An Introduction to World History

Strayer
Ways of the World
Prologue, Chapters 1 and 2
The History of the Human Species . . . in a Single Paragraph

Paleolithic age was very long; 95 percent of human history

- settlement of every major landmass
- construction of the first human societies
The History of the Human Species . . . in a Single Paragraph

Agricultural era began about 12,000 years ago

- domestication of plants and animals
- dependence on domestic plants and animals to sustain life fundamentally shaped the human experience
The History of the Human Species... in a Single Paragraph

Modern industrial era: from around 1750 to the present

- massive increase in the rate of technological change
- massive increase in human control over nature
- rise of “modern” societies
Comparison, Connection, and Change: The Three Cs of World History

The need for constant comparison

- world history is comparative
- comparison is a recurring theme throughout this course
- comparison is useful in fighting Eurocentrism
- the art of comparison must be learned and is a matter of careful choice
Comparison, Connection, and Change: The Three Cs of World History

Awareness of **connections**

- effort to counteract the habit of thinking about peoples or states as self-contained and isolated
- no societies developed in a vacuum
- cross-cultural connections have existed for a very long time
Comparison, Connection, and Change: The Three Cs of World History

Examination of “big picture” changes

- What caused both large and small transformations?
The Agricultural Revolution in World History

- Agriculture is the second great human process after settlement of the globe.
  - started about 12,000 years ago
  - often called the Neolithic (New Stone Age) or Agricultural Revolution
  - deliberate cultivation of plants and domestication of animals
  - transformed human life across the planet
The Agricultural Revolution in World History

- Agriculture is the basis for almost all human developments since.

- Agriculture brought about a new relationship between humans and other living things.
  - actively changing what they found in nature rather than just using it
  - shaping the landscape
  - selective breeding of animals
The Agricultural Revolution in World History

“Domestication” of nature created new mutual dependence.

- many domesticated plants and animals came to rely on humans
- humans lost gathering and hunting skills

“Intensification” of living: getting more food and resources from much less land.

- more food led to more people
- more people led to greater need for intensive exploitation