

**Central Asia in World History and Human Geography**  
**Angela Guldin**

**Long term goals**

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- Integrate content on Central Asia into the six time units of the World History curriculum (R/H/AP) and at least two of the thematic units in Human Geography AP
  1. Period 1
  2. Period 2- Scythians
  3. Period 3-
  4. Period 4-
  5. Period 5-
  6. Period 6- Nationalism and Religion- expand this unit to incorporate Central Asia
    - Historiography activity, footnote tracking
      - Jigsaw groups- one article each, show “intellectual genealogy”
- Collect more accessible resources (dearth of material in the textbook)
- Expand cultural enrichment opportunities with Central Asian options
  1. Literature
  2. Film
  3. Music
  4. Food
    - Quarterly class meals, different regional theme
    - One class cooks for other three, finds and teaches recipes, etc.
- Direct students toward Central Asian topics for sophomore research project

## World History

### Unit 2: Early empires

#### Lesson on the Scythians (2 Days)

##### Objectives

- Make them think this period is cool! (affective domain)
- Incorporate historiography skill building
- Incorporate geography skills

##### Central Questions

- Who were the Scythians? How do we know?
- How do different texts portray the Scythians?
  - Was this group “civilized”?
  - Was this group an “empire”?

##### Day 1

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1. Geography (15 minutes)
  - Study Abazov Maps #6 and #7
  - Read passages from Abazov relating to Scythians
2. Who are the Scythians? Power point (15 minutes)
  - Images and notes (from Prior)
    - Tools of nomadism, myth of origin, Siberian tombs, etc.
    - Archaeological finds as historical evidence
3. Briefly read references to Scythians in Spodek text (5 minutes)
  - p. 130- “invaders” into Persian empire
  - p. 136- “Guerrilla” style warfare, difficult for empires to combat
  - p. 194- thrown in with the Huns
4. Briefly read references to Scythians in Golden’s book (5 minutes)
  - p. 22-25
    - link between civilizations
    - scalps, skulls
5. Brief discussion (5 minutes)
  - Do these brief textual references portray the Scythians as “civilized” or “barbaric”? Why?
  - Do these historians seem to think that the Scythians are important?
6. Begin homework (10 minutes) Portions of Herodotus, Book 4.
  - Begin reading together.
  - Finish reading for homework.

**World History**  
**Unit 2: Early empires**  
**Lesson on the Scythians**

**Day 2**

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1. Warm up (composition books) (10 minutes)
  - How did Herodotus portray the Scythians?
  - Would our historians from yesterday agree or disagree with Herodotus' views?
2. Read and analyze the Aleksandr Blok poem (watch video in Russian) (15 minutes)
  - How does the poem portray the Scythians?
  - Does the writer believe the Scythians were an empire?
  - What is the author's purpose in writing this? (1918 Russia)
3. Andrew Bird song, "Sythian Empire" (20 minutes)
  - Watch on youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSBLSfhVSR0>
  - Discuss conceptions of nomads, Central Asia
    - Discuss comments ("Scythians? He made them up!")
    - Why does Bird write about the Scythians?

"A lot of [my] songs have a big leap, like there's two strains going on. In this case, it's my current state of mind, and then the mind completely wanders to a whole different universe, and I see how one might have something to say about the other. I was imagining this real-estate agent out on the Russian steppes. [Quoting lyrics:] "Offering views of exiting empires, such breathtaking views of Scythian empires." I've always been fascinated by these obscure corners of history. I sit there and look at maps of the ancient world, where there's so many of these fantastical names, tribes that you know nothing about. The Visigoths, the Gauls. And of course, the Huns. And they're always at the edges of the empires—they're shown as an arrow piercing into this empire. When I was in eighth grade, I got particularly fascinated by the Scythian empire, because they were a little bit lesser-known. And that became my thing. My identity in eighth grade was connected to the Scythians. So I resurrected them through this song." Andrew Bird  
<http://www.avclub.com/articles/andrew-bird,14069/>

- Lyric analysis: In pairs, determine...
  - if the lyrics are factual
  - what Herodotus might think of the song
  - whether Andrew Bird knows what an empire is

now they're offering views of exiting empires, such breathtaking views of Scythian empires  
Scythian empire... horsemen of the Russian steppe  
Scythian empire... archers of an afterthought  
routed by Sarmatians... thwarted by the Thracians  
Scythian empire... kings of Macedonia.... and the Scythian empire

4. Discussion (10 minutes)
  - Are nomadic groups from the steppe simply a side note on "the edges of empires"?
  - Will nomadic empires be important in our course?

**Human Geography**  
**Unit 4: Political Space (Nation states, nationalism)**  
**Lesson on Caucuses**

**Guiding Questions**

1. How do people define their nationality?
2. Why do our definitions of political space matter?

**Day 1**

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1. Map activity- Caucasus (15 minutes)
  - Blank map handout
    - Label countries, republics within Russia  
[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/caucasus\\_region\\_1994.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/caucasus_region_1994.jpg)
    - Label physical features (Discuss term “Caucasian”)
  - View maps on screen
    - Map of ethno-linguistic groups
    - <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/dagestan.html>
2. Watch *Power of Place*, video #8, first half (15 minutes)
  - <http://www.learner.org/series/powerofplace/page8.html>
    - Physical geography, impact on culture, religion, lifestyle
3. Follow up article from 2011 (“Dagestan most dangerous place in Europe.”) (10 min.)
  - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15824831>
4. Brief discussion (15 minutes)
  - What do Dagestan and Chechnya have in common? How do they differ?
  - What has changed in Dagestan between the video and the article?
  - Are people in Dagestan “Russian”? Why or why not?
    - Reference TEXT- map on p. 222 “Ethnicities in Russia”
  - Based on the ethno-linguistic maps, how do you think people in the region will define their nationality?
5. HW: Rubenstein, Ch. 7, pp. 217-224 (Why have ethnicities been transformed into Nationalities?)

**Day 2**

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1. Class notes (20 minutes)
  - Background on Soviet approach toward Caucuses in 20<sup>th</sup> Century
2. Discussion from notes and reading (15 minutes)
  - Why have ethnicities been transformed into Nationalities?
  - How has this process progressed in the Caucuses?