



THE
NEW CAVALIER
READING SOCIETY

HISTORY
OF THE
WORLD



FULL LIST
OF SUBJECTS

Our novelist-written histories average 17,000 words in length.
Some are as brief as 10,000 words while the
longest—*The Vietnam War*—is 25,000.

A typical world-history semester consists of 6 subjects,
but we can make it shorter or longer depending
on what you're most interested in learning.

Delivered by email during the semester,
at semester's end you'll receive
your chosen histories in a bespoke
New Cavalier Reading Society paperback.

ANCIENT GREECE. Familiarise yourself with the most brilliant of all people—the Ancient Greeks—as you follow their 800-year history from Achilles to Cleopatra. You'll trace the rise of Sparta and explore Athenian culture & politics before descending through the century of Plato & Aristotle—then watch on as Alexander's successors transform the Eastern Mediterranean into a series of empires in which inequality, powerlessness, & irrationality proliferate.

HOMERIC POETRY & ANCIENT RELIGION. You'll explore the composition, characters, & values of Western Civilisation's oldest work of literature, Homer's *Iliad*—before discovering the real strangeness of Greek temples & priests and all their Olympian Gods. As you dive sandal-first into the aboriginal values of Europe, you'll find a society in which poetry and religion both were intent on establishing & perpetuating human-centred justice.

ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY. Meet the radically curious Greeks who speculated for the first time about the physical composition of the universe—then came to Athens and practically invented education. You'll find out why Socrates is so seminal a figure in world history and unpack the philosophical sleight of hand by which Plato invented the immortal soul—before questioning, with the Greeks themselves, just how wise is wisdom.

PERSIA, EVIL, & FREEDOM. You'll explore the history and operation of the enormous Persian Empire and discover how its royal religion invented Paradise and introduced the opposition of Good & Evil. Persia was also in many ways the antithesis of democratic and polytheistic Greece—so you'll assess the nature & meaningfulness of those differences, before tracing the two world wars in which they came into epic conflict.

CLASSICAL ATHENS. In just a few decades the Athenians invented democracy, freedom, equality, beauty, comedy—in what was history’s first tangible ‘Golden Age’. So you’ll explore what made such innovation possible and get to know the 5th century’s most famous exponents & dissidents—and through the interactions of Tragedy & Civil War, you’ll question with Sophocles & Euripides how and why such brilliance faded.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT. You’ll follow the career of perhaps history’s most influential person as he inherits Greece from his father then conquers the known world. After meeting Antiquity’s coolest dude—Diogenes the Cynic—you’ll then accompany Alexander to Egypt as he becomes one of history’s richest people, exports Greek culture to as far away as Pakistan, and gradually convinces his followers—& thereafter the world—that mortals can be divine.

THE ROMAN REPUBLIC. Meet the fascinatingly appalling Ancient Romans—with their love of decapitating horses & burying virgins—as they conquer Italy then embark on 130 straight years of war. With an empire gained and unlimited wealth pouring in (and with concrete & censuses invented) you’ll see a society gradually descend from class conflict into slave revolts into a global civil war fought by a man whose power burdens millennia: Caesar.

ROME & CHRISTIANITY. After meeting the trillionaire Octavius Augustus you’ll get to know the group of converts in his newly proclaimed Roman Empire who believe Jesus of Nazareth to be the Son of God. As Rome is beset with continual war, you’ll discover how and why successive emperors gradually enslaved 99% of Rome’s citizens—and as a new faith evolves & spreads you’ll explore how Christianity conquered Rome.

THE FALL OF ROME. As Christianity grows in influence you'll tear down no-longer-acceptable statues and deem human nature corrupt. As St Augustine advises women on how to preserve their virginity & Attila the Hun ravages Italy, you'll get to know the Church leaders & barbarian aristocracies who replace the bureaucracy of the disintegrating empire. That is, you'll explore why—and when exactly it was—that Rome 'fell', if fall it did.

PERSIA BEFORE & AFTER ISLAM. Still powerful 8 centuries after their wars with the Athenians, as the Persians now fight perpetually with the Byzantines a new power, full of belief, bursts out of Arabia. Discover exactly where Islam came from, explore its essential nature—and trace its conquest then transformation of Sassanid Persia. All while witnessing the slow demise of Persia's thousand-year-old Zoroastrian religion.

HINDU SOUTHEAST ASIA & ANGKOR WAT. You'll follow the growth of Hinduism as it expands out of India and contributes to the civilisation that soon controls all of Southeast Asia. You'll then explore how that devout civilisation mastered the natural environment and walk through its incredible temple mountains—before suddenly coming upon the very relevant reasons as to why it so rapidly declined & completely disappeared.

