Origins

• Although distinctive, still influenced by contact with Persian, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian civilizations (e.g. Phoenicians)

• Indo-European ethnically--like those who invaded India.

• Early civilization on Crete, Mycenaeans, influenced by Egyptian monumental architecture, and told of in Homer's epics, eventually conquered by Indo-Europeans.
Decentralized Civilization

- Greeks united linguistically and culturally, but not politically.
- Mountainous terrain makes unifying difficult.
- By 800 B.C.E, City-States emerge as the dominant political unit.
• Dynamic trade between city-states

• Written language (inspired by Phoenician alphabet) leads to rich literary tradition.

• Intra-Peninsula athletic competition: the Olympics. Emphasis on individual events and excellence.

• Sparta and Athens dominate the scene and provide useful contrasts:
  
  ❁ Sparta dominated by a military aristocracy supported by slave-labor agriculture.

  ❁ Athens more commercial and artistic (although Athens also had its share of slaves)
Gender Issues

• Strictly patriarchal

• Sparta an exception
Golden Age, War, Defeat

• Pericles brings democracy for all adult male citizens and rebuilds the city (it had been wrecked by the Persians). The Parthenon is built.

• Pericles forms the Delian League, a confederacy of city-states not unlike NATO.

• Greek Philosophy was less mystical, more based upon reason and observation, as was its science. There's a good reason why they were pioneers in mathematics and physics.

• Greek Art: Drama (tragedies and comedies), sculptures, architecture, pottery.

• Greek accomplishments would, in part, inspire the European Renaissance nearly 2,000 years later.
Greek Architecture
Peloponnesian War

• Athenian wealth and culture lead to arrogance. Sparta objects.

• Read Thucydides.

• Peloponnesian Wars (431-404 BCE). Sparta wins, but the conflict weakens everyone and enables the Macedonian conquests.
Alexander The Great

- Philip II's son, begins conquering at age 20.

- From his father's conquests in Greece, he will expand the empire across Mesopotamia, into Egypt, through Persia, and just beyond the Indus River.

- Never lost a battle

- He stops only because he dies, aged 33.
Hellenistic Period

• Alexander's armies spread Hellenism ("Greekness").

• Greek art, architecture, and culture spreads across the Middle East.

• Library of Alexandria (in Egypt) stored all ancient knowledge. When it burned to the ground, much was lost.
Problems With Alexander's Empire

• When he died, it was divided amongst his three best generals. This weakened the whole and allowed for the rise of Rome.

• Antigonid Empire: Greece and Macedonia.

• Ptolemaic: Egypt and Palestine

• Seleucid: Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Persia.
We’ve still got Rome and some comparin’ to do
All Roads Lead to Rome

• Rome had been a minor city-state.

• After abolishing the monarchy (nemo est rex!), aristocrats ruled Rome and its territories as a republic.

• The republic spread its borders across Italian Peninsula, conquering Greek colonies in southern Ionia and Sicily.

• Like the Chinese, their expansion may have started simply as a means to protect their central territory, but whatever their original motives, they didn't stop.
You Gotta Problem, Carthage?

• Carthage was a powerful Phoenician city-state in northern Africa. It dominated much Mediterranean trade.

• Rivalry with Rome led to the Punic Wars (264-146 BCE)

• Carthage ultimately defeated, razed, and its fields sown with salt. Clearly this was about more than a trade dispute, but what?
The Problem With Caesar

• As Rome's borders expanded, politics became more volatile.

• Julius Caesar crosses the Rubicon, defeats Pompey and Crassius (the first Triumvriate) and becomes master of Rome.

• The Senate elects him "dictator," but that has a term limit. Many suspect that Caesar want's more. When he pushes to be named "Dictator for Life," they assume he plans to make himself king.

• So they stabbed him, and stabbed him, and stabbed him.
Octavian "Augustus" Caesar

- Julius Caesar's grand-nephew and adopted son.

- In the years after his uncle's assassination, Octavian vies with Marc Antony and Brutus for power (Second Triumvriate).

- Strong arms the senate, people die (Cicero), a new emperor for a new empire.
Roman Emperors

- Augustus emphasized a virtuous life, but subsequent emperors were corrupted by power and experience.
  - Nero
  - Caligula
  - But Marcus Aurelius was cool.
Greco-Roman Religion

• The gods matter. What the Pantheon means.

• Polytheism until Theodosius II.

• Socrates and the problem with Greek religion.

• Roman problems with Christians.

• Christianity and Rome.
Greco-Roman Culture

• Arts and sciences
• Philosophy
• Theater, Colosseum
• Architecture
Greco-Roman Economy

• Importance of trade because arable soil limits on the peninsulas.

• Mediterranean a perfect pond.

• Slavery--not exactly like in the US.
Greco-Roman Values

• Excellence: physical and mental
• Science, practical and theoretical.
• Philosophy, practical and theoretical.
• Family and patriarchy.
• Law.
Rome's Fall

• Centuries in the making.
• Inept emperors.
• Overreach.
• Barbarian hordes.
• Aristotle, Book X.
Classical Comparisons

• All three involved expansion from localized beginnings and integration as they assumed dominance over conquered peoples.

• All three regressed in both expansion and integration between 200 C.E and 500 C.E.

• Why couldn't the great empires push back the nomadic invaders?

• Why did different regions see different patterns of decline, with different results?

• What did each civilization's decline mean for the immediate and distant future?
Comparing Expansion

• Expansion is preceded and accompanied by the need to define a people's values: Confucius, Buddha, Socrates—all three lived within 150 years of each other.

• Chinese expansion: emphasis on political centralization.

• Indian expansion: localized and diverse, but held together by Hinduism.

• Mediterranean expansion: localized and diverse, affected smaller populations and limited political unity.
Comparing Integration
The issue of territory

• Chinese integration: efforts to resettle northerners into southern regions, promote a common language.

• Indian integration: spread of caste system and Hinduism will unite territories.

• Roman integration: much local autonomy and tolerance, expansion of citizenship means less resentment; interdependent trade network unites regions.
Comparing Integration
The Social Issue

- Greeks distrusted and disrespected foreigners.
- Pericles and citizenship
- Issues of toleration in Roman Empire