

Origins

Volume V Number 9

Third IBHA Conference
July 15 - 17, 2016
Amsterdam



International
Big History
Association

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A New Direction for *Origins*

Origins has been receiving an increasing number of submissions that are the product of extensive scientific and scholarly research into big history. As a result, we have set up a double-blind peer review process to evaluate these submissions. As you know, this means that none of the three reviewers know the identity of the author; the author is given the reviewers' evaluations but not their identities.

We will continue to use *Origins* to share IBHA members' reflections on Big History, as well as their activities and accomplishments in the field. We will also continue republishing classic texts in Big History. We are pleased to initiate this new direction next month with "The Role of Calcium in the Evolution of Life" by Frans Verstappen of the Netherlands.

We welcome your submission to *Origins*, either in the established sections that are open to the reflections and insights of our members or as double blind reviewed Big History scholarship.

Sincerely, Lowell Gustafson, Editor, *Origins*

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Thank you for your membership in the IBHA. Your membership dues all go towards the administration of the association, but do not by themselves cover our costs. The only paid position is a part time administrative assistant. Other costs are for our website, for example. [Please consider a tax deductible \(in the US\) gift](#) to our 501(C)3 and please consider remembering the IBHA in your will.



From Big Bang to Galactic Civilizations: A Big History Anthology, Volume I

Our Place in the Universe

An Introduction to Big History

Edited by Barry Rodrigue, Leonid Grinin and Andrey Korotayev

2015, Primus, xii + 358pp, hb

[Information on international orders.](#)

The Book

Big History is a new field that has been developing rapidly around the world. What is Big History? According to its professional definition: Big History seeks to understand the integrated history of the Cosmos, Earth, Life and Humanity by using the best empirical evidence and scholarly methods. Big History deals with the universe's grand narrative of 13.8 billion years and provides a connection between our past, present and future. It encompasses all forms of existence and all time scales. The present collection is divided into three volumes and is the first international and comprehensive anthology of Big History. In volume one *Our Place in the Universe: An Introduction to Big History* our existence is regarded from different points of view: as a history of the universe, as a philosophy, and as a factor in the life of people. This edition will challenge and excite your vision of your own life and the new discoveries going on around us. Together with the authors, who come from all the inhabited continents of our planet, readers will engage in a fascinating trip into the depths of time and space, and we hope they will join us in coming to an understanding of our origins and our future.

The Editors

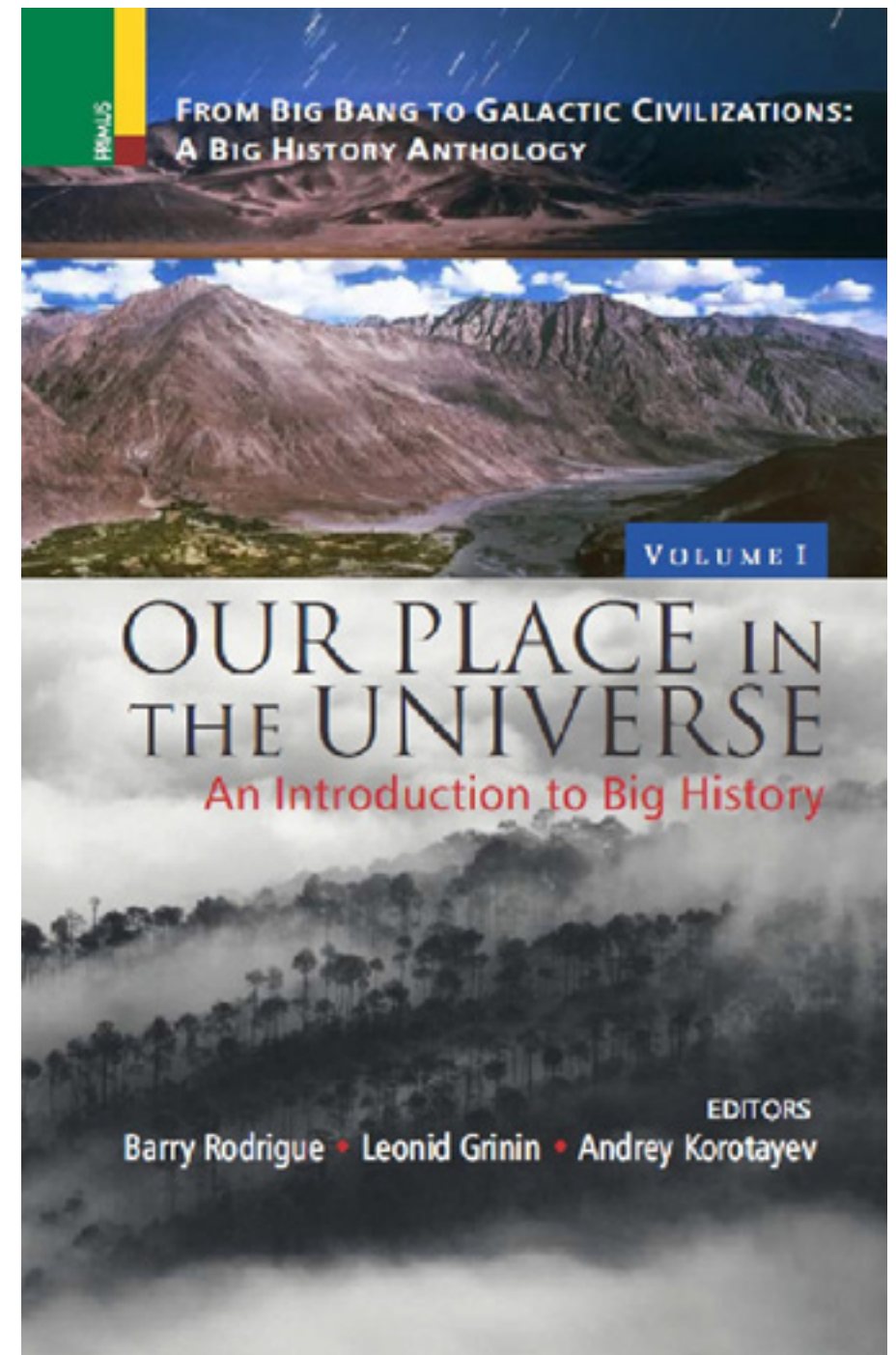
Barry Rodrigue is a geographer, archaeologist and historian who works as a Research Professor at the Eurasian Center for Megahistory and System Forecasting, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences. Rodrigue is a founding member of both the International Big

History

Association and
the Asian
Big History
Association.

