

History of Western Civilization - HIS 100 - 029
Fall