

APPENDIX I: SYLLABUS OF A WESTERN CIVILIZATION COURSE OFFERED IN SPRING 2011

Note: We have abbreviated this syllabus to omit details on classroom policy.

History 151–06 | Spring 2011

The History of Western Civilization to 1650

COURSE OVERVIEW, OBJECTIVES, AND THEME:

This course will survey some of the major topics, issues, and problems that have shaped the history of Western Civilization—or really Europe, to be honest—from the Ancient World to roughly the middle of the seventeenth century. Now, this course has been a part of college curricula for a long time, and some critics have suggested that it should be abandoned in favor of “World History.” Among other things, these critics argue that it’s too “Eurocentric” and “exclusive,” for example, and perpetuates a sense of Western superiority. They do, I think, have a case. Nevertheless, others, including your current instructor, think studying the history, culture, and traditions of this thing—more a product of the imagination than an objective reality—that we call “Western Civilization” remains a worthwhile endeavor. For however much we must learn about and appreciate non-Western cultures, it’s not hard to make the argument that Western Civilization—or at least Western culture and Western power—continues to influence the course of world history more than any other civilization or culture, sometimes for better, sometimes worse. So, while we should approach it critically, I believe that it’s still important that we confront this thing we call the “West.” And one of the best ways to do that is to examine its history.

More importantly, perhaps, the history of Western Civilization—as much as any civilization—is a fascinating laboratory for historical investigation in general, a place where we can practice thinking historically together. Thinking historically means many things. For our purposes, it means recognizing changes and continuities over time; understanding the complex relationship between historical events, historical context, and human culture; interrogating and critically interpreting both primary and secondary sources; constructing interpretations of one’s own based on analysis of historical evidence; and using historical knowledge and insight to gain a better understanding of the present. In this course, we will think historically by entering into a dialogue with the past and some of its more interesting personalities while at the same time reflecting on what the past can teach us about our world today. Moreover, we will think critically about how “Western Civilization” has and continues to be “imagined.” Westerners and non-Westerners alike talk a lot about “the West”—what, actually, do we mean by it? What events, traditions, and culture shaped it?

Among the topics this course will examine are:

- Political systems and conflicts in Ancient Greece and Rome, medieval and renaissance Europe, and early modern Europe.
- The role of religion and religious institutions, especially Catholicism, the Catholic Church, and Protestantism, and their relationship to political systems and intellectual trends.
- Major intellectual trends including classical Greek and Hellenistic philosophy, medieval theology, renaissance humanism, and early modern scientific thinking.
- Changing social and economic contexts, social relations, and their influence on politics, culture, and intellectual life.
- How people's identities were formed by the contexts in which they lived, their own thoughts, beliefs, and actions, and their encounters with and constructions of people who were different from them.

Finally, this course seeks improve your ability to analyze various types of historical sources critically, write clearly and effectively, and articulate yourself intelligently and confidently in front of others. These are skills that will benefit you no matter what your chosen field of study or career may be.

Now, there are countless ways to approach a broad history survey course such as this. Inevitably, lots of things—in fact most things—get left out, while some things receive greater emphasis than others. This Western Civilization course is no different. In order to provide some coherence to this course and help you make some connections as we march through the centuries, I have chosen as a course theme “truth.” So, throughout the semester, we will return to the question of how people in different historical and cultural contexts conceived of and attempted to establish the “truth” about God, human nature and society, the natural world, ethics, history, and other things.

READINGS:

Required Book: There is only one required book that you need to purchase for this class, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, edited and translated by David Wooten (Hackett Publishing, 1995). It is available at the UNC bookstore for purchase. Make sure you purchase the correct edition by checking the ISBN number (0872203166).

Course Reader: All of the other readings for this course can be found in Course Reader, which is composed of excerpts from numerous primary sources. The course reader is available in both PDF and MS Word formats. You must print out the readings and bring them to your discussion section. I highly recommend that you print out the entire course reader all at once and put it in an easily accessible three-ring binder—that way you don't have to worry about it for the rest of the semester. If you own your own printer, this will cost you about \$3 in paper and \$2 in ink, which is a fraction of the cost of a coursepack from a publisher or a published sourcebook.



Recommended Textbook: There is no required textbook for this course. However, for those of you who'd like more background information or want to reinforce material from lectures (especially missed ones), you can read the corresponding chapters in just about any Western Civ textbook, which can be purchased used online for very little cost. A textbook can also be used to review for exams or read more about issues and topics you find particularly interesting. While it may contain information similar to that presented in lectures, you will not be held responsible for its content. Moreover, you won't be able to pass this course if you rely solely on the textbook (or Wikipedia, Google, etc.) for your exams and papers. Whatever you do, don't get bogged down in a textbook. Instead, concentrate your time and effort on the supplementary readings that will form the basis of your discussions in discussion.