Leonid Grinin is Senior Research Professor at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, and Deputy Director of its Eurasian Center for Megahistory and System Forecasting.

Andrey Korotayev is Senior Research Professor at the Eurasian Center for Megahistory and System Forecasting, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences and Head of the Laboratory for Monitoring Socio-Political Destabilization Risks, National Research University, Higher School of Economics.



ChronoZoom



ChronoZoom

Fonty's students are working on project ChronoZoom

- Fontys University of Applied Sciences, Eindhoven, the Netherlands
- Axiell ALM Netherlands B.V.
- University of Amsterdam
- The Faculty CMC Lomonosov Moscow State University

Project ChronoZoom by Matthijs Lantaff

In February 2015, fifteen students from Fontys University of Applied Sciences, Eindhoven, the Netherlands, started working on a pilot project called ChronoZoom. Together with the partners Axiell ALM Netherlands B.V., the University of Amsterdam and the Faculty CMC Lomonosov Moscow State University, these students will create a ChronoZoom that will extend the current Version.

With the help from our partner Axiell, who are developers of advanced and innovative technical solutions for libraries, archives and museums, we want ChronoZoom to provide access to multiple databases that contain exhibitions and artefacts from different museums, such as the

‘ChronoZoom is a timeline for all history: From the Big Bang, to the time of the dinosaurs, to the present.’

Rijksmuseum, Imperial War Museum in London, National Museums of Scotland and the Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst. This data will be added to ChronoZoom to enable users to view the artefacts and exhibits and add them to their own collection and put them in timelines for everyone to see. This will give the users a brand new experience in ChronoZoom.

What are we doing?

The fifteen students created three groups. The first group will focus on the scalability of ChronoZoom, They are trying to make sure that, when huge amounts of data are added, ChronoZoom keeps working fluently.

The second group will focus on the virtual canvas and will explore new ways to show the mass data of Axiell in the timelines and to make sure the canvas keeps working fluently.

The third group will focus on the user experience. The user experience group is currently working on improving the current user interface so that future projects can easily modify the sites. It all started with research on user experience. After that research, we began creating wireframes---dummy screens that enable us to create a new user interface . After creating these screens, we visited the University of Amsterdam to perform a series of tests to see if what we had created gave a better experience for all the users.

Our Goal

The goal we want to achieve for ChronoZoom is: to create an improved multi tooling platform for the Big History Community.

- to Improve the usability for a broader audience.
- to Implement access to databases from

- museums all over the world.
- to prepare ChronoZoom for new technologies in the future, so that other developers can continue to improve it.

We are currently performing a lot of research and tasks in a test environment. When we are finished with testing everything, we will update the current ChronoZoom to the new version.

We are currently using new techniques such as noSQL, asp.net and web api's. We are using

these techniques to improve the maintainability of ChronoZoom and make it future-proof for new developers to add more tools.



The ChronoZoom Project Team



*From top left to right:
Max, Joery, Wesley, Neil, Marcel, Eugene, Richard,
Anthony, Bob, David.*

*From Bottom left to right:
Lenne, Zef, Matthijs, Galvarino, Rens, Lars, Felix, Rick*

Book Review

Teaching Big History, edited by Richard B. Simon, Mojgan Behmand, and Thomas Burke. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015. 426 pages. \$34.95, cloth and e-book.

Big History has been much in the news lately! The International Big History Association was formed in 2011, and has staged two successful conferences in Michigan and California, with a third planned for Amsterdam in 2016. The first-ever textbook in the field—*Big History: Between Nothing and Everything*, by David Christian, Cynthia Brown, and Craig Benjamin—was published by McGraw-Hill in 2014. That same year, the Big History Project, a resource-rich, web-based high school Big History course sponsored by Bill Gates, was released to the world and is now being used at hundreds of schools globally to teach Big History. And recent articles about Big History in major international newspapers including *The New York Times* have elicited an enormous number of comments and enquiries from readers.

So, it is incredibly timely to now have available this fascinating and useful addition to the Big History canon, edited and authored by a team of professors who are amongst the most experienced college-level Big History instructors on the planet. As Mojgan Behmand explains in the introduction to the book, the Dominican University of California has been teaching Big History as the required course for all first-year students since 2012. *Teaching Big History* includes a thoughtful account of how the Dominican faculty built their general education curriculum for first-year students around the field of Big History, and argues that this has been a particularly rich and transformative experience for faculty and students alike.

That decision means that professors at Dominican have accumulated a great deal of practical experience in how to actually teach this huge, all-encompassing narrative — experience enhanced by regular reflective faculty discussion sessions and by professional development workshops that have involved most of the leading proponents in the field. This wealth of experience has resulted in this particularly useful “manual” that contains an enormous amount of practical advice on how to teach all components of the course. Yet this is also a very thoughtful book that includes reflective essays on what the

experience of teaching and learning Big History has meant to instructors and students.

