**EUROPEAN HISTORY**

**Students Name**

**University's Name**

**Department’s Name**

**Course Name and Number**

**Instructors Name**

**Due Date**

**EUROPEAN HISTORY**

Europeans’ history is divided into four; Prehistoric Europe [approximately before 800BC], Classical Antiquity [800BC to AD500], the Renaissance [AD 500 to AD1500], and the Modern Era [since AD 1500].

**Prehistoric Europe**

This period occurred before writing of records started, where cultural and civilization development was experienced. It was characterized in three periods;

**Paleolithic period**

This was the old stone age period where the first humans arrived about 1.4 million years ago. Evidence of human occupation, homo erectus and neanderthals, where a human tooth dated approximately 1.4 million years back, was found in Bulgaria in the Kozarnika cave. Tools such as hand axes dated to at least 900,000 years are found in the Iberia peninsula, Southwestern Europe. Ancient hunting weapons dated 380,000 years back, were found near the town of Schoningen, Germany. The neanderthals practiced hunting and gathering, making of stone tools, building of fires and some also practiced burial ceremonies [Hirst, 2016].

**Mesolithic period**

This is the middle stone age period or epipaleolithic as termed in Easten Europe. During this period, there were major climatic changes that influenced environmental changes. As the ice fields thawed in Northern Europe, the high temperatures and humidity caused growth of plants. As new economic practices increased there was also a need for advanced tools, so the stone tools took new forms. There was also evidence of hooks, nets and traps for fishing. Textiles from plant sources, canoes and paddles have also been found.

**Neolithic period**

This was the new stone age period where humans transitioned from hunters and gatherers to agriculture and domestication of animals. This also led to permanent settlement. Pottery was also practiced, it replaced stone and wood utensils. Art was also a part of life during this period. Landscape paintings [Catal Huyuk] dating to approximately 6150 BCE have been sighted in Modern Turkey [Esaak, 2020].

**Classical Antiquity**

Also known as the classical era, this period occurs between the 8th century BC and the 5th century AD. It revolves around the civilization of the Greco-Roman world. It features;

**Ancient Greece**

This period was known for the advancement of technology, poetry, and the emergence of city-state or *polis*. Its features were;

***The birth of the city-states.*** Before the archaic period, people lived in little farming villages which evolved. City-State were separate communities, each having their own governing laws customs and interests. The citizens of these city-states raised armies and collected taxes. It is said that they were protected by deities, to whom the citizens owed respect and sacrifice. Some of these deities were Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Thebes, Rhodes and others. Even though the citizens had a lot in common, every city-state was different. The largest had about 300 square miles of land, the smallest had a few hundred people. The Archaic period, however, brought about political and civil organization. The city-state's economies were now based on agriculture thus land was a valuable resource. Aristocrats were now in power unlike previously where kings were hereditary [Onion, Sullivan et al., 2023a].

***Colonization.*** Due to population growth and limited land, many people moved away from their city-states to the less dense poleis around Greece. Since the poleis were independent, people that migrated were not bound by their previous laws hence the new poleis were self-governing.

***Rise of the Tyrants.*** As population grew trade also became an economic activity due to the consumer goods produced. Trade was practiced by the common citizens, which was fruitful and made some of them wealthy. These elites sought to avoid the domination by the oligarchs and put new leaders in charge. The new leaders were the tyrants. Tyrants gained power through coups and even threats. Over time, most tyrannies would also fail bringing about democracy also known as the rule of the people.

***The Archaic Renaissance.*** Colonial migration had essential effects on art and literature. There was a human-centered approach that emphasized reason and education, thus the progression of science and mathematics. This period saw the discovery of the Pythagorean theorem and the theory of gravity. Developments in this period prepared the city-states for huge changes in the following century [Onion, Sullivan et al., 2023a].

**Ancient Rome**

Rome was said to have been founded in 753 BC by sons of Mars, god of war, Romulus and Remus. They were rescued on the Tiber after they had been left to drown by the king of Alba Longa. The twins grew up to defeat the king and built their own city along the Tiber banks. Romulus became the first king of Rome after killing his brother.

Rome became a republic after the overthrow of the seventh king, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus. He was said to be a cruel tyrant compared to the previous kings. The republic, power of the people, was performed by annually electing two magistrates known as **consuls**. These consuls also acted as commanders in chief of the army [Onion, Sullivan et al., 2023c].

