

**COURSE TITLE:** GUNS, GERMS & STEEL: Roots of Global Inequality-CLOSED 1/20/25  
**NO. OF CREDITS:** 3 QUARTER CREDITS  
[semester equivalent = 2.00 credits]

**INSTRUCTOR:** Wendi Fein  
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**WA CLOCK HRS:** 30  
**OREGON PDUs:** 30  
**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48:** 30

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**This Course is CLOSED to new registrations**

Why did the world become so unequal? Why have some societies developed more quickly than others? How come Europe conquered the Americas and not the other way around? Help your students understand these essential questions by learning the theories that Jared Diamond presented in his Pulitzer-prize winning book, Guns, Germs and Steel. Professor Diamond dispels any ideas of racial inequality to claim that power has nothing to do with personal qualities, but with geographic advantages. He expertly weaves geography and history to provide a clear picture as to why some countries have developed more quickly, enabling them to take over other, less-developed nations. Using the PBS documentary based on the book and the accompanying website, you will gain a clear understanding of Diamond's research and develop ways to apply his ideas in the classroom. Additionally, students taking the course for 500 level will explore ideas from his latest book Collapse, on what causes societies to collapse. This course is most appropriate to Grades 6-12 History or Geography teachers and World or Global Studies teachers.

There will be no additional fee for those with a Netflix subscription. Otherwise, fee will vary with choice of video purchase or alternate book.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:  
Known how to engage students in the larger dynamics and questions behind history

1. Understand that the layout of the continents, including their latitude and longitude, influenced societal development
2. Understand that every culture has intelligence and ingenuity; racial differences do not determine the development of societies
3. Understand that world power and domination can be traced back thousands of years to agricultural development
4. Know that domestication of animals proved to be an important influence on global inequality
5. Understand that disease proliferation and epidemics are intricately connected with geography and societal development

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

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**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

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**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
  2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
  3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
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### **CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)**

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

### **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

#### **REQUIRED TEXT**

You will need high-speed (DSL) Internet access in order to easily view online resources. Some of the reading materials may be provided in the online course environment as PDF documents, a format readable by computers with Adobe Acrobat Reader. Materials required will be available online. There is an option to read the book Guns, Germs and Steel instead of watching the DVD. There will be no additional fee for those with a Netflix subscription. Otherwise, fee will vary with choice of video purchase or alternate book.

None. All reading is online.

#### **MATERIALS FEE**

Text, Guns, Germs and Steel, is approximately \$9 from Amazon.com There will be no additional fee for those with a Netflix subscription. Otherwise, fee will vary with choice of video purchase or alternate book.

### **ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

#### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### **Assignment #1: Interview with Jared Diamond**

Assignment #1:

As an introduction to the course, read the following interview with Jared Diamond:

\*\*You must put in your email to access the video.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/news-guns-germs-steel-jared-diamond-interview>

In approximately 300 words, write down three (3) new ideas you are processing after reading this interview OR create a poster/prezi/slide of key ideas. Include any questions that come to mind that you hope to have answered by watching the documentary. Also briefly describe if you have been introduced to any of these ideas before, or if this is totally new information to you.

Post your answer in the online response box.

#### **Assignment #2: Guns, Germs and Steel: DVD viewing**

Assignment #2:

View the DVD Guns, Germs and Steel. It will be two discs that include three, 1-hour episodes. Since it is not longer on Netflix, you can order the DVD new or used from Amazon.com or other sellers from about \$15.00 to \$25.00. OR Amazon Prime is another option.

<https://www.amazon.com/Guns-Germs-Steel-Season-1/dp/B000I8HMT6>

If you prefer to read the book instead you may do so. The book may be tedious for some as it contains academic language. Although the book will take longer to get through, it is well-written and worth it if you enjoy reading history and science.

Watch the DVD/Amazon in three individual sessions, take notes on key points, and do some reflection on what you saw. Then, write a 1,000-1,500 word paper with the following sections (one paragraph for each section). If you would prefer to demonstrate mastery of the material in another way: Prezi, slide show or other visual, that works, too!

- 1) Introduction: Summarize the questions Diamond set out to answer and the new theories which he developed as a result of his research.
- 2) Part One: Explain how agricultural development and the domestication of animals started to allow some societies to flourish.
- 3) Part Two: How did specialization result in the development of steel, guns and other inventions?
- 4) Part Three: How did geography and development impact the continent of Africa? What were some unique aspects of their development and history which has led to challenges in the present?
- 5) Conclusion: How will this new information be useful in your classroom? How will you use Diamond's ideas to engage your students in critical thinking and analysis?

Post your answer in the online response box.

### **Assignment #3: PBS: Guns, Germs and Steel Website review**

Assignment #3: Please note: The website is a bit outdated and that is a consistent comment, yet I think there is still much value in many of the resources.

Go to the following website at PBS:

<http://www.pbs.org/gunsgermsteel/index.html>

Spend some time reading, exploring the website. Browse through all the pages except the Lesson Plans (that will be in the next assignment). Do the following:

- 1) Use "The World" feature where you can navigate around the continents and review the climate zones, vegetation and wildlife.
- 2) Look at the "Variables" button. You can examine specific subjects, such as writing. Choose a few and read them.
- 3) Skim over "The Show" section. Find where it says "transcripts" and look at some of the actual dialogue from the show.
- 4) Read over the glossary to detect words that your students may not know. (Glossary is found by selecting the "Resources" tab and scrolling to the bottom of the Bibliography list).

Next, submit a review of the website in any visual or written manner that demonstrates understanding of the website. It can be a 500 word review, a powerpoint, info poster/Prezi, or a recorded presentation. Pick the way you want to display and share the information.

