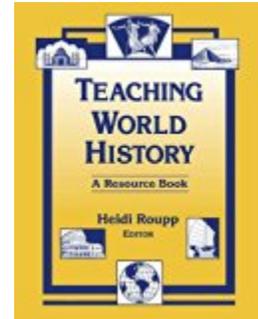


# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Heidi Roupp, ed. *Teaching World History: A Resource Book*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997. xiii + 271 pp. \$97.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-56324-419-3; \$30.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-56324-420-9.

Reviewed by Kara Staunton (Reid Middle School, Pittsfield, MA)  
Published on H-High-S (June, 1997)



## Perspectives and Resources on World History Teaching

Heidi Roupp, editor of this book, has created a resource for teachers of world history. It is not intended as a textbook, but rather a guidebook for teachers who may not be experts in world history. It is from this perspective that the book comes: that world history is so expansive that no one could be an expert in world history and that, in fact, many teachers may never have even taken a comprehensive world history course, choosing instead to focus on a narrow historical period as their specialty. Thus, it is the hope of the contributing writers and editors of this book to help enlighten educators on some of the current trends in world history, to examine suggested approaches in teaching world history, as well as offering practical lesson plans from teachers who are currently teaching world history.

This volume is an outgrowth of the World History Association (WHA), a forum where scholars and teachers can discuss the values and trends in world history education. This book serves as a compilation of the ideas of many of the WHA's members and serves as an extension of that forum, thereby allowing all world history teachers the opportunity to learn from each other.

*Teaching World History* is divided into three parts: approaches, articles, and strategies and lessons. Part one examines the various approaches to teaching world history education as they have been developed over time. Over the last decade, there have been three general approaches to world history: comparative study of civilization, the study of human societies using themes or top-

ics, and the chronological survey (p. 3). The reader is asked to decide from the varied approaches which he or she will use to organize their course. The advantages and disadvantages of each approach are then examined in the course of some fourteen essays.

The first nine essays are devoted to an examination of theory. William McNeill begins with his essay "World History" and discusses exactly what historical events are, in his view, important for students to know. Leften Stavrianos, in "A Global Perspective in the Organization of World History," argues that world history education is a disaster because of its regionalization and that it must become a comprehensive, global comparative study between the problems of the past and the present. Marilyn Hitchens offers distinct goals and rationales for a world history course in "World History as a Course of Study: Rationale, Goals, and Formulations." Her essay ends with sample outlines from various textbooks. Bob Andrian gives us an overview of the mechanics and theory behind a thematic approach to world history that is offered at Loomis Chaffee school in his essay, "World History: Not Why? but What? and How?"

This thematic approach is also mentioned in an article by Lawrence McBride and Bernard Hollister, "Introducing Students to Civilization", as well as in Connie Wood's "Wheel of Fortune: An Alternative Approach to the Second Semester." Dwight Gibb, in his essay, "Interior Dimensions of World History: A Process Approach," states that the focus should not be on the content that

the students are learning, but rather, it should be on the students themselves. Gibb states that the themes of the course should be set first, based on the minds and abilities of each teacher's students, and then a selection made on which content will best fit those themes.

This first section on approaches ends with several examples of actual state and local world history curriculum frameworks as well as syllabi of representative world history courses. These encompass everything from a district-wide curriculum for the Clayton, Missouri schools, to a high school social studies framework, to a community college syllabus, and lastly to a description of course offerings in world history at the University of Utah.

The second section focuses on articles describing what is "hot," or the most current trends in teaching world history. Since it is the authors' belief that many teachers are not experts in world history, they contend that all such teachers must read continually in order to stay current. There are eight essays in this section, touching on everything from the study of gender in world history education in Sarah Hughes' essay, "Gender at the Base of World History," to Lydia Shaffer's "Southernization," which examines the theory that events in Southern Asia had the greatest impact on world events. In "The Procession Portrayed: Using Art History in the Global Curriculum," Mary Rossabi states that art history is an instrumental component of a world history program, especially the concept of the "procession," which "portrays rituals and ceremonies, celebrates civil and religious authority, and illustrates social activities" (p. 89). A.J. Carlson, though, defends his belief that it is the sixteenth-century Reformation more than any other concept which must be emphasized in a world history course in the essay "Teaching the Reformation as World History."

The third and final section of *Teaching World History*, entitled "Strategies and Lessons," has over twenty-five examples on how to make your world history lessons more global, cross-cultural, and comparative (p. 135). This section has a wide range of recommendations including the incorporation of the computer in the world history classroom (Nancy Fogelson's "Forging Links in Time and Space with Computers and Hypercard"), the use of research and investigation (Charles Hart's "Investigating History"), and the inclusion of ancient literature in a history class (Bullit Lowry's "Historical Themes in Ancient Literature").

Many lessons plans are offered in this section, devoted to specific topics which include everything from comparing Christ and Confucius, to Mexican mural

painting in the United States, to making Japanese *washi* paper. Examples of how to generate round table discussion through the use of costumes and experimental lessons, as well as lessons that make use of primary historical sources, are also given consideration here. The section ends with a list of sources available to world history teachers compiled by Marianna McJimsey. In her introduction to this section, the editor lists eight questions that should be asked when evaluating a lesson plan. These questions are an excellent way to think about the lesson each teacher has created and are designed to help determine if the plans fit in with the approaches and goals you have set for your course. The discovery of a lesson that fails to meet this standard may be addressed by perusing the sample lesson plans provided within the section.

As a project of the WHA, *Teaching World History* was intended as a way to spread and share the organization's discussions with a wider audience of world history teachers found outside of the organization, thus aiding in the dissemination of the knowledge and experiences of WHA members. The book is not intended as a be all or end all. It was intended to generate thought and discussion on how best to educate students in the seemingly overwhelming and all-encompassing topic of world history. There is no direct attempt to forward the notion that any of the book's recommendations are to be seen as "the" way to teach world history. That is not its purpose. This book merely offers several suggestions, made by numerous specialists and teachers, on a variety of different concentrations and approaches to teaching world history. The emphasis remains constant that each teacher must decide for him/herself what can and will work best for the students they serve.

The veritable treasure trove of ideas presented here, however, makes reading *Teaching World History* a daunting task for the average teacher struggling with a typical work load. Just as it is difficult for a teacher to sort through all of the content areas involved in world history, it is time-consuming to sort through all of the approaches and methods presented in this book. To the authors' collective credit, it does serve as a means of fostering contemplation of just what it is that each teacher does with their classes, something that is unquestionably the mark of a good teacher. In this regard, *Teaching World History* serves both a useful and desirable purpose.

Copyright (c) 1997 by H-Net, all rights reserved. This work may be copied for non-profit educational use if proper credit is given to the author and the list. For other permission, please contact H-Net@h-net.msu.edu.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-high-s>

**Citation:** Kara Staunton. Review of Roupp, Heidi, ed., *Teaching World History: A Resource Book*. H-High-S, H-Net Reviews. June, 1997.

**URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=1050>

Copyright © 1997 by H-Net, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the Reviews editorial staff at [hbooks@mail.h-net.msu.edu](mailto:hbooks@mail.h-net.msu.edu).