

History 100

## History of Western Civilization

Prof. John Orens  
Mr. Jefferson Byrd  
Mr. Eric Gonzaba

Hours: T 12:00-1:00 (Prof. Orens/jorens@gmu.edu)  
R 12:00-1:00 (Mr. Byrd/jbyrd12@gmu.edu)  
T 4:30-5:30 (Mr. Gonzaba/egonzaba@gmu.edu)

Office: Robinson B 226C

### Required Reading

Cole, Symes, Coffin, and Stacey, *Western Civilizations*, Brief 3rd edition  
Primary Sources emailed to you with this syllabus

### Course Description

This course will follow the development of western civilization from its roots in antiquity to the present. We shall devote special attention to the ideas that continue to shape both the world in which we live and our understanding of who we are. Thus, ours will be more than a journey into the past. It will be a voyage of self-discovery.

### Course Requirements

Covering, as it does, the whole of western civilization in a single semester, this course presents unique challenges. *It is essential, therefore, that you pay careful attention to the following requirements. They are intended for your benefit, but to do well in this class, you must adhere to them faithfully.*

1. **Attendance.** Our class meetings are the foundation of everything we do this semester. You cannot afford to miss them. Although attending class is not mandatory, we do take attendance, and if you have fewer than three *unexcused* absences, I shall add five points to your quiz average for the semester. *Please note that if you arrive late, leave class early, or are asleep during class, you will be marked as absent.*
2. **No laptops or smartphones.** Because this class demands your undivided attention, and because laptops are almost always distracting to you and to those around you, *you may not use a laptop during class.* For the same reason, *texting is strictly forbidden.* *Each time you text or use your smartphone for any other reason during class, ten points will be deducted from your quiz average for the semester without exception.*
3. **Quizzes.** Beginning the fourth week of class, there will be a multiple-choice quiz every other week, on either Tuesday or Thursday. I have indicated those weeks on the class schedule with asterisks. We shall send you review questions to guide your preparation for the quizzes. These quizzes will account for 40% of your final grade.
4. **Midterm and Final Essays.** There will be a midterm and a final essay paper. These will both be take-home assignments of two to three pages. You will receive each assignment about two weeks before it is due. These essays will account for 60% of your final grade. These assignments are very important, so *please keep in mind that you cannot earn a good grade on them if you cannot write clear English prose.*
5. **Extra-Credit Papers** I shall designate a film for you to watch online before the midterm and another before the final. I shall give you questions to answer about the film. If you want to earn extra credit, on the day that the midterm paper is due, and then again on the last day of class, you may hand in a paper in which you answer the questions I asked. If your paper is acceptable, up to five points will be added to your midterm or final essay grade.
6. **Final Extra-Credit Assignment.** On the last day of class, I will show a film and then ask a few simple questions about it. If you participate and your answers are acceptable, up to five points will be added to your final essay grade.

## Grading Scale

A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-73, D = 60-69

**Weekly Class Schedule** (T = textbook chapters, P = primary sources, \* = quiz this week):

Sept. 1	Introduction to History, the Ancient Near East, Greek Civilization (T, 1-2; P, Gilgamesh)
Sept. 8	Classical and Hellenistic Greece, Roman Civilization, and Christianity (T, 2-6; P, Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism, Cicero, Sermon on the Mount)
Sept. 15	The Middle Ages (T, 7-10; P, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas).
Sept. 22	The Renaissance (T, 11-12; P, Pico della Mirandola, Machiavelli)*
Sept. 29	The Reformation and Absolutism (T, 13-15; P, Luther, Bossuet, Hobbes)
Oct. 6	Limited Monarchy (T, 15; P, Locke)*
Oct. 15	The Age of Reason (T, 16-17; P, Descartes, Voltaire, Kant)
Oct. 20	The Age of Revolution (T, 18; P, Declaration of the Rights of Man, Burke), Midterm/First extra-credit paper*
Oct. 27	The Age of Industrialism and Nationalism (T, 19-21; P, Mill, Mazzini, Treitschke, Wordsworth, Marx)
Nov. 3	The Birth of Modern Culture (T, 22-23; P, Social Darwinism, Certainty and Uncertainty, Nietzsche, Freud)*
Nov. 10	War, Communism, and Fascism (T, 24-25; P, Lenin, Mussolini)
Nov. 17	Nazi Germany and the Second World War (T, 25-26; P, Hitler)*
Nov. 24	Postwar Europe and the Contemporary West (T, 27-29; P, Gorbachev, Sartre, John Paul II)
Dec. 1	The Contemporary West (T, 28-29)*
Dec. 8	Final Essay/Second extra-credit paper/Final extra-credit assignment in class

## MISSED CLASSES, MISSED PAPERS, MISSED TESTS

If you miss a class and do not want to be penalized, you **must** bring us a *documented* reason for your absence. This is especially important if there was a paper due or a quiz given on the day you were absent. *I shall schedule a make-up quiz and allow you to hand in your paper late without penalty **only** if you have a documented excuse.*

Please print your papers before the day they are due. *Last-minute computer glitches are not an acceptable excuse for a late paper.* I will not accept papers submitted by e-mail except in cases of dire emergency, and even in those cases you must submit a hard copy within a few days in order to receive credit for your work.

## E-MAIL

We shall be sending review questions and other important material to your GMU e-mail address. Please make sure that your account is open and that your mailbox has room for more messages. We encourage you to use e-mail to share your questions and concerns with us, but please *do not ask for information already contained in this syllabus. To insure that we receive your message, and in order to comply with student privacy laws, **make sure to send it from your GMU address.*** Your message should be grammatical and properly spelled. Do not use instant messaging abbreviations.

*Whenever you write, please include your name and which section you attend. This is **very** important.* Please allow us at least 24 hours to reply.

## DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations *must* be arranged through that office.

### **ADDING AND DROPPING CLASSES**

The last day you may add a class or drop a class without penalty is September 8. The last day you may drop a class is October 2.

### **GENERAL EDUCATION: A NOTE FROM THE PROVOST**

This course meets one of the core requirements of the University General Education program. The goal of this requirement is to ensure that students are introduced to the broad range of study that contribute to a liberal education, enabling them to synthesize new knowledge, respond to fresh challenges, and meet the demands of a complex world. For more information on General Education, please see the University Catalog, and the General Education website, [www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/gened/index.html](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/gened/index.html).