- How information on the website could be accessed directly by students to supplement a lesson on this subject.
- How teachers could use the website to gain additional material not on the DVD.
- Specific elements which you found helpful and interesting.
- Your overall impression of the website.

Post your answer in the online response box.

### **Assignment #4: PBS Website: Lesson Plans**

Assignment #4:

Look at the PBS website again and find lesson plans to use with the documentary (select the "Educators" tab on the homepage). There are many good project ideas associated with this topic. An examination of the plans, however, will show that it would take numerous class hours to complete this unit if you were to follow them exactly. Do some reflection on the actual class time you would have to teach the concepts in Guns, Germs and Steel to your class. Then, modify the plans, create your own plans, and develop a PowerPoint or other teaching format to go with the DVD. Additionally, you will need to decide which parts of the DVD to show. (Since Section One has some tribal nudity, you will need to check with your district policy before showing that section.) Section Two reviews some of Section One and provides a good analysis of the European conquest of America. This section could probably be shown in its entirety. Since Section Three focuses specifically on Africa, it may connect to your curriculum in a World History or Geography course but would be optional in other courses. After you have planned out your unit, submit the following:

- 1) Create an overview page outlining the unit. Include three or four essential questions that your students should be able to answer by the end of the unit. Explain how much time is being dedicated to the unit.
- 2) Create daily lesson plans for the unit. You are welcome to adapt plans from the website as needed. (Minimum three class periods. You couldn't teach the information in less time)
- 3) If you create a PowerPoint or handouts, please submit copies. (You may use the Share-A-File option)

on the online response system to upload large documents.)

For each lesson plan, include the following format (or you may use the format approved by your school ).

- a. Name of unit
- b. Objective for the lesson
- c. Materials used
- d. Description of lesson
- e. Delivery format
- f. How you will assess learning

Post your answer in the online response box.

## **ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### **B. LEARNING APPLICATION**

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

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#### **Assignment #5: Teaching Guns, Germs and Steel Unit**

1. Teach your unit to the class. Keep a log of daily reflections of how the unit is proceeding. Write down what went well, the actual time used vs. what you projected, and think about how you would modify the unit next time. Submit a 2-3 page paper detailing the notes in your log and your overall assessment of the unit. Include how your students responded to the new information and if you feel your students gained answers to the "essential questions" posed in the unit outline. You are welcome to include samples/pictures of student work.

**OR**

2. If you are unable to teach the lesson during the time of this course, write a 3-5 page paper analyzing how you have previously taught ideas on global power and inequality and how it will be different next year based on what you have learned in this workshop. If you have never taught this subject before, explain how and where this information will be integrated into your course of study and how you hope your students will benefit from this new information. (Use this option in the Summer)

Post your answer in the online response box.

#### **Assignment #6: Self-evaluation/Reflection of course objectives**

Assignment #6:

Review the course learning outcomes described in this syllabus. In 300-500 words, do a self-evaluation on which learning outcomes you feel confident were achieved through the course, and which are areas for continued growth in the future. Overall, have your beliefs about the roots of global inequality changed after taking the course? Has student understanding of global inequality changed after participating in your unit?

Post your answer in the online response box.

#### **Assignment #7: (500 Level ONLY) Collapse**

In addition to the 400 level assignments, complete **one** of the following:

Option A)

Explore ideas in Diamond's latest book Collapse. To get an overview of the book, read this noteworthy book review of Collapse and video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYegWOTFqGI>

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-omr-001&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=omr&p=Jared+diamond+collapse+book+review+video#id=14&vid=f162a8ce4e6dc37b7b4c750764fd11a4&action=view>

Submit 500-750 words reviewing the new theories presented by Diamond.

- What are the five factors of collapse?
- How have some countries adapted, avoiding collapse?
- How will this information be useful to countries (like the U.S.) in the future?
- How could this information be used and applied in a social studies classroom?

**OR**

**Option B)**

Create another assignment of your own design with prior approval of your instructor. (See bibliography for additional ideas.)

Post your answer in the online response box.

**C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #8: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

**SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

**INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

Wendi Fein, M.A., enthusiastically brings her years of teaching experiences since 1980 to the development and implementation of her courses. Presently, she is teaching Adult Education, Developmental Math and English as a Second Language at Tacoma Community College in Tacoma Washington.

She spent 25 years teaching in K-12 public schools with a focus on special education, math, dance, PE, study skills and English/World Cultures. In addition, Wendi has traveled and volunteered extensively, bringing her stories and passion for human rights and equity into the classroom. Wendi holds a B.A. from the University of California, Santa Barbara and an M.A. in Special Education.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**GUNS, GERMS & STEEL: Roots of Global Inequality-CLOSED 1/20/25**

- Bennet, Deb. *Conquerors: The Roots of New World Horsemanship*.
- Diamond, Jared. *Collapse*. (paperback edition). Penguin Books, 2006. ISBN: 0140279512.
- Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. (paperback edition). WW Norton and Co., 1999. ISBN: 0393317552.
- Guns, Germs, and Steel*. DVD. National Geographic Video, 2005.
- Harland, Jack. *The Living Fields: Our Agricultural Heritage*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. ISBN: 0521649927.
- Landes, David. *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*. WW Norton and Co., 1999. ISBN: 0393318885
- Wallace, David, Director. *The Conquest of America*. DVD. PBS video, 2001.
- Wood, Michael. *Conquistadors* (paperback version). BBC, 2007. ISBN: 0563487062

Resource list on the PBS Website:

<http://www.pbs.org/gunsgermsteel/resources/index.html>