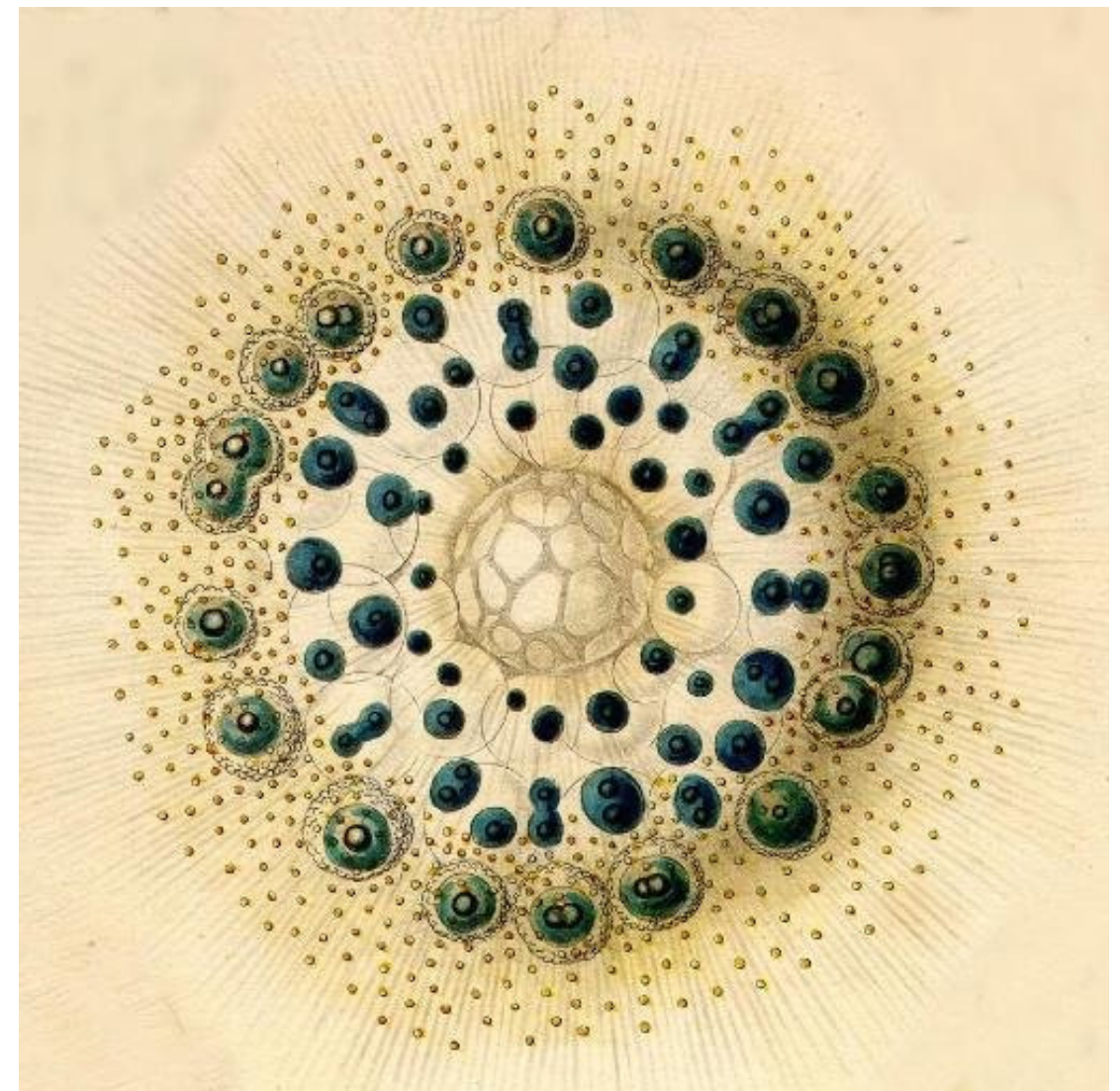
Big History tells the story of the universe over 13.82 billion years, and does so by using the knowledge and perspectives of a widely diverse range of disciplines, including cosmology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, evolutionary biology, anthropology, archaeology, economics, sociology, futurology, and, of course, history. Once immersed in the story, students quickly realize that the Big History framework will help them make sense, not only of their own majors and careers, but also of the extraordinary connections that exist between these various disciplines, and of the necessity of equipping ourselves with this sort of multi-disciplinary knowledge if we are to have any hope of dealing with the many problems humanity and our planet are facing.

But the prospect of teaching such an enormous, cross-disciplinary course can be daunting to even the most experienced college instructor, which is why *Teaching Big History* is such a valuable resource. The editors and their authors have essentially created a comprehensive guide for designing, teaching, and assessing Big History in the undergraduate classroom. The book is full of helpful advice about the challenges of creating a course in Big History, and, even more ambitiously, an entire general education program constructed around Big History—a development that those of us deeply committed to the field believe will eventually be emulated at many other institutions and liberal education universities in the future.

As someone who has been teaching Big History for twenty years, and as an author of numerous Big History articles, chapters, and books, I know of very few other instructors who have thought more deeply about pedagogy and assessment in this field as systematically and rigorously as editors Simon, Behmand, and Burke and their accomplished team of teacher-authors.

Perhaps Brian Thomas Swimme, one of the leading proponents of Big History (or as he has often termed it in print and film, “*The Universe Story*”), puts it best when he notes that future scholars tracing the “rise” of Big History might well begin their story with the faculty at the Dominican University of California. There is quite simply no better teaching guide available than this well-written and quite inspiring book. Those of us deeply committed to the field are grateful to have this book available, because it may well help facilitate Brian Swimme’s prediction that by the twenty-second century of the Common Era, Big History will be “taught in every university around our planet.”

Craig Benjamin
Grand Valley State University



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Volume 48 Number 3, May 2015, pp 591 - 593.

Establishment of the International Big History Association Research Fund

by **Craig Benjamin, IBHA Treasurer** founding donor Heathe Kyle Yeakley; and thanks to all members and friends of the IBHA for your consideration of making a small contribution to the IBHA Research

The International Big History Association is proud to announce the establishment of the IBHA Research Fund; we ask members and friends of the IBHA to consider making a tax-deductible donation to the fund. The fund was launched in July of this year thanks to a generous donation from IBHA member Heathe Kyle Yeakley. Heathe, a strong supporter of the field of Big History, and of the IBHA in particular, described his reasoning and hopes for the Research Fund in an email to me in my capacity as IBHA Treasurer.


To paraphrase Heath: I am not a millionaire by any stretch of the imagination, but I have reached a point in my life where I can budget a little money each year to invest in ... something. How much might it cost to fund a Big History research agenda? Are there opportunities where an individual like myself could donate a few hundred dollars here and there to help get a Big History research fund off the ground?

After discussing this enquiry with IBHA Board and Advisory Council members, we decided that this was a very good idea of Heathe's that we should support. We noted that a research fund could begin in quite a modest way with an initial contribution from Heathe. Once it has grown to a worthwhile amount, the fund could then be used annually to help fund a research PhD project for a Big History doctoral student. We hope that other IBHA members and friends might consider also making modest contributions to this fund, both to advance research in Big History at the graduate level, and also as a way of more actively participating in and directly supporting Big History research. Once the fund balance has reached a reasonable level, a small subcommittee will be formed to help select appropriate research projects being undertaken by graduate students pursuing doctoral research in the field of Big History.

