**Period 4: Global Interactions, c. 1450 to c. 1750**

**Key Concept 4.1.** Globalizing Networks of Communication and Exchange

The interconnection of the Eastern and Western hemispheres made possible by transoceanic voyaging marked a key transformation of this period. Technological innovations helped to make transoceanic connections possible. Changing patterns of long-distance trade included the global circulation of some commodities and the formation of new regional markets and financial centers. Increased transregional and global trade networks facilitated the spread of religion and other elements of culture as well as the migration of large numbers of people. Germs carried to the Americas ravaged the indigenous peoples, while the global exchange of crops and animals altered agriculture, diets, and populations around the planet.

1. **In the context of the new global circulation of goods, there was an intensification of all existing regional trade networks that brought prosperity and economic disruption to the merchants and governments in the trading regions of the Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, Sahara, and overland Eurasia.**
2. **European technological developments in cartography and navigation built on previous knowledge developed in the classical, Islamic, and Asian worlds, and included the production of *new tools, innovations in ship designs*, and an improved understanding of global wind and currents patterns — all of which made transoceanic travel and trade possible.**
3. **Remarkable new transoceanic maritime reconnaissance occurred in this period.**
   1. Official Chinese maritime activity expanded into the Indian Ocean region with the naval voyages led by Ming Admiral Zheng He, which enhanced Chinese prestige.
   2. Portuguese development of a school for navigation led to increased travel to and trade with West Africa, and resulted in the construction of a global trading-post empire.
   3. Spanish sponsorship of the first Columbian and subsequent voyages across the Atlantic and Pacific dramatically increased European interest in transoceanic travel and trade.
   4. Northern Atlantic crossings for fishing and settlements continued and spurred European searches for multiple routes to Asia.
   5. In Oceania and Polynesia, established exchange and communication networks were not dramatically affected because of infrequent European reconnaissance in the Pacific Ocean.
4. **The new global circulation of goods was facilitated by royal chartered European monopoly companies that took silver from Spanish colonies in the Americas to purchase Asian goods for the Atlantic markets, but regional markets continued to flourish in Afro-Eurasia by using established commercial practices and new transoceanic shipping services developed by European merchants.**
   1. European merchants’ role in Asian trade was characterized mostly by transporting goods from one Asian country to another market in Asia or the Indian Ocean region.
   2. Commercialization and the creation of a global economy were intimately connected to new global circulation of silver from the Americas.
   3. Influenced by mercantilism, joint-stock companies were new methods used by European rulers to control their domestic and colonial economies and by European merchants to compete against one another in global trade.
   4. The Atlantic system involved the movement of goods, wealth, and free and unfree laborers, and the mixing of African, American, and European cultures and peoples.
5. **The new connections between the Eastern and Western hemispheres resulted in the Columbian Exchange.**
   1. European colonization of the Americas led to the spread of diseases — including smallpox, measles, and influenza — that were endemic in the Eastern Hemisphere among Amerindian populations and the unintentional transfer of vermin, including mosquitoes and rats.
   2. *American foods* became staple crops in various parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. *Cash crops* were grown primarily on plantations with coerced labor and were exported mostly to Europe and the Middle East in this period.
   3. Afro-Eurasian fruit trees, grains, sugar, and *domesticated animals* were brought by Europeans to the Americas, while other *foods were brought by African slaves*.
   4. Populations in Afro-Eurasia benefited nutritionally from the increased diversity of American food crops.
   5. European colonization and the introduction of European agriculture and settlements practices in the Americas often affected the physical environment through deforestation and soil depletion.
6. **The increase in interactions between newly connected hemispheres and intensification of connections within hemispheres expanded the spread and reform of existing religions and created syncretic belief systems and practices.**
   1. As Islam spread to new settings in Afro-Eurasia, believers adapted it to local cultural practices. The split between the Sunni and Shi’a traditions of Islam intensified, and Sufi practices became more widespread.
   2. The practice of Christianity continued to spread throughout the world and was increasingly diversified by the process of diffusion and the Reformation.
   3. Buddhism spread within Asia.
   4. *Syncretic and new forms of religion* developed.
7. **As merchants’ profits increased and governments collected more taxes, funding for the visual and performing arts, even for popular audiences, increased.**
   1. *Innovations in visual and performing arts* were seen all over the world.
   2. Literacy expanded and was accompanied by *the proliferation of popular authors, literary forms, and works of literature in Afro-Eurasia*.

**Key Concept 4.2.** New Forms of Social Organization and Modes of Production

Although the world’s productive systems continued to be heavily centered on agricultural production throughout this period, major changes occurred in agricultural labor, the systems and locations of manufacturing, gender and social structures, and environmental processes. A surge in agricultural productivity resulted from new methods in crop and field rotation and the introduction of new crops. Economic growth also depended on new forms of manufacturing and new commercial patterns, especially in long-distance trade. Political and economic centers within regions shifted, and merchants’ social status tended to rise in various states. Demographic growth — even in areas such as the Americas, where disease had ravaged the population — was restored by the eighteenth century and surged in many regions, especially with the introduction of American food crops throughout the Eastern Hemisphere. The Columbian Exchange led to new ways of humans interacting with their environments. New forms of coerced and semi-coerced labor emerged in Europe, Africa, and the Americas, and affected ethnic and racial classifications and gender roles.

1. **Traditional peasant agriculture increased and changed, plantations expanded, and demand for labor increased. These changes both fed and responded to growing global demand for raw materials and finished products.** 
   1. *Peasant labor intensified* in many regions.
   2. Slavery in Africa continued both the traditional incorporation of slaves into households and the export of slaves to the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.
   3. The growth of the plantation economy increased the demand for slaves in the Americas.
   4. Colonial economies in the Americas depended on a range of *coerced labor*.
2. **As new social and political elites changed, they also restructured new ethnic, racial, and gender hierarchies.**
   1. Both imperial conquests and widening global economic opportunities contributed to the formation of *new political and economic elites*.
   2. The power of *existing political and economic elites* fluctuated as they confronted new challenges to their ability to affect the policies of the increasingly powerful monarchs and leaders.
   3. Some notable *gender and family restructuring* occurred, including the demographic changes in Africa that resulted from the slave trades.
   4. The massive demographic changes in the Americas resulted in *new ethnic and racial classifications*.

**Key Concept 4.3.** State Consolidation and Imperial Expansion

Empires expanded and conquered new peoples around the world, but they often had difficulties incorporating culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse subjects, and administrating widely dispersed territories. Agents of the European powers moved into existing trade networks around the world. In Africa and the greater Indian Ocean, nascent European empires consisted mainly of interconnected trading posts and enclaves. In the Americas, European empires moved more quickly to settlement and territorial control, responding to local demographic and commercial conditions. Moreover, the creation of European empires in the Americas quickly fostered a new Atlantic trade system that included the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Around the world, empires and states of varying sizes pursued strategies of centralization, including more efficient taxation systems that placed strains on peasant producers, sometimes prompting local rebellions. Rulers used public displays of art and architecture to legitimize state power. African states shared certain characteristics with larger Eurasian empires. Changes in African and global trading patterns strengthened some West and Central African states — especially on the coast; this led to the rise of new states and contributed to the decline of states on both the coast and in the interior.

1. **Rulers used a variety of methods to legitimize and consolidate their power.**
   1. Rulers used *the arts to display political power* and to legitimize their rule.
   2. Rulers continued to use *religious ideas to legitimize their rule*.
   3. States *treated different ethnic and religious groups* in ways that utilized their economic contributions while limiting their ability to challenge the authority of the state.
   4. Recruitment and use of *bureaucratic elites*, *as well as the development of military professionals*, became more common among rulers who wanted to maintain centralized control over their populations and resources.
   5. Rulers used tribute collection and tax farming to generate revenue for territorial expansion.
2. **Imperial expansion relied on the increased use of gunpowder, cannons, and armed trade to establish large empires in both hemispheres.**
   1. Europeans established new trading-post empires in Africa and Asia, which proved profitable for the rulers and merchants involved in new global trade networks, but these empires also affected the power of the states in interior West and Central Africa.
   2. *Land empires* expanded dramatically in size.

Required examples of ***land empires***:

* + Manchus
  + Mughals
  + Ottomans
  + Russians
  1. European states established new *maritime empires* in the Americas.

Required examples of ***maritime empires***:

* + Portuguese
  + Spanish
  + Dutch
  + French
  + British

1. ***Competition over trade routes*, *state rivalries,* and *local resistance* all provided significant challenges to state consolidation and expansion.**