Wikipedia: While you cannot rely on Wikipedia to, for example, study for potential IDs on the midterm or final exams, you should feel free to use it as a resource. I am not a Wikipedia hater! In fact, I consult it frequently to check dates, facts, find images, and learn new and interesting things about historical figures, events, and ideas. For the most part, I think, the information it provides is reliable, especially when it's not about a particularly controversial topic. So, while you should read Wikipedia articles critically and carefully, understanding that they contain errors and sometimes biases, I encourage you to look things up that you want to know more about, following the various links where they lead you, and sharing your wisdom in discussion.

How much reading? There is a substantial, but manageable amount of reading for this course. Some weeks are heavier than others, so plan ahead. On average, you can expect to read about 20–25 pages each week from the course reader, maybe 1–2 hours depending on how fast you read. My hope is that having fewer pages to read will lead you to read more closely and carefully. Still, you will probably not be able to complete some readings, for example, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, the night before your discussion section meets. It is absolutely essential, however, that you complete all of the readings on time so that you can participate actively in discussion, write your papers, and be prepared for exams.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Lectures: All of the factual information that you need for exams and papers will be presented in lectures, so I highly recommend that you attend them all. Lecture outlines will be posted on the online version of this syllabus (see webpage address above) before class. I recommend that you download and print these outlines out *before* class so that you can spend more time listening and thinking than copying. In the past, students have copied them into Word documents and taken their notes between the lines. But remember: you cannot pass this class by relying on your textbook, Google, or Wikipedia. Please do not start packing up your things before 12:15 p.m.

Discussion and Discussion Assignments: Discussion is an integral component of this course. It is where you and your classmates will "do" history together by critically discussing primary and secondary sources; freely exchanging your thoughts, ideas, and questions; and, in the process, improving your



ability to articulate yourself in front of others. It is here where you will actively create knowledge, not just absorb it. You will be assessed according to how well (qualitatively and quantitatively) you participate in weekly discussions. In general, the more you offer your informed thoughts in discussion about the subject material, the better you will do. So prepare well for discussion by reading the assigned texts carefully, thinking of questions, ideas, and issues they provoke, and coming ready to share them. Laptop use is not permitted during discussion section.

Discussion Assignments: So that you will be well prepared for your discussion section, for *each* discussion section (#2–#10) you will *type* and *submit* the following:

- One question about one of the texts—something you would ask to get a conversation going if you were leading the discussion section yourself.
- A passage that you found particularly interesting (no more than 200 words—you may cut and paste directly from the course reader.
- Fifty words about the one thing you found interesting, shocking, hard to understand, whatever you want to say—about *one* of the texts you read for that discussion section.

These assignments should take you about 10 minutes each and will contribute to your participation grade. You will not receive a grade for them, nor will they be handed back. The teaching assistants will just check them off. If, however, you do not complete one of these assignments, or it appears particularly rushed or does not reflect any real engagement with the reading, you will receive a “zero,” which will result in a 5 point deduction from your participation grade.

Papers: You will write two 1200–1500 word (4–5 page), thesis-driven essays based on supplementary readings discussed in discussion. Specific questions and instructions for writing these essays will be given out well in advance of their due dates.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

PART 1: THE ANCIENT WORLD

WEEK 1	
1/11	Introduction: "Western Civilization" and "Western Civ" Course
1/13	The Hebrew/Jewish Contribution to Western Civilization
Discussion #1 (10 pages)	Introduction: "Doing History" Together Read: Gerald Schlabach, "A Sense of History: Some Components" David Koeller, "Using Historical Sources"
WEEK 2	
1/18	Ancient Greece: Athens and Sparta
1/20	From Unity to Civil War: A 5th-Century Greek Tragedy
Discussion #2 (27 pages)	Politics and Constitutions in Ancient Greece Read: Thucydides, "Funeral Oration of Pericles" from <i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> The Old Oligarch, "The Polity of the Athenians" Xenophon, "The Polity of the Spartans" Plato, <i>The Republic</i> Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>
WEEK 3	
1/25	Greek Philosophy and History
1/27	Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Culture
Discussion #3 (16 pages)	Philosophy and the Individual Read: Thucydides, "Introduction" to <i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> Plato, "The Apology" and <i>The Republic</i> Aristotle, <i>Ethics</i> Aristotle, <i>Animals</i> Epicurus, Letter to Menoecus

WEEK 4	
2/1	The Roman Republic: Constitution and Expansion
2/3	The Crisis of the Republic and the Imperial Solution
Discussion #4 (22 pages)	The Roman Constitution: Strengths and Weaknesses Read: Polybius, Book VI of <i>The Histories</i> Sallust, <i>The Catiline Conspiracy and The Jurgurthine War</i> <i>Aelius Aristes, "The Roman Oration"</i> Tacitus, <i>Annals and Agricola</i>

WEEK 5	
2/8	The Pax Romana and the Decline of the Roman Empire Due: Paper #1 (click here for assignment)
2/10	Historical Jesus and the Origins of Christianity <i>Start Reading</i> the chapters from Bart Ehrman's <i>Jesus, Interrupted</i>
Discussion #5 (80 pages)	A Critical-Historical Approach to Reading the New Testament Read: Bart D. Ehrman, "A World of Contradictions" and "A Mass Variant of Views," from <i>Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible</i> , 2009. Located on Blackboard under "Course Documents".)

PART 2: MEDIEVAL EUROPE

WEEK 6	
2/15	Foundations of Medieval Europe: Germanic Kingdoms and the Early Church
2/17	Feudalism and the Western Political Tradition
(4 pages)	Read: Fulbert of Chartres, <i>On Feudal Obligations of Vassals and Lords</i> The Magna Carta

WEEK 7	
2/22	Popes, Kings, and Crusades: Politics and Religion in the Middle Ages Read: Pope Urban II, Speech at Cleremont
2/24	Agricultural Revolution, Urban Revival and Intellectual Renewal
Discussion #6 (10 pages)	Read: Peter Abelard, <i>Sic et Non</i> and <i>Dialectica</i> (Abelard's Response) Bernard of Clairvaux, Letter to Innocent II and <i>The Love of God</i> Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologica</i>

WEEK 8	
3/1	Midterm Exam
3/3	The Crisis of the Middle Ages Read: Boccaccio, Introduction to <i>Decameron</i>

WEEK 9	Spring Break
---------------	--------------

WEEK 10	
3/15	The Renaissance in Italy Read: Innocent III, <i>On the Misery of Man</i> Pico della Mirandola, <i>Oration on the Dignity of Man</i>
3/17	Politics and War in Renaissance Italy
Discussion #7 (80 pages)	The Power of Virtú: Politics and Philosophy in Machiavelli's <i>The Prince</i> (click for reading questions) Read: Nicolò Machiavelli's <i>The Prince</i> (to be purchased)

PART 3: THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

WEEK 11	
3/22	The "Early Modern Period" and the Northern Renaissance (click here for Paper #2 Assignment)
3/24	Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation in Germany
Discussion #8 (24 pages)	Martin Luther's Reformation Read: Martin Luther, "On the Freedom of a Christian," 1520 Martin Luther, "Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, 1520 Pope Leo X, <i>Exurge Domine</i> Martin Luther, <i>On the Jews and Their Lies</i>

WEEK 12	
3/29	The Spread of the Reformation: Calvinism and the Henry VIII's Reformation
3/31	The Catholic Reformation and Religious War, 1530–1648
(2 pages)	Read: Ignatius Loyola, <i>Spiritual Exercises</i>

WEEK 13	
4/5	European Overseas Expansion: Motives and Consequences
4/7	Popular Culture and the Witch Craze Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer, <i>Malleus Maleficarum</i>
Discussion #9 (28 pages)	Persecuting Others at Home and Abroad Read: Bartholemew de Las Casas, <i>Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies</i> Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, <i>Just War Against the Barbarians</i> Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer, <i>Malleus Maleficarum</i>

WEEK 14	
4/12	The Commercial Revolution
4/13	The Scientific Revolution
Discussion #10 (20 pages)	Read: Galileo, "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany" Francis Bacon, <i>Novum Organum</i> René Descartes, <i>Discourse on Method</i>

WEEK 15	
4/19 (5 pages)	Absolutism in France Read: Jacques Benigne Bossuet, <i>Politics Drawn from the Very Word of Scripture</i> Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> Paper #2 Due (click here for assignment)
4/21 (5 pages)	Constitutionalism and Civil War in England Read: The Petition of Right John Locke, <i>Second Treatise on Government</i> Thomas Jefferson, <i>The Declaration of Independence</i>
No Discussion	Holiday

WEEK 16	
4/26	On the Cusp of the Modern Age: The Enlightenment Evaluations and Review