Thank you to all involved in this exciting endeavor, particularly

Fund. Tax-deductible donations can be sent as checks to the IBHA Office; or made through PayPal with a note indicating that this is a donation for the IBHA Research Fund. Receipts will be issued by the office for all contributions.

by Heathe Yeakley



I became a Teaching Company customer in the fall of 2001. Over the last fourteen years, I have had the pleasure of learning a variety of topics from some of the best professors the human race has to offer. I am a Linux Administrator by trade, but in my heart, I am a paleontologist. As I have worked my way through the Teaching Company catalog, I have kept an eye out for a course which might cover the rise of life, the reign of the Dinosaurs, or perhaps the rise of my own species a few hundred thousand years ago.

In 2008, the Teaching Company released David Christian's "Big History: The Big Bang, Life On Earth, and the Rise of Humanity". I read the course description and recognized immediately that this might be the course I have been waiting for. I received the course for Christmas in 2011. It was everything I was looking for and more. It never occurred to me that it was possible to take everything known about time from various disciplines and weaving it all together into a single, cohesive narrative. Not only was I hooked on this "Big History" idea, but I wanted to be part of this community. I quickly located Dr. Christian's e-mail address through a Google search and contacted him about getting involved in Big History. He informed me



that I could join the IBHA and suggested I attend the first IBHA meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan the following year. I joined the IBHA on Valentine's Day in 2012 and attended the Grand Rapids conference a few months later. I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and had a wonderful time meeting other people from various walks of life that share my interest in the Big History narrative. I left the conference with a question crawling around in the back of my mind, however...

Now what?

In other words, we have this fresh inter-disciplinary idea in Academia. We have a community of people interested in making Big History happen. Several people at the 2012 conference gave presentations on what they are working on personally to develop the growing body of scholarship within the Big History discipline, but these are individual people working on individual ideas... What is our objective as a community? I put the question on the back of my mind. It was, after all, our first conference, and I think several Big Historians were pleased to finally meet one another and spend a weekend discussing the mother of all Creation stories. I attended the 2014 conference in San Rafael hoping my one unanswered question from Grand Rapids might come up in a panel. What's next? What is the IBHA's goal as a community? I didn't hear an answer, though I concede this might have come up at a panel I didn't attend.

A few months ago, Steven Spielberg released the next installment of the Jurassic Park franchise, "Jurassic World". It made \$500 million just in its opening weekend. As an amateur paleontologist, I follow a few dinosaur message groups on Facebook, and shortly after "Jurassic World" came out, a few members of the paleontology community began to point out that the movie made more money in one weekend than is spent on funding all paleontology programs over the course of a year. As I read these scientists and graduate students lament over all the work and research that could be happening if someone would just come along and drop half a billion dollars in their lap, I had one of those "light bulb" moments.

Funding!

The IBHA needs funding. More specifically, the IBHA needs research funding. That's the answer to my "What's next?" question. We need funds to launch Big History research agendas which will subsequently expand the steadily evolving body of scholarship that is Big History! I began to think of all the things that could be happening in the Big History community if we just had the cash to get some research projects moving. My head began swimming with ideas, but I wasn't sure what to do with them.

A few years ago, someone setup an IBHA message board on LinkedIn, and I

have it setup to e-mail me when someone posts anything to the board. A few weeks ago, someone posted a question on the forum about funding Big History research agendas. Seeing someone else asking this question spurred me into action. We need funding. Do we have any? Where does it come from? Who should I talk to about this? How much does it cost to fund a research agenda? Could IBHA members pitch in a few hundred dollars a piece and we fund research from a community pool?

Since Dr. Benjamin is the treasurer for the IBHA, I decided he might be a good place to start. I sent him an e-mail asking him some of my questions about Big History research funding. Dr. Benjamin responded that my inquiry had initiated a serious discussion among the IBHA Board about setting up a system to fund Big History research agendas. The Board agreed that setting up a Research Fund sounded like a good idea, and they asked me if I would be interested in making the initial deposit. I sent some money to Dr. Benjamin who, in turn, opened a new account specifically for funding Big History research agendas.

So, we have a fund. The balance is currently sitting at \$250. (Hey, it's a start.) Now that we have a fund officially established, I pose a friendly challenge to my fellow Big Historians.

As I write this, we are just under one year away from the IBHA 2016 conference in Amsterdam. Between now and then, I would love to see this brilliant community of scholars band together and contribute to the research fund. I would love to arrive in Amsterdam 11 months from now and learn that we, as a community, raised enough money to not only launch a research project, but to get a status update on how that project is going.

So there is my challenge. Can we fund 1 project between now and next July?

Who's with me?



Heathe Yeakley

IBHA Participation

One of the key purposes of the IBHA is for those of us who are interested in Big History to have a place to associate. It is a place to learn of other members' Big History activities and thoughts. So we are delighted to welcome new members to the IBHA – and by the vote of confidence and recognition of the value of our association by those who have renewed their membership. It is a pleasure to have each of you with us.

Rich Blundell

Esther Quaedackers

Philip Brown

Michael Burns

Heathe Yeakley in this issue of *Origins* challenges IBHA members and friends to contribute to a research fund. Word leaked out and already one person has contributed. We want to add your name to the list of contributors:

Cynthia Leonard



Three **IBHA Board of Directors** were each elected to three year terms in the on-line elections that ran during July. We are pleased to announce that ***Craig Benjamin, David Christian, and Jonathan Markley*** will each be serving the IBHA in this important capacity.

Since Board members are on staggered three year terms, there is an election each year. Nominations will open next month for candidates to run next year. Information on how members may nominate a candidate will be included next month in *Origins*. We appreciate all the different ways that IBHA members participate in advancing our common goals.

Did you catch these Tweets?

From Fred Spier's Twitter

Follow Fred Spier on twitter
@BigHistory

[Our early solar system may have been home to a fifth giant planet.](#)

A cluster of icy bodies in the same region as Pluto could be proof that our early solar system was home to a fifth giant planet, according to new research. That planet may have “bumped” Neptune during its migration away from the sun 4 billion years ago, causing the ice giant to jump into its current orbit and scattering a cluster of its satellites into the Kuiper belt in the outer solar system.

[Charting the slow death of the universe](#)

Astronomers studying more than 200,000 galaxies have measured the energy generated within a large portion of space more precisely than ever before. This represents the most comprehensive assessment of the energy output of the nearby Universe. They confirm that the energy produced in a section of the Universe today is only about half what it was two billion years ago and find that this fading is occurring across all wavelengths from the ultraviolet to the far infrared. The Universe is slowly dying.