GOTHIC VENICE. From lagoon refugees to adventuring soldiers & sailors, you'll build an entire city on water before exploring how Venetians used currency manipulation & trade monopolies with Egypt & Constantinople to turn themselves into Europe's wealthiest people. As the meeting point of East & West, you'll also explore the religious and artistic influences that made Venice—still today—one of the most beautiful cities on earth.

THE REFORMATION. With the advent of printing you'll be able to for the first time read your Bible—and will soon have to decide whether or not to follow a German monk in attacking the most powerful institution on earth: the Catholic Church. As Germany & Switzerland break away from the Church—and Henry VIII invents his own—Wars of Religion devastate Europe for decades until finally Puritans and the Amish flee for America.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT. As European thinkers contemplate New World 'savages' who are obviously happier & freer than they are, you'll explore how Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau & Hume all began trying to liberate us from centuries of 'civilisation'. With Voltaire opposing the Catholic Church and the new *Encyclopédie* banned—and economists and atheism taking over France—you'll be delightfully immersed in Europe's Age of Reason.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. With the superiority of monarchy & Christianity in question, you'll witness bad weather & corrupt kings combining to cause modernity's first revolution. As France breaks out in liberty, equality, & fraternity—and as suspicion, atheism, & bloodshed replace hierarchy, religion, & custom—you'll explore one of modernity's most pertinent questions: what new systems should, or can, replace the old and established order of things?

THE FIRST FLEET AT BOTANY BAY. As Britain decides to send its surplus criminals to New South Wales you'll sail to Sydney Cove and struggle to establish a viable penal colony there. As rum becomes currency and convicts try to run away to China, you'll take a deep dive into the nature & extent of Aboriginal culture as it's left with no choice but to interact with a new and fundamentally different civilisation.

NAPOLEONIC EUROPE. As a Corsican officer takes control of Revolutionary France, you'll follow Napoleon as his military genius conquers most of Europe. Self-proclaimed as the continent's new Emperor, you'll then weigh Napoleon's modernising achievements against brutal rebellion in Spain & horrible failure in Russia—and as he passes the height of his power you'll reflect with Lord Byron on the nature of genius, power, & mortality.

THE SETTLING OF AUSTRALIA. With British rule established in New South Wales and its population of convicts & immigrants growing, two irreconcilable value systems—British & Aboriginal—come into increasingly tragic conflict. As Australia is turned into pasturage (and the village of Melbourne is founded) you'll follow the legal & social processes by which ownership of a continent was decided and a race of people condemned.

MEIJI JAPAN. After landing in a country that's been closed to the outside world for centuries, you—as they—will have to decide: remain closed or modernise? Despite several samurai rebellions against Western-style progress, within 50 years Japan will defeat Russia in steel-battleship warfare and play baseball against Babe Ruth—but as the samurai ethos is revived in an industrialised nation, you'll explore both the causes and the consequences of Japan's modernisation.

FROM AYUTTHAYA TO THAILAND. When Southeast Asia's wealthiest & most bizarre city is so obliterated that its population has to relocate, you'll follow the Thai people downriver to establish Bangkok in its stead. With European empires soon threatening Siam's divine kings, you'll explore the modernisation programs that keep their reign & country independent—but which also reform their mystical world into earthly irrelevance.

AUSTRALIA, COLONY TO NATION. As free immigrants begin to outnumber convicts—& after gold is discovered in the south—you'll explore the colonisation of the Australian continent. You'll see the country's expanding population change its attitudes towards its original inhabitants—in parts their violent conflict too—as a new nation born in prosperity and racism seeks to protect their culture from capital and eventually—in Turkey and France—from the German Empire.

THE GREAT WAR. Follow millions of men in marching off to discover that war has become industrialised, anonymous, & absurd. Hiding in trenches from machine guns, chemical weapons, & 'tanks'—you'll watch as entire generations of men are killed in a enormously futile conflict. As Europe's young poets react to violent modernity, often right before they're killed by it—you'll explore the war's literature and discover the life-changing battle experiences of one Austrian soldier in a Bavarian regiment, named Adolf H...

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. Get to really know the event that defined the 20th century. As a vast rural society is upended by a year of revolutions, you'll witness a communist coup that becomes a brutal and enormous civil war. As Lenin & Trotsky try to keep their Revolution alive, you'll discover Terror as a political tool and watch a new government gradually enslave its own people in order to rebuild the country it just destroyed.