Ancient Rome had remarkable accomplishments. They built networks of aqueducts to supply water and durable roads across the vast roman empire. It also produced influential literature in Latin, for example the Vigil and Ovid that contributed philosophical treatises. The spread of religion, Christianity, also changed the religious landscape of Europe. There were also major innovations like the pioneering of concrete for constructions, advancements in the medical field and hygienic practices [Anirudh, Tim et al., 2023].

The fall of Ancient Rome was caused by internal and external factors that unfolded over the centuries. History often points to 476 CE as the significant year that a German king, Odoacer, overthrew the last emperor, Romulus Augustine, ruling the western Rome. The eastern part continues as the Byzantine empire while the city of Rome continued to exist. Some of the factors that contributed to the fall of the roman empire included; spread of Christianity, corruption and political instability. Theories also suggest that lead poisoning from water pipes also contributed to societal decline [Gill, 2020].

**The Greco-Roman**

This was the classical antiquity period that was influenced by the language, culture and religion of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Greeks and Romans had interacted for years through trade which resulted to cultural exchange. However, romans were conquerors who later took Greek lands, stole their way of life and imitated them.

Despite their differences, there were significant achievements in this era. This included the invention of watermills for food production, analog computers, alarm clocks, further development in mathematics and survey. These innovations were the base of future advanced technology [Satyal, 2023].

**The Middle Ages**

Also known as the medieval time, it talks more about the Renaissance than the era itself. The Middle Ages saw the development of gothic styles in art and architecture such as stained-glass windows, the flying buttresses and pointed arch.

The rise of Islam religion was complex, and it spread especially via conquests. A century after its origin, 632 CE, the Muslim community had spread out in the Middle East.

In 1095, the Catholic church formed crusades, a series of religious wars, to check the spread of Islam religion. These crusades also were a means of redemption of their sins. Christian armies took Jerusalem from the Muslim control resulting to pilgrims visiting the land. Many of them were killed as they crossed Islam-controlled areas.

In 1347, a plague known as the Black Death struck Europe killing over 30 percent of the population in the following five years. It is said that the disease originated in Asia and spread through trading ships [Onion et al.,2023b].

**Renaissance Period**

This was a period of intellectual and artistic revolution, celebrating human achievements and bridging ancient wisdom with modern civilization. Renaissance began in Florence, Italy where the elites were able to support up-and-coming artist. Humanism, a cultural movement whose principle promoted celebrating human achievement in education, art literature and science, expanded. This movement expanded to other cities and later to other parts of Europe. The impacts were revolutionary such as the Copernican revolution that established that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun. Renaissance also encouraged rational thinking for example, Martin Luther led the Protestant Reformation that caused a split in the Catholic church. This movement challenged the practices of the church and the bible teachings. This resulted to the formation of a new form of Christianity, the Protestants [Onion et al., 2023].

While the Renaissance was an interesting time for many scholars, other modern historians say that the Middle Ages had cultural distinctiveness that has been diminished by the Renaissance era.

**The Modern Era**

This period began in the 15th century and continues to the present day. This period saw huge economic growth in Europe in turn enhancing social, political and cultural changes in the modern era.

**The early modern era**

This period was characterized by;

***The Age of Exploration and Discoveries.*** During this time, European countries embarked on voyages to explore, colonize and conquer territories across the world. Portugal led the expeditions to the Canary Islands all the way to the West African coast. In 1498, Vasco da Gama established sea route to India, signifying a milestone and its trade presence in the Indian Ocean. Chritopher Columbus embarked on transatlantic voyages between 1492 and1504 leading to the colonization of America. Ferdinand Magellan achieved the first circumnavigation from 1519 to 1522, impacting European perceptions of the world [Briney, 2020]. These expeditions had major impacts like diseases, slave trade, exchange of cultures, metals, plants and even animals.

 ***Industrial Revolution.*** This period saw the transition from agrarian economy to manufacturing economy. Factories replaced traditional handicrafts which increased productivity. The new machines were powered by steam and later electricity, which revolutionized production. There was also a downside to this because as machines made work easier it also created challenges for the factory laborers.

Mass production also benefited the economies of scale leading to lower production costs thus leading to affordability of resources like textiles. During this era there was a surge in population due to a decrease in epidemic illnesses and better diets. Immigration was also rampant in this period. People relocated from the rural areas to the city closer to the factory workplaces. As people flocked to the city, they developed new urban cultures thus sustaining revolution.