[FIVE PERSONAL THRESHOLDS OF TEACHING COMPLEXITY](#)

Angelina Kreger
Big History Teacher, 11th & 12th Grade
Novi, Michigan



At the end of last school year, I was asked to present to my department about what I have learned from teaching Big History. My department, while supportive of my endeavor, did not know about the content or instructional methods employed. They knew that I taught a course that was viewed as a senior elective, which took place over the course of one semester. They were aware that students brought in their parents to view their final presentations, and that my class was the one that kids brought in balloons, shake weights, and ukuleles for, but other than that they were in the dark.

[INCORPORATING BHP “WAYS OF KNOWING” LESSONS IN THE CLASSROOM](#)

Alex Madueña
Big History Teacher, 9th Grade
Los Angeles, CA

“We know that early humans lived in hunter-forager societies because our textbook said so,” declared a student, and not without a degree of certainty and pride in her voice. Partially from curiosity, and partially from a desire to gauge student understanding, I had asked students to explain how we know about early human societies as we entered our sixth unit in the Big History course.

[Australia criticised over emissions cuts that defy 2 °C target](#)

Australia is set to weaken its targets for carbon emissions ahead of the UN’s climate-change summit in Paris this December, contrasting with a push by the US, China and other countries towards more ambitious cuts.

[New design could finally help to bring fusion power closer to reality](#)

It’s an old joke that many fusion scientists have grown tired of hearing: Practical nuclear fusion power plants are just 30 years away—and always will be.

But now, finally, the joke may no longer be true: Advances in magnet technology have enabled researchers at MIT to propose a new design for a practical compact tokamak fusion reactor—and it’s one that might be realized in as little as a decade, they say.



@davidgchristian

The era of practical fusion power, which could offer a nearly inexhaustible energy resource, may be coming near.

[Study finds price of wind energy in US at an all-time low, averaging under 2.5 cent/kWh](#)



@JosephVoros

Wind energy pricing is at an all-time low, according to a new report released by the U.S. Department of Energy and prepared by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab).

Call for Papers

INTERNATIONAL BIG HISTORY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

July 15-17, 2016

The University of Amsterdam

The Netherlands

Building Big History: Research and Teaching

DEADLINE FOR [PAPER](#) / [PANEL](#) SUBMISSIONS IS FEBRUARY 12th, 2016

The International Big History Association (IBHA) defines its purpose as “to promote, support and sponsor the diffusion and improvement of the academic and scholarly knowledge of the scientific field of endeavor commonly known as “Big History” by means of teaching and research and to engage in activities related thereto.”

Article 2 of the IBHA Articles of Incorporation.

The theme for the 2016 conference is “Building Big History: Research and Teaching.” The conference seeks to present the latest and the best in Big History research and teaching, while creating a forum for the articulation and discussion of questions that are central to Big History. Among the topics that are to be addressed at the conference through a series of panels, roundtables, and discussions, are:

Approaches to Big History; Big History research agenda; Scholarship contributing to Big History;

Big History teaching at universities, secondary, and primary schools: achievements and challenges; Little Big Histories; Reactions to Big History. We encourage proposals along these lines on any topic related to Big History.

To allow the Program Committee to effectively group individual participants into panels, we request that you format your proposals as follows:

- Individual paper proposals must include two

separate paragraphs of no more than 150 words each.

- Paragraph one should contain the title of your proposed paper, and provide a summary of its specific content.
- Paragraph two should carry the title “Methodology, and Relevance to Big History”, in which you address the underlying methodology of your paper, your approach to Big History, and in which you explain how your specific paper

(as described in paragraph one) relates to the broader field of Big History.

- Your proposal must include your name, institutional affiliation (if you have any), e-mail address, phone and/or fax numbers, and a brief curriculum vitae.
- All of this must be provided as one single file, preferably in MS-Word.
- Proposals for entire sessions or panels must contain all this information for each participant, as well as contact information and a brief C.V. for the moderator, if you suggest one. (The program committee can help find moderators, if necessary.)

Please submit your [paper](#) or [panel](#) proposal by clicking on one of these links, which allow for submission of information. The deadline for paper and panel submissions is February 12th, 2016. The time limit at the conference for presenting papers will be 20 minutes, and the deadline for submitting papers to

the session moderator is three weeks in advance of the conference.

All presenters at the conference must be members of IBHA. Presenters may become members at www.ibhanet.org and will need to do so prior to registration for the conference.

The IBHA Conference will convene on premises of the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, located in the center of this beautiful European city. Attendees will have the option of selecting from one of several hotels in Amsterdam and the surrounding area with whom special conference arrangements have been made.

The Conference Planning Committee is already hard at work investigating walking and other pre-conference tours of the city, and a post-conference tour that will visit many of the leading scientific, geological, and

cultural sites in Europe. We will keep all members fully informed as plans for the third IBHA conference evolve. (See the IBHA website www.ibhanet.org)

For all things Amsterdam, you can go to <http://www.iamsterdam.com/en/>. For a complete guide to the Netherlands and its many attractions, you can visit <http://www.holland.com/us/tourism.htm>. If you have more time to explore the larger area, similar websites exist for nearby Belgium, France, Germany, and Great Britain.

Please find more details on the conference at www.ibhanet.org. We very much hope that you can join us at the 3rd IBHA conference.

Program Committee: Jonathan Markley (chair, jmarkley@fullerton.edu), Cynthia Brown, David Christian, Lowell Gustafson, Andrey Korotayev, Esther Quaedackers, Fred Spier, Sun Yue.

The conference will take place at the Oudemanhuispoort (Old Man's Home Gate). Part of it was built, as the name implies, as a home for poor old people in the early 17th century. In the late 19th

century the University of Amsterdam started to use the building. Around that the same time book traders also moved into the little shops that line the main hallway of the building. The book traders are still

there. Fred Spier started teaching a Big History course in Oudemanhuispoort 20 years ago. It ran there for 10 years.

