

Global History of Time Syllabus

Instructor
S. Prashant Kumar
Quarter: Summer 2024
Start – end date: June 10 – July 29
Session day/time: Monday, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm CT
Course Code and Section: KNOW11030 24U1

Email **Course Overview**

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Modality

Remote learning

Time has a history. Many people in many moments in world history have worked with, and lived inside of, very different conceptions of time, both everyday and cosmic. In this course, we will examine notions of time held by peoples around the world. Following this history, from Babylonian astronomy to pulsar timing arrays, we'll seek to understand how and why cultures of precision develop, and how they both solve, but also produce new, problems with our understandings of time. We'll look not only at science, technology, and philosophy, but also art and literature, in order to develop a sense of how notions of time shaped everyday experience.

Required texts will be provided as pdf files on Canvas.

Course readings

Week	Topic	Reading Assignment
Week 1	Creation and Origin Myths	Rochberg, F. "A Short History Of The Waters Above The Firmament." in <i>In the Path of the Moon</i> . Brill, 2010. 339-354. Doniger, Wendy. "You Can't Get Here From There: The Logical Paradox Of Ancient Indian Creation Myths." in <i>Imagining Creation</i> . Brill, 2007. 87-102.
Week 2	Calendars	Aveni, Anthony F. <i>Empires of time: Calendars, clocks, and cultures</i> . New York: Basic Books (1989). Selections
Week 3	Clocks	Glennie, Paul, and Nigel Thrift. <i>Shaping the day: a history of timekeeping in England and Wales 1300-1800</i> . Oxford, 2009, 23–64.
Week 4	Time, Ritual, and Religion	Barnes, Robin. "Reforming Time." in <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations</i> (2016).
Week 5	Work Discipline	Thompson, E. P. "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism." <i>Past & Present</i> , no. 38 (1967): 56–97

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		Landes, David S. "The Ordering of the Urban Environment: Time, Work and the Occurrence of Crowds 1790-1835." <i>Past & Present</i> 116 (1987): 192-199.
Week 6	Deep time	Rudwick, Martin JS. "The shape and meaning of earth history." in <i>God and nature: Historical essays on the encounter between Christianity and science</i> (1986): 296-321.
Week 7	Relativity	Galison, Peter. "Einstein's clocks: The place of time." <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 26.2 (2000): 355-389.
Week 8	Cosmology and End Times	Kragh, Helge. "Continual fascination: The oscillating universe in modern cosmology." <i>Science in Context</i> 22.4 (2009): 587-612.

Accessing remote courses

Remote courses are taught through our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the "Get Started" button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts>. Once you've created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: <https://canvas.uchicago.edu>.

Accessibility information

Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class session at 773.702.6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu.

UChicago CARES Statement:

The University and its faculty are committed to creating a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students. At the University, all faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants are considered "Individuals with Reporting Responsibilities" and are required to let the University's Title IX Coordinator know about any disclosures they receive from students about experiences of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment). This includes disclosures of experiences that happened before their time at the University. This is to ensure that all students who have experienced sexual misconduct receive support, options, and information about their rights and resources. Students are not obligated to respond to this outreach, and this will not generate a report to law enforcement.

For more information, please see [this handout for students](#) as well as the [University's Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#). You can also reach out

directly for services and support from the Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support by emailing titleix@uchicago.edu.

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at zmel@uchicago.edu.