Technology was also affected as steam locomotives transformed transportation, making it efficient. There was also the invention of the telegraph which helped in communication. These developments facilitated economic growth, urbanization and trade [Barzun, Herlihy et al., 2023].

 ***Revolution Wars.*** This period experienced several revolutions inspiring movements for freedom, equality, and justice.

1. American War of Independence [1778-1783]; the revolution sought to break America free from the colonial rule and become a sovereign state.
2. French Revolution [1789-1799]; this revolution led to the end of monarchy and establishment of the first French republic. It influenced modern democracies, demonstrating the power of the people.
3. Greek War of Independence [1821-1830]; Alexander Ypsilantis led the initial revolt. Battles and sieges occurred throughout the conflicts. The revolution eventually led to the establishment of the Kingdom of Greece in 1832.
4. Russian Revolution [1917]; it was led by Vladimir Lenin and others who advocated for the establishment of a socialist state. This revolution led to the fall of the Romanov dynasty and the birth of the soviet state.
5. Chinese Communist Revolution [1945-1949]; it was led by figures like Mao Zedong. It was formed to revolt against the Kuomintang government that failed to address the problems its citizens had.
6. Cuban Revolution [1953-1959]; it was led by Fidel Castro. It was meant to overthrow the dictatorship of Fulgencio Barista and stop the American dominance in Cuba.
7. Iranian Revolution [1979]; this revolution was due to few reasons. The exile of Ayatollah Ruhollah, a prominent religious leader, social injustices and the rule of Mohammed Reza. The revolution had global impacts including hostage crisis and international sanctions against Iran.
8. The Velvet Revolution [1989]; this was a non-violent protest to end the communist regime in Czechoslovakia.

**Contemporary History**

This is the period after the world wars to the present day. It was characterized by;

**The Cold War**

Europe was divided into two power blocks after World War *11,* the American-led west [including NATO] and the Soviet-led east [including the Warsaw Pact]. The cold war was characterized by great ideological and geopolitical rivalry of those two power blocks. The division was symbolized by the Iron Curtain, separating communist of the East from the democratic West. Europe became a battleground for proxy conflicts such as the Berlin Blockade, the Cuba Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. After the Cuba Missile Crisis, Europe witnessed a standoff of nuclear weapons between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Efforts at detente [easing the tensions] were futile. However, protests led to the fall of the berlin wall in 1989 marking the end of the cold war in Europe. This followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 ending the cold war era [Britannica, 2021].

**The Digital Age**

Europe's digital journey has been marked by innovations, ambition and commitment to shaping a better future. The European Union recognizes the impacts of digital technology in day-to-day life and aims to exploit it. There have been major inventions in this era including;

***Social media and Networking.*** Platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram connect people globally. They influence communication, news spread and social interactions.

***Streaming services.*** Netflix, Spotify and YouTube have disrupted traditional media consumption. On-demand streaming of music, movies, and videos have become the standard [Nguyen, 2019].

***E-commerce Disruptions.*** Companies like Amazon and Alibaba transformed retail through digital innovation. Online shopping is now convenient [Jain, 2023].

***Artificial Intelligence.*** AI applications range from voice assistants like Siri and Alexa to predictive analytics.

***Digital Payment Systems.*** From credit cards to mobile wallets and cryptocurrencies, digital payment methods have streamlined transactions globally.

***Collaborative Platforms.*** Tools like Zoom, Google Drive and Slack have facilitated remote work and collaboration. Cloud computing enables smooth data storage and sharing.

***Health Tech and Telemedicine.*** Digital health platforms like Teladoc allow remote consultations, wearable health monitors and personalized treatment plans. Telemedicine bridges the gaps in health care access.

Europe has plans for its digital future, aiming to empower businesses, individuals and the whole society. Some of these initiatives are;

* Equipping more than 80% of its population with basic digital skills.
* Developing secure and sustainable digital infrastructures
* Digitalization of public services.
* Helping SMEs reach at least a basic level of digital intensity.
* Helping innovators access financial aid in order to increase the number of unicorn companies in Europe.
* Encourage tech up-takes by businesses.
* Ensuring gender equality in the tech workforce.
* Improving connectivity, rapid data transfers and enhancing security in the digital space.
* Doubling its shares in the global semiconductor market to play a significant role in the shaping of global tech space.
* Developing computers with quantum acceleration that have the potential to revolutionize various fields like cybersecurity, finance and complex manufacturing.

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