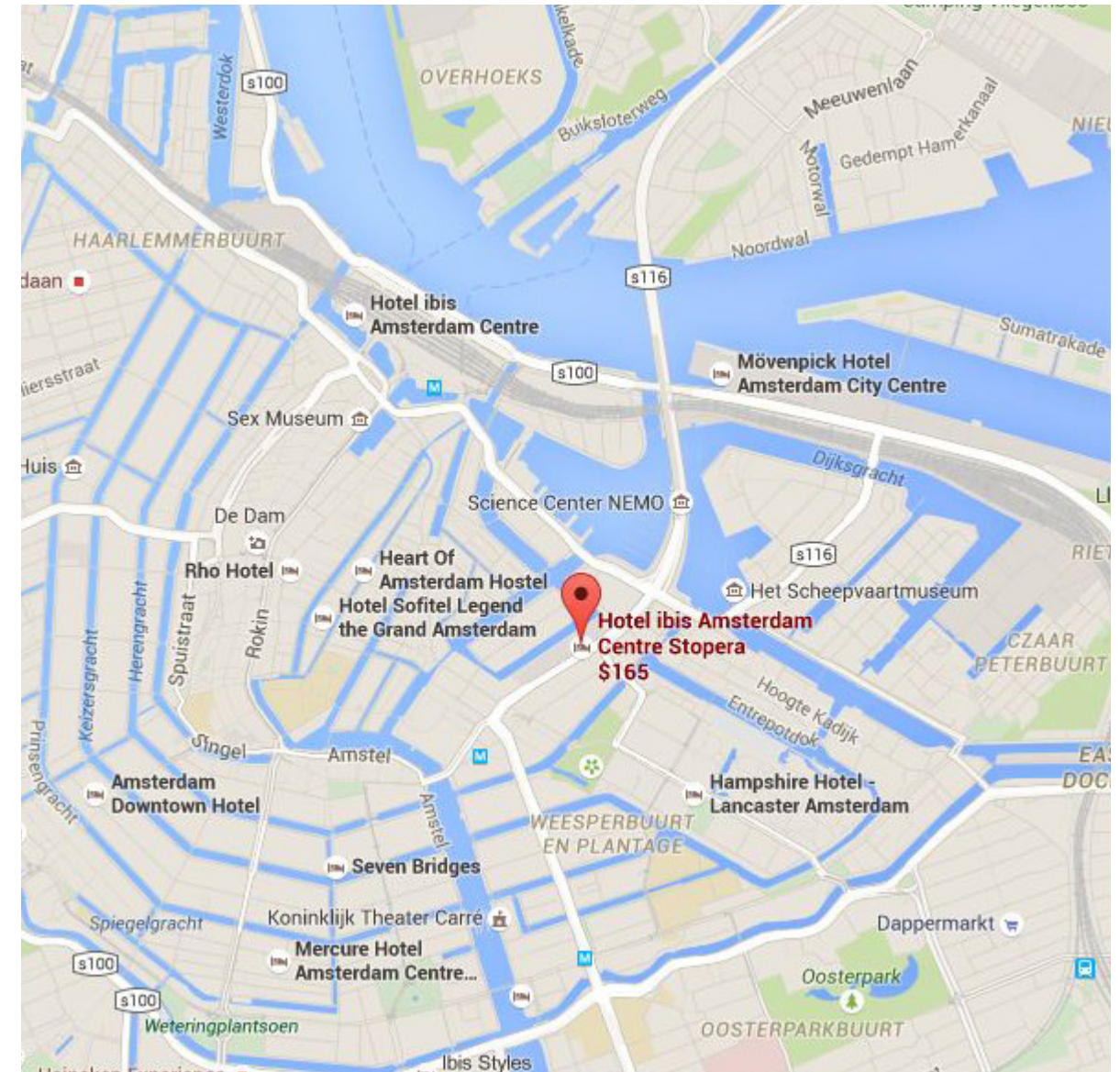
We have retained two hotels – IBIS Amsterdam Centre Stopera (<http://www.ibis.com/en/hotel-3044-ibis-amsterdam-centre-stopera/index.shtml>) within a 15 minute walk to the University of Amsterdam, and the Volkshotel (<https://www.volkshotel.nl/>) within a 15 minute metro ride to the University. The two hotels are totally different types of hotels; check the great reviews of these hotels on tripadvisor (<http://www.tripadvisor.com/>) . Please mark the dates of July 15 - 17 on your calendars, and start planning to join us in Amsterdam in July of 2016!

If you have any questions – just email Donna Tew, IBHA Office Coordinator @ tewd@gvsu.edu



