

History of Western Civilization 1

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This course gives students an overview of the major events and developments in European history, from ancient times to roughly 1700. It is divided into eight segments, each centering on a specific historical era: Ancient Greece; Ancient Rome; the Middle Ages; the Crusades; the Renaissance; the Reformation; the New Monarchies; the Scientific Revolution. In each segment, one class period will be devoted to a straight-forward lecture, the second will require students to read essays by professional historians analyzing the past, and the third will require students to read primary sources (historical documents from the cultures and periods examined in this course). In the second and third sessions of each segment, students will be expected to discuss the class texts in detail – we will be using the primary and secondary sources to draw a detailed picture of the past, and will be comparing past political developments, ideas, and social structures to our own present-day equivalents. In this way, we will seek both to understand the past on its own terms and to examine the roots of our contemporary world. As an example: we will compare medieval romances (as a literary art form) with present-day romance novels to understand how concepts of gender, family, and love have changed over time.

In this class, students will regularly practice their writing skills with written assignments and a final paper, and will have many opportunities to express their ideas verbally in class discussions. In both the written assignments and the class discussions, students will develop their analytical skills by identifying the course readings' main theses, supporting arguments, evidence, assumptions, and rhetorical strategies.

Course Requirements:

This course is heavily based on reading and discussing the assigned texts. In a nutshell: there are no exams in this course; instead, students will be graded on the following four elements:

1. Participation in class discussion. Students will be expected to read the assigned texts before the class (by date indicated on the syllabus).
2. Final Essay, 5-7 pages (typed and double-spaced), due December 20, by 6 pm.
3. Quizzes and Assignments. There are a total of 17 assignments and quizzes in the class; the top 15 grades will be counted for the final grade.

Quizzes:

The quizzes will be ten minutes long, given at the beginning of the class meeting, and based on the content of the texts to be discussed in that particular class meeting.

Assignments:

Assignments MUST be handed in at the beginning of class.

Grading:

In-class participation: 15%

Final essay: 25%

Quizzes and assignments: 60% (4% each)

Required Books:

Marvin Perry, *Western Civilization: Volume 1: to 1789* (this is the textbook)

Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, *Life in a Medieval Village*

Rudolf Wittkower and Margot Wittkower, *Born under Saturn*

Natalie Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

The books are available at New Jersey Books, 167 University Avenue (corner of University and Bleeker) and at the University Book Store. They are also on two-hour reserve at Dana Library. The rest of the required readings are either on Blackboard (Bb) under „Course Documents” or on- line (URL).

Attendance policy:

Attendance is required. If you miss more than four classes, your grade will be lowered by a third of a grade (from B+ to B, for example). If you miss more than six classes, your grade will be lowered by one full grade (B+ to C+, for example). Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the class.

Late papers and exams:

Papers and exams are due on the dates announced in class or indicated below. Unless discussed with me IN ADVANCE, late assignments will have their grades lowered.

Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism):

Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. The standard minimum penalties for students who cheat or plagiarize include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University. All students are required to sign the History Department’s „plagiarism agreement” on Blackboard under the Academic Integrity menu.

Syllabus

Tues., Sept. 4: Intro

Thurs., Sept. 6: The Germanic Tribes:

URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/tacitus-germanygord.html>

Assignment (2-3 pages): due at the beginning of class: What were the Germanic tribes like, according to Tacitus? Pick out five characteristics.

Segment 1: Ancient Greece

Tues., Sept. 11: Ancient Greece

Textbook: “Chapter 3: The Greek City-State”

Thurs., Sept. 13: Greek Life

Textbook: “Chapter 4: Greek Thought: From Myth to Reason” and “Chapter 5: Cultural Diffusion”

Bb: Freeman, Egypt, Greece and Rome, pp. 224-234

Quiz

Tues., Sept. 18: Oedipus Rex

URL: <http://records.viu.ca/~Johnstoi/sophocles/oedipustheking.htm>

URL: <http://books.eserver.org/nonfiction/dreams/chap05d.html>

Assignment (2-3 pages): Why do you think Freud drew on an ancient Greek myth to name his Oedipal complex? What do the two have to do with each other, beside the name?

Segment 2: Ancient Rome

Thurs., Sept. 20: Ancient Rome

Textbook: “Chapter 6: The Roman Republic”

Tues., Sept. 25: Life in the Roman Empire
Textbook: "Chapter 7: The Roman Empire"
Bb: Freeman, Egypt, Greece and Rome, pp. 495-516
Quiz

Thurs., Sept. 27: Early Christianity
Textbook: "Chapter 8: Early Christianity"
URL: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/matthew-web.html>
URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guXirzknYYE&feature=related> at least from minute 13 up to minute 40 (but by all means watch more if you want).
URL: <http://www.zeitgeistmovie.com/Zeitgeist,%20The%20Movie-%20Companion%20Guide%20PDF.pdf> take at least a quick look at this companion guide to the movie, to think about how the movie and/or the guide work as historical sources.
Assignment (2-3 pages): Do any of the mythic elements cited in the film show up in the gospel of Matthew?

Segment 3: The Middle Ages

Tues., Oct. 2: The Middle Ages
Textbook: "Chapter 9: The Heirs of Rome: Byzantium, Islam, and Latin Christendom"

Thurs., Oct. 4: Life in the Dark Ages?
Book: Frances and Joseph Gies, Life in a Medieval Village (Chapters 5, 6, and 10)
URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/xanten1.html>
URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/843bertin.html>
Quiz

Tues., Oct. 9: The Medieval Romance
Textbook: "Chapter 11: The Flowering of Medieval Culture"
URL: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/sggk.htm>
URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1170chretien-lancelot.html>
Assignment (2-3 pages): Compare "Lancelot" and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" to a modern romance novel. Do they have common elements? Are they very different? How so? (You will need to buy or borrow a romance novel and bring it to class. You may not use a novel that has been turned into a movie.)

Segment 4: The Crusades

Thurs., Oct. 11: The Crusades
Textbook: "Chapter 10: The High Middle Ages"

Tues., Oct. 16: The Conquest of Constantinople
URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/villehardouin.html>
Quiz

Thurs., Oct. 18: Later Encounters
URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus1.html>
URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus2.html>
URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/lascasas.htm>
URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/sepulved.htm>
URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/Kipling.html>
Assignment (2-3 pages): Do we justify our own (US) foreign policy in similar terms as empires did in the past? How are these justifications similar? How do they differ? To answer this question, you will need to

find a present-day source that outlines/explains our foreign policy, and cite the reference in the assignment.

Segment 5: The Renaissance

Tues., Oct. 23: The Renaissance in the Italian City-States

Textbook: "Chapter 13: The Renaissance: Transition to the Modern Age"

Thurs., Oct. 25: Humanism, Individualism and the Renaissance

URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/petrarch-ventoux.html>

Book: Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn*, Chapter 3 (Artists' Attitudes Towards Their Work)

Quiz

Tues., Oct. 30: Worldly Fame and the Renaissance

Book: Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn*, Chapter 4 (Eccentric Behavior and Noble Manners) and Chapter 5 (Genius, Madness, and Melancholy)

Assignment (2-3 pages): Compare artist behavior in the Renaissance to a modern example of creative celebrity. For the modern example, you can draw on celebrity magazines, TMZ, newspapers, or a more highbrow source, but you must bring a copy of the source with you to class (attach to the 2-3 page essay).

Segment 6: The Reformation

Thurs., Nov. 1: Reformation and Early Modern Europe

Textbook: "Chapter 14: The Reformation: The Shattering of Christian Unity"

Tues., Nov. 6: Order out of Chaos

Textbook: "Chapter 15: European Expansion: Economic and Social Transformations"

Bb: Burke, "The World of Carnival," from *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*

Bb: Aries, "The Discovery of Childhood," from *Centuries of Childhood*

Quiz

Thurs., Nov. 8: Martin Luther and Christian Liberty

URL: <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/web/cclib-2.html>

URL: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1850/peasant-war-germany/ch0e.htm>

URL: <http://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Luther-Peasants.html>

Assignment (2-3 pages): Is it possible to reconcile these three texts? Or are they fundamentally at odds with each other? Are these texts marked with tolerance or intolerance? In what ways?

Segment 7: The New Monarchies

Tues., Nov. 13: New Monarchies: English Revolution, French Absolutism

Textbook: "Chapter 16: The Rise of Sovereignty"

Thurs., Nov. 15: The Thirty Years War in the Holy Roman Empire

Bb: Mortimer, "A Myth of All-destructive Fury?" from *Eyewitness Accounts of the Thirty Years War*

Quiz

Tues., Nov. 20: No class.

Thurs., Nov. 22: No Class: Thanksgiving

Tues., Nov. 27: Witchcraft

Bb: Briggs, "Theories and Realities," from *Witches and Neighbors*

Bb: Levack, "The Dynamics of Witch-Hunting," from The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe

Bb: Levack, "The Salem Witchcraft Trials," from The Witchcraft Sourcebook

URL: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/13910>

Assignment: Joe McCarthy is often described as having led a witch-hunt in the 1950s. How does it compare to early modern witch-hunts? Is there a real similarity, or is „witch-hunt“ today just a colorful term for persecution more generally? Can you find another present-day example of a „witch- hunt“?

Segment 8: The Scientific Revolution and Early Modern Europe

Thurs., Nov. 29: The Seventeenth Century: Age of Encounter, Scientific Revolution, Print Culture

Textbook: "Chapter 17: The Scientific Revolution"

Tues., Dec. 4: Early Modern Culture – What has changed? What remains the same?

Book: Natalie Davis, The Return of Martin Guerre, pp.1-93, 123-125

Quiz

Thurs., Dec. 6: The Return of Martin Guerre

No Reading. We will watch a part from the film "The Return of Martin Guerre"

Tues., Dec. 11: Galileo and Scientific Proof

URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/galileo-tuscany.html>

URL: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1615bellarmine-letter.html>

URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/30/science/30muse.html?_r=1

URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitzmiller_v._Dover_Area_School_District

Assignment: (2-3 pages): Find three more sources of information on the Dover Area School District conflict about intelligent design (and bring them to class). Based on those sources, take a position on the question of whether intelligent design should be taught in school or not.

Take-Home Final: DUE December 14th.