COMMUNIST RUSSIA. With Stalin firmly in charge of the Soviet Union, you'll explore how & why every aspect of Russian society was brought under ideological domination. You'll discover the horrors of collectivization, witness the famine in Ukraine—see the appalling mechanisms of The Great Purge—and as World War II approaches you'll find out why so many Western thinkers praised & even idolised the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

VIETNAM AND INDOCHINA. You'll learn all about a society based on the Chinese Confucian order as its lords & mandarins (& eunuchs) colonise the plains of eastern Southeast Asia. You'll trace how France slowly conquered & created Indochina then exploited its resources—you'll also make several visits with Graham Greene to Vietnam—before a communist insurrection led by Ho Chi Minh takes on an exhausted European power, and wins.

ISRAEL & PALESTINE BEFORE 1949. You'll visit Ottoman Syria with Mark Twain to find out what Palestine was like when European Jews began seeking refuge there—and you'll spend most of World War II with the leader of Palestine's Arabs in Nazi Berlin. After recounting what little the world did to prevent the Holocaust you'll explore the causes of the war that led to the creation of Israel and the dispossession of most of its Arab population.

NAZI GERMANY. Explore the cultural trends & historical events that led to the founding in Germany of a new political movement: National Socialism. You'll track the Nazis' many hatreds and very modern methods as they turn themselves into Germany's largest party—then witness an incredibly rapid cultural & societal transformation as central Europe barrels towards totalitarianism and the most destructive war in human history.

WORLD WAR II IN THE EASTS. Explore history's most destructive conflict in its most hellish theatres: Eastern Europe & The Pacific. You'll join resistance movements in Yugoslavia and Greece, witness the depths of human depravity in Leningrad & the Philippines—as a nuclear bomb is built and its use debated. As Japan refuses to admit defeat, Russians behave very badly on their march to Berlin—until in two atomic flashes the world changes forever.

THE COLD WAR & SOUTHEAST ASIA. With the USA and the Soviet Union competing for power in a postwar world, you'll explore how culture, countries, & outer space became ideological battlegrounds. You'll uncover the brand-new CIA using jazz, movies, & money to promote American freedom in Southeast Asia—as gradually it's decided that military intervention has to be used to save Laos, South Vietnam, & Cambodia from communism.

THE VIETNAM WAR. With America committed to keeping its Cold War promises, you'll follow half a million American soldiers into the jungles and villages of Vietnam. As LBJ loses control and Nixon & Kissinger take over, you'll see the conflict expand into Cambodia & Laos before three Southeast Asian countries turn communist. As atrocities accelerate to the point of madness, you'll explore the culture, causes, & resounding consequences of The Vietnam War.

20TH-CENTURY IRAN. After suspecting the Iranian mind of being inherently nostalgic, you'll discover two competing visions of Iran's future: one Ancient Persian, one early Islamic. With the Shah seemingly in perpetual power, you'll explore the politico-religious theories of Ayatollah Khomeini and, after 1979's Islamic Revolution, you'll see how those theories subjugated Iranian women, terrorised the Iranian people, and attempted to export themselves through terrorism.

THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT. After the establishment of Israel displaces 750,000 Arabs, you'll explore the several attempts by neighbouring Arab countries—with fugitive-Nazi help—to destroy it. From the Six-Day War to the PLO, Hizballah, & Hamas, you'll discover the advent of aeroplane hijackings & suicide bombers and the fighting of two Intifadas amid the constant derailing of peace negotiations—all while a network of tunnels is built under Gaza...

— SUGGESTED SETS OF SUBJECTS —

YOUR TUTOR'S FAVOURITES:

Ancient Greek Philosophy
The Fall of Rome
Hindu Southeast Asia
The Enlightenment
Israel & Palestine
The Vietnam War

ANTIQUITY:

Ancient Greece
Homeric Poetry & Religion
Classical Athens
Alexander the Great
The Roman Republic
Rome & Christianity

MEDIEVAL TO MODERNITY:

The Reformation
The Enlightenment
Napoleonic Europe
Meiji Japan
The Great War
Iran's 20th century

WESTERN CIV CONTRASTED:

Persia Before & After Islam
Hindu Southeast Asia
The First Fleet
Vietnam & Indochina
Ayutthaya to Thailand
Israel & Palestine

WORLD RELIGIONS:

Homeric Poetry & Religion
Rome & Christianity
Persia Before & After Islam
Hindu Southeast Asia
The Reformation
Ayutthaya to Thailand

THE 20TH CENTURY:

The Great War
Communist Russia
WW2 in The Easts
The Cold War in Indochina
The Vietnam War
The Israel–Palestine Conflict



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