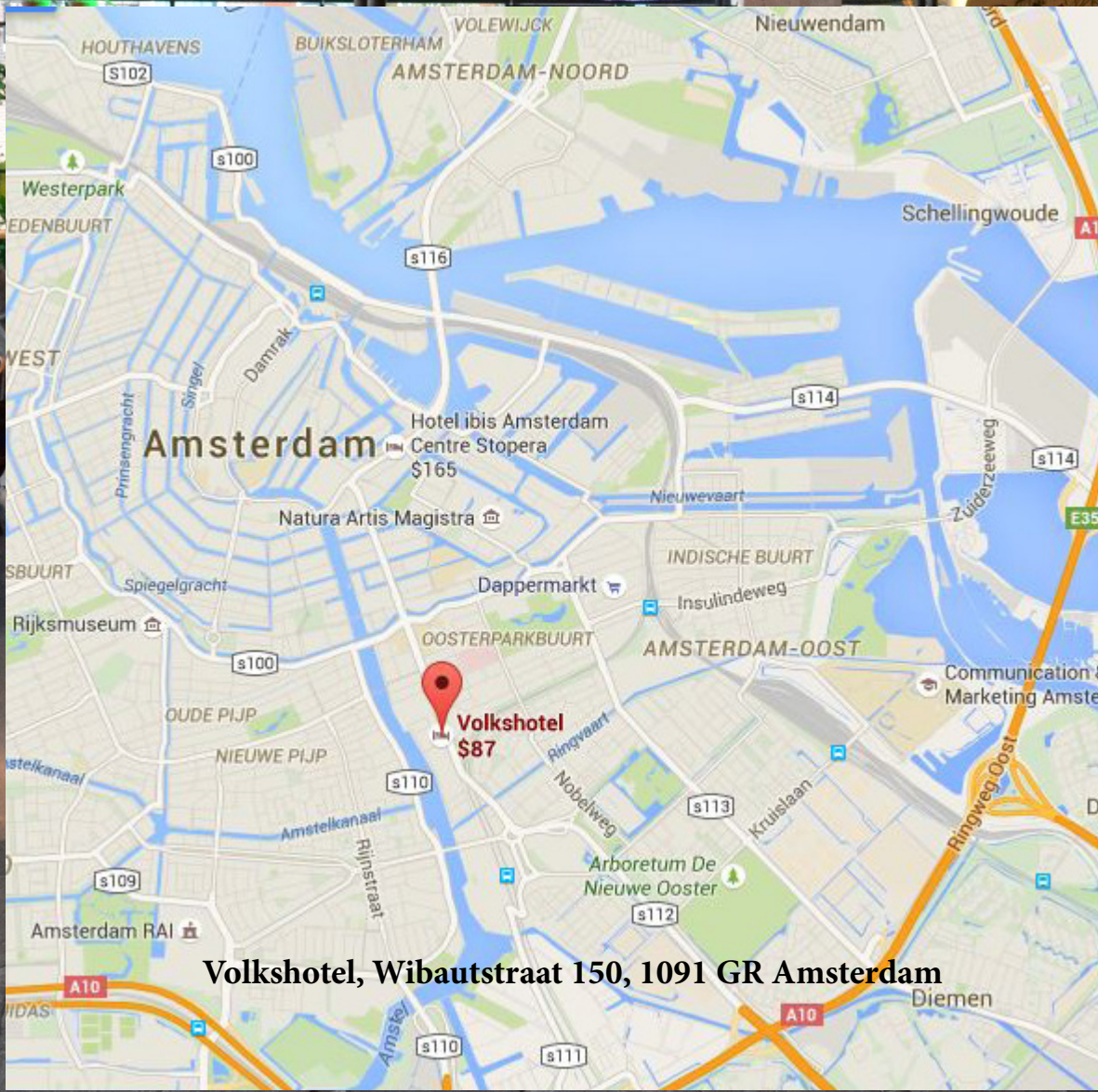


Location of Conference: Oudemanhuispoort 4-6, 1012 EZ Amsterdam



Hotel ibis Amsterdam Centre Stopera, Valkenburgerstraat





Volkshotel, Wibautstraat 150, 1091 GR Amsterdam

Big History (and the IBHA Conference) at the University of Amsterdam

The next and third IBHA conference will be held from July 15th to July 17th 2016 at the University of Amsterdam.

The University of Amsterdam has a long history. It was founded as the Atheneum Illustre in 1632, during the Dutch Golden Age. The prosperous city of Amsterdam wanted and needed a university to educate its citizens about the riches of the world. Yet the central government did not allow it to have one, since a university had already been established in nearby Leiden in 1575, possibly as a reward for that city's successful resistance against the Spanish. Amsterdam, however, was not discouraged and simply established an educational institution under a different name. It subsequently hired a number of internationally renowned scientists and scholars and started teaching from the Agnietenkapel, a former nunnery. This chapel, which currently houses the university museum, is right around the corner from the IBHA conference location.

The university's slightly anarchistic nature never quite disappeared. After almost 400 years and numerous upheavals, some of which led to major university reforms, the institution still identifies with its somewhat rebellious roots. Even today, one of its three core values is a form of determination, described on the university's website as "inherent to any Amsterdam citizen who looks at the world from an independent, critical and self conscious perspective. University of Amsterdam researchers, teachers and students are competent rebels who, boldly yet responsibly, choose their own paths and set trends."

Partly because of its history and identity, the University of Amsterdam was one of the first in the world to adopt the groundbreaking and unconventional approach to history that was being pioneered by David Christian at Macquarie University in Sydney in the early 1990s. After visiting David in 1992, University of Amsterdam professor Johan Goudsblom brought the syllabus of the big history course that was being taught in Sydney home and decided to set up a similar course at his own university. He did so together with his former Ph.D. student Fred Spier, who after Goudsblom's retirement in 1997 became the course's main organizer.

The new course proved to be a big success. About 200 students attended its first run and hundreds of students have registered for the course each year ever since. Within the university, the course's success occasionally led to some resistance, mainly from faculty members who deemed the big history approach to be too broad. But thanks to student engagement and the strong support of a number of the

university's most prominent scientists a semi-permanent position in big history was created for Fred Spier in 1997 and was turned into a permanent position in 2006.

Meanwhile, new big history courses, aimed at slightly different student populations, were established both within the University of Amsterdam and outside the university. The university started to function as a kind of big history course contractor, which in turn made it possible for the university to develop into a regional big history hub. The university's latest efforts to create a big history MOOC that will be published on Coursera in early 2016 (alongside Macquarie's big history MOOC that will be published on the same platform in the upcoming months) neatly fits into this pattern.

All of these developments have led to the creation of another permanent position in big history in August 2015, which will be filled by Esther Quaedackers. These developments have also enabled the University of Amsterdam offer to host the 2016 IBHA conference. This offer has been accepted by the IBHA, which, given the university's dedication to big history, deemed it to be a suitable place to hold its first conference outside of the US.

For more information on the history of big history at the UvA, you can also read Fred Spier's [The Small History of the Big History Course at the University of Amsterdam](#) that appeared in World History Connected in May 2005.

The Agnietenkapel
(source: Wikimedia Commons)



MAIL-IN REGISTRATION FORM | INTERNATIONAL BIG HISTORY ASSOCIATION 3rd Conference

“Building Big History: Research and Teaching”

University of Amsterdam | July 15-17, 2016 (post-conference tour “A taste of Europe” July 18-27, 2016)

Name: _____ Affiliation: _____ Printed Program ____ or Online ____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

CONFERENCE BADGE INFORMATION (Please state name and affiliation exactly as you want it to appear on the badge):

NAME:	
AFFILIATION:	

2016 REGISTRATION DATES: Early: August 1st, 2015 – January 27th, 2016 | Regular: January 28th – June 15th | Late: begins after June 15th

QTY.	RATE	Subtotal	Total
	IBHA Members: Early \$295 Regular \$325 Late \$355		
	Non-Members: Early \$395 Regular \$425 Late \$455		
	IBHA Full-Time Student Members: Early \$150 Regular \$180 Late \$210		
	Guest Pass: (Evening Social Events only): Early \$150 Regular \$180 Late \$210		

Membership: Consider taking advantage of the discounted registration rate if you are not currently a member by joining the IBHA. See membership rates below and enter rate that applies here:

	Membership Type:		
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Note: The last day for Conference Fee refund (less \$30 handling fee) is **JUNE 15TH, 2016**

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$

Please make checks payable to: International Big History Association

Payment must be made in US\$ and payable through a U.S. bank.

Please note: returned checks will incur a \$25 fee.

Please mail registration form to: (or online www.ibhanet.org)

International Big History Association

Grand Valley State University

1 Campus Drive, LOH-181

Allendale, MI 49401 USA

***Daily AM/PM snacks, lunch, opening & closing receptions are all included in registration cost.

***Guest registration includes evening events only.

MEMBERSHIP RATES	1 year	2 year	3 year
Student			\$25
Annual Gross Income:			
30,000-39,999	\$35	\$60	\$90
40,000-49,000	\$45	\$80	\$120
50,000-64,999	\$60	\$110	\$165
65,000-79,999	\$70	\$130	\$190
80,000-94,999	\$80	\$150	\$220
95,000 – over	\$95	\$180	\$270
Contributing			\$330
Sustaining			\$550
Lifetime			\$2,250

Note:

Regarding Membership: Although non-presenters do not have to be members of the IBHA to register for the conference, if you are not currently a member and would like to take advantage of the discounted member registration fees, please consider joining the IBHA before completing your conference registration. Please note that **all presenters, panel chairs, and commentators will need to be members** of the IBHA before we can confirm their participation.

IBHA Post conference tour: “A taste of Europe” directly following the conference (July 18 – 27th, 2016)

We are excited to invite you to participate on a custom designed big history and world history tour of Europe that will take place after our IBHA conference in Amsterdam next summer. The exclusive tour will be organized by Go Ahead tours and thematic lectures will be provided by leading Big Historians.

The itinerary includes a number of the most significant scientific and historic sites in Europe. Scientific sites include; the Large Hadron Collider at CERN near Geneva, the highest astronomical observatory in Europe atop the Jungfrauoch, the extraordinary geological sites of the volcanoes of Central France, the formidable



Lascaux

mountain wall of the Bernese Alps, and the Rhine River valley. Sites of great historical and cultural significance include; the battlefields of the First World War, the cultural treasures

of Paris, the Renaissance architectural masterpieces of the Loire

Valley, the Paleolithic cave art of southern France, the castles and towns of the Rhine Valley, Rhine River cruise, Strasbourg (location of the European Parliament), and the ancient university town of Heidelberg.

Designed and led by leading big historians and world historians especially for travelers with an interest in these two fields. This is an extraordinary tour of Europe that will probably never be repeated.

Space is limited, and the response has already been overwhelmingly positive. So, if you know you are interested, call Donna Tew at IBHA (616-331-8035) or email tewd@gvsu.edu for more information today! The price includes 10 days/ 9 nights in handpicked 3-4 star, centrally located hotels, breakfast daily, 1 wine tasting, 1 lunch, 4 three course dinners, full time tour director, lectures by leading field experts, and transportation. The price is on a sliding scale for 20-40 travelers - \$3439-\$3139.

Those who sign up in August 2015 will lock in a special early sign up discount!



11,300
ft high
in the Swiss
Alps on the
Jungfrauoch' Photo: C.
Benjamin

9 OVERNIGHT STAYS		YOUR TOUR INCLUDES
Paris	(2 nights)	9 nights in handpicked 3-4 star, centrally located hotels
Dordogne Region	(2 nights)	
Geneva	(1 night)	Buffet breakfast daily, 1 wine tasting, 1 lunch, 4 three-course dinners
Grindelwald	(2 nights)	Multilingual Tour Director
Heidelberg Region	(2 nights)	
		Private deluxe motorcoach

DAY 1: 07/18/2016 PARIS

Your tour starts this morning. Say goodbye to some of your fellow conference-goers and hello to your Tour Director as you transfer from Amsterdam to Paris on our own deluxe coach. En route, you'll stop at Ypres, Belgium for free time and a visit to the In Flanders Field Museum.

Included Entrance Fees: In Flanders Field Museum

Included meals: breakfast

Overnight in Paris

DAY 2: 07/19/2016 PARIS

Guided Sightseeing of Paris

Panoramic tour featuring Notre Dame, Eiffel Tower, Louvre, Place de la Concorde

Guided tour of the Louvre's ancient artifact collection

Welcome dinner included tonight for the group in Paris

Included Entrance Fees: Louvre

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Overnight in Paris

DAY 3: 07/20/2016 DORDOGNE REGION

Transfer from Paris to the Dordogne region on our deluxe coach with a stop in the Loire Valley.

Guided visit to Chateau Chenonceaux

Dinner included tonight for the group in the Dordogne region

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Overnight in Dordogne region

DAY 4: 07/21/2016 DORDOGNE REGION

Morning guided visit to Lascaux II Cave

Afternoon visit to Musée national de Préhistoire in Les Eyzies-de-Tayac-Sireuil

Included Entrance Fees: Lascaux II Cave, Musée national de Préhistoire

Included meals: breakfast

Overnight in Dordogne region

DAY 5: 07/22/2016 GENEVA

Transfer from the Dordogne region to Geneva on our deluxe coach via scenic drive through the Volcans d'Auvergne Natural Regional Park, featuring Puy de Dôme and Puy de Sancy

Included meals: breakfast

Overnight in Geneva

DAY 6: 07/23/2016 GRINDELWALD

Morning guided tour of CERN

Afternoon transfer from Geneva to Grindelwald by bus

Dinner included tonight for the group in Grindelwald

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Overnight in Grindelwald

DAY 7: 07/24/2016 GRINDELWALD

Full-day excursion to Jungfrauoch alpine saddle

Included meals: breakfast

Overnight in Grindelwald

DAY 8: 07/25/2016 HEIDELBERG REGION

Transfer from Grindelwald to Heidelberg on our deluxe coach with a stop in Strasbourg for a visit to the European Parliament

Included meals: breakfast

Overnight in Heidelberg region

DAY 9: 07/26/2016 HEIDELBERG REGION

Lunch and wine tasting on a Rhine River cruise

Farewell dinner included this evening for the group in Heidelberg region

Included meals: breakfast, wine tasting, lunch, dinner

Overnight in Heidelberg region

DAY 10: 07/27/2016 AMSTERDAM

Today, you'll transfer from the Heidelberg region back to Amsterdam by our deluxe coach with a stop in Cologne for free time

Once in Amsterdam, say goodbye to your group and tour director as you make your way home independently

You are cordially invited to join us for our trip to Paris, Dordogne Region, Geneva, Grindelwald, and the Heidelberg Region.



Heidelberg Bridge and Castle