**SPICE Chart: Definitions and Guiding Questions**

In Comparative Cultures we must learn to view history thematically. There are five overarching themes that serve as unifying threads throughout the course, helping students to relate what is particular about each time period or society to a “big picture” of history. The themes also provide a way to organize comparisons and analyze change and continuity over time. The SPICE anacronym is a useful approach to analyzing human culture and society.

# Social

Development and Transformation of Social Structures

How does the group relate to one another? How do people communicate? What do people do together? How is the group organized? What are the family and gender relations(patriarchal, matriarchal)? Are there social classes? How fluid are social classes? How do they live? Are there inequalities?

# Political

Leadership, State-Building, Expansion, and Conflict

Who is in charge? What is power based on? Who gives that person or group power? Is there a contract? What is the government structure? Are there significant wars, treaties, courts, or laws? What is the relationship with other societies and civilizations? Are there any treaties, agreements or diplomacy?

# Interaction:

Interaction Between Humans and the Environment

In what geographic region is the culture/civilization located? What geographic landscape makes up the region? How are the people/events affected by the geography? How do the people interact with their environment? How does the environment define the culture/civilization?

# Culture:

Development and Interaction of Cultures

What is the meaning of life for people living in this society? How do they spend their lives? What are the basic religious beliefs? Are there leaders or documents that define religion? What groups are given the chance to learn? How do people learn? Do the people have any form of philosophy, math, or science? How do they express themselves? What technology or resources are given to art? Do the people have any significant achievements in the arts, music, writing, architecture, or literature? Are there influences or exchange of cultural ideas from other societies?

# Economic:

Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems

How do people earn their food? Is it based on agriculture, commerce, small trades or professions, or industry, like manufacturing or technology? Where's the money? What are the valued and traded commodities? What technologies or industries define culture?

Name: Block: Date:

**SPICE Chart**

***Civilization/Culture & Time Period:***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Social* Family & kinship
* Gender Roles & Relations
* Social & Economic Classes
* Racial & ethnic constructions
* Inequalities
* Lifestyles
 |  |
| Political* Leaders, Elites
* Political structures & forms of governance
* Nations & Nationalism
* Revolts & Revolutions
* Wars, diplomacy, & treaties
* Courts & Laws
 |  |
| Interaction (between humans and environment)* Demography & disease
* Patterns of settlement
* Migration
* Technology
* Available Resources or lack of
* Climate
 |  |
| Culture* Religions
* Belief systems, philosophies, & ideologies
* Math, science & technology
* The arts & architecture
* Writing & literature
* Values
 |  |
| Economic* Type of System
* Labor Systems
* Technology & Industry
* Trade & Commerce
* Capital/Money
* Types of Businesses
 |  |