



To whom it may concern,

This fall trimester in Honors World History we started out with fairly lengthy units on Chinese history and the history of the Mongolian empire. In both we read foundational primary sources: readings on Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism and The Secret History of the Mongols. The boys wrote a short paper on the Chinese philosophy, and took brief content quizzes and longer multiple-choice quizzes to incentivize and reward the learning of this material. In the final weeks of the trimester, we switched to our course textbook, Robert Marks, The Origins of the Modern World, which makes a surprising argument about the sources of Western economic power and dominance in the modern era. In these weeks the goal was for the boys to understand Marks' arguments on their own terms and in their own words. In the winter trimester, the class will be divided into thirds, with each third assigned either Harari's Sapiens, Diamond's Guns, Germs, and Steel, or Ferguson's Civilization: the West and the Rest. These prize-winning works all disagree with each other on the sources of Western power. We will try to make sense of these arguments by staging classroom debates on the key issues!

Luke had a great fall term in World History Honors! I am really proud of him for "getting over the bar" to earn an A in this class: this is a testament to Luke's dedication and hard work. He is in a small class of eight high-performing, talkative history students. I sensed Luke might be a bit underconfident at the beginning, but he's got grit. He remained engaged, asked questions, and made contributions to class discussions. His test scores have been very good: B+/A-. An area of growth for him would be strengthening his performance on tests to the solid A range, and a good way to do that would be for him to come to X Blocks before tests to go over material with me. Overall, great job Luke!

Mr. Stiffler
Modern World History Honors