank*, prepared by Edward Davies at The University of Utah, provides a useful teaching tool, especially for professors who are new to teaching from a thematically organized textbook. Each chapter of the *Instructor's Manual* will contain a Test Bank, which will include multiple-choice questions (with answers and page references provided), matching exercises, sentence completion exercises, identification questions (terms and concepts, people and places, and map questions), and factual and interpretive essay questions. Computerized versions of the Test Bank are also available, in Macintosh, Windows, and DOS formats, which allows instructors to alter, replace, or add questions as they wish.

## THE CHALLENGE OF WORLD HISTORY

What is world history? History can be briefly described as the study of peoples and their experiences and achievements in time. World history considers the experiences of all peoples of the globe, rather than the history of one group. The task of the historian is to attempt to reconstruct, recreate, and explain past human experiences by using suitable evidence, critical thinking, and informed imagination. Historians are aided in their job by the knowledge and insights of other social and behavioral sciences, such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, political science, and economics.

Historical evidence takes many forms, including oral traditions and archaeology as well as written texts. Study of the very distant past necessarily relies primarily on oral traditions and archaeology; these two kinds of evidence offer different perspectives on the past and answer different historical questions. Oral tradition is the means by which knowledge—both fact and myth—was passed on until it was written down. Even in literate societies, which preserved the past in written form, oral traditions also existed. Archaeology, in contrast, is the scientific study of the material remains of past human life and activities; fossil relics, artifacts, monuments. Archaeology supplies physical evidence of material culture, while oral sources provide insight into the nonmaterial world of ideas, values, and beliefs. Archaeological investigation may present evidence from millions of years before the present or from the most recent historical past. Oral traditions, some of which are ultimately written down, are more ephemeral, extending across a single lifetime or as far back as the past 10,000 years or so of remembered human experience.

The collection of evidence is clearly the first basic step in reconstructing the past. Since evidence does not speak for itself—objects can be faked and documents can be forged—the historian must act as interpreter. Establishing the validity and authenticity of the evidence is therefore the first task of the researcher. For example, not all archaeologists agree on the meaning, or even the dating, of stones and bones. There may be disagreement as to how objects came to be associated with one another and whether or how an archaeological site has been disturbed. Similarly, not all scholars respond to or interpret oral and written sources in the same way. Attempts to synthesize evidence into a composed story of the origins of human history adds yet another level of explanation. The many planes of subjective interpretation that make up historical reconstruction of the past result in continued scholarly investigation and debate. Such retelling of the past gives life to it, and used critically, each version contributes to a fuller historical understanding.

The challenges of evidence, interpretation, and recreation that all historians meet are intensified in the study of world history, where concern with a variety of pasts complicates fundamental historical tasks and introduces new ones. World history is the study of the pasts of all peoples who live on this earth. Since there are many pasts everywhere and they are perceived in so many different ways, writing global history is a complex and challenging task,

though it is by no means a new one. Historians in other times and places have tried to recount and explain the past they knew, often presenting culturally specific accounts as representing all human history. In a world where there are numerous and varied pasts, few historians have been able to recognize the limitations of their perspectives and acknowledge the validity of other views of the past that challenged their own.

Since it is apparent that the human experience is various, what do we understand of our shared past? Since all societies have their own discrete views of their pasts, the construction of a global version of human achievements in time is a complicated and difficult process. Late twentieth-century global awareness—shaped by the information superhighway, satellite communications, and common environmental issues such as global warming and nuclear energy—has created an imperative for reordering our collective knowledge of the past within a global framework in order to comprehend the present and plan for the future. Basic to the integration of separate histories into global historical understanding are challenges to accepted assumptions, such as the use of the European historical experience as the measure and model for understanding the totality of the human past. The process of weaving a global history includes decisions about what constitutes significant human experience and which events and ideas are worthy of inclusion. The practice of world history requires new processes of interpretation and integration so that a global past may be known, shared, and debated.

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