Before 1492, we couldn't really talk about a world history at all, we could only talk about the different histories of separate regions, but Columbus changed all of that, and everything else.

1. The Columbian Exchange
   a. irrevocably diminished the number of plant and animal species
   b. variation in species from place to place has diminished dramatically
   c. first European visitors to the Americas had never seen a tomato or a catfish;
   d. Native Americans had never seen a horse
   e. Most important: cross-pollination also made possible such wonders as contemporary pizza

So we're going to break the Columbian Exchange down into four categories: Diseases, Animals, Plants, and People.

2. Diseases
   a. Microbes = definite negative in terms of the Columbian Exchange
   b. Majority of indigenous peoples of the Americas had exactly one response to the arrival of Europeans: death.
   c. How many died?
      i. Not certain
      ii. Somewhere between 50-90%... seriously
      iii. Some via brutality
      iv. But main culprit was disease
   d. Smallpox is usually seen as the villain
      i. More likely = series of diseases in combination did the damage
      ii. measles and mumps, typhus, chicken pox – never exposed to those diseases before
   e. Secondary effects were almost as bad
      i. deaths of Aztec and Incan rulers set off wars which made it easier to spread disease
         1. leader of the Incan empire succumbed to smallpox before Pizarro even arrived
         2. death led to a violent succession struggle between his sons
3. Without that war, the Inca probably would have beat the Spaniards, whose numbers were comparatively tiny
   ii. Another effect = starvation
      1. Not enough people left to grow crops to feed the living
      2. malnutrition made survivors more susceptible to disease
   iii. New World introduced Tobacco to the rest of the world, and we’ve been slowly dying of lung disease ever since

3. Animals
   a. llamas and guinea pigs never really caught on in Eurasia
   b. but imports to the Americas, like pigs, cows and horses were revolutionary
   c. First of all, these animals, especially pigs, completely remade the food supply.
      i. Pigs breed really quickly, they eat anything, they turn into bacon
      ii. made them heroes to the new world
      iii. Here's how quickly pigs breed:
         1. Hernando de Soto arrived in Florida in 1539 with 13 pigs.
         2. By the time of his death, there were 700 - that was 3 years later.
      iv. Abundance of meat + plentiful land for agriculture + grazing meant that Europeans in the Americas very rarely experienced famine
      v. One of the main reasons Europeans came to America was to eat
   d. Before Europeans, the largest beast of burden was the llama
      i. at best it could carry like, 100 lbs
      ii. Oxen, when combined with their plows, made it possible to bring more land under cultivation and also made transportation easier and more efficient,
   e. European animals remade culture
      i. stereotypical American Indian – riding a horse on Great Plains with an eagle feather headdress and war paint
      ii. didn't exist before the Columbian Exchange
      iii. because no horses for him to ride
      iv. Intro of horses allowed many Native Americans to abandon agriculture in favor of a nomadic lifestyle because riding around hunting buffalo made them far richer than farming ever had
4. Plants
   a. New World plants that had the biggest effect on Eurasia
   b. Europeans brought over some crops like wheat and grapes
   c. New World plants radically changed the lives of millions, maybe hundreds of millions of Africans, Asians and Europeans – specifically by making pizza possible
      i. 500 years ago, Italians lived without tomatoes
      ii. Indians lived without curry, which contains chilies
      iii. Persians lived without corn
      iv. Beans, potatoes, avocados, peanuts, blueberries, etc.
   d. New World food was far more caloric than Old World food
      i. central reason why world population doubled between 1650 and 1850
      ii. Plants like corn and potatoes could grow in soils that were useless for Old World crops
      iii. 1.5 acres of potato cultivation could feed an Irish family for a year
   e. And it wasn't just Europe. Sweet potatoes became a big deal to Africa.
      i. New World grains never replaced rice in Southeast, or East Asia
      ii. sweet potato was so common – known as "poor person’s staple" in China
   f. corn became central source of food for animals in Europe for centuries
      i. And in fact, that's still the case
      ii. In 2005, 58% of the corn grown in America went to animal feed

5. People
   a. Columbian Exchange involved the transfer of lots of people.
   b. in early stages, just Europeans and Africans - the Africans usually against their will - making their way to the Americas
   c. Columbian Exchange led to the re-population of the New World following the disease devastation of the initial encounter
   d. Better nutrition = Old World growing population = population pressure = more people moving to.
   e. But it also led to horrors of Atlantic slavery

6. Deep Dive into Atlantic Slavery:
4.5 Lesson Notes: The Columbian Exchange + Atlantic Slave Trade

a. Slavery is as old as civilization itself
   i. not as old as humanity thanks to our hunting and gathering beginnings
   ii. numbers involved in Atlantic slave trade are truly staggering

b. Stats
   i. 1500-1880, between 10-12 million African slaves were forcibly moved from Africa to the Americas
      1. about 15% of those people died during the journey
   ii. Where they went:
      1. 48% of slaves went to the Caribbean
      2. 41% to Brazil
      3. 5% to the U.S.

c. Did not capture the Africans to make them slaves
   i. Africans too powerful for the Europeans to just conquer
   ii. Europeans obtained slaves by trading for them
   iii. Africans captured other Africans + traded in exchange for goods

d. Slave Ships
   i. largest could hold 400 people
      1. each slave had an average of four square feet of space
      2. As one eye-witness testified before Parliament in 1791, "They had not so much room as a man in his coffin."
   ii. Horrific conditions – 15% died on the way over

f. Once in the Americas, surviving slaves were sold in a market similarly to cattle
   i. After purchase, branded on the cheeks just like cattle
   ii. lives of slaves were dominated by work and terror

e. In Caribbean + Brazil, most worked on sugar plantations
   i. harvest and process the cane: speed was incredibly important because once cut, sugar sap can go sour within a day
   ii. slaves would often work 48 hours straight during harvest without sleep in sweltering sugar press houses
   iii. cane would be crushed in hand rollers + boiled
iv. Slaves often caught their hands in the rollers + their overseers kept a hatchet on hand for amputations
v. Average life expectancy for a Brazilian slave on sugar plantation was 23

g. Slightly better in Barbados and in U.S.
i. living/working conditions were better
ii. slave populations began increasing naturally
iii. meaning that more slaves were born than died
iv. explains why even though percentage of slaves imported from Africa to the United States was small

h. Slavery not new but difficult define
i. Many we do consider slaves in history had lives of great power, wealth, and influence. Remember Zeng He? = slave.
ii. Atlantic slavery was different and more horrifying
   1. Because chattel slavery, a term historians use to indicate that the slaves were moveable property

iii. Greeks were first to consider otherness a characteristic of slaves
   1. Most Greek slaves were Barbarians
   2. Aristotle believed that some people were just naturally slaves,

iv. Slaves probably made up 30% of the total Roman population

v. Bible was widely used to justify slavery
   1. in particular, enslavement of Africans, because of the moment in Genesis when Noah curses Ham, saying "cursed be Canaan, the lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers"
   2. Ham went out to the area that is Africa
   3. So people were like, “It was just meant to be!”

i. Atlantic slavery was a monstrous tragedy
   i. whole world participated
   ii. truth we must grapple with is that a vast array of our ancestors believed it was possible for their fellow human being to be mere property

7. Conclusion
   a. What are we to make of the Columbian Exchange?
i. devastated the population of the Americas
ii. led to the widespread slavery of Africans
iii. but it also allowed for a worldwide population increase
iv. the lives of some Natives including Plains tribes like the Lakota became better and more secure (at least for a while)
v. Fewer people have starved since the Columbian Exchange began

1. but diversity of life on Earth has diminished dramatically
2. planting crops where they don't belong has hurt environment

b. Should we be grateful for the Columbian Exchange? And should we work to continue and deepen its legacy of globalism and monoculture?
c. Are longer, healthier lives for more humans worth the sacrifice of an impoverished biosphere?
d. And most importantly, how will your conclusions about those questions shape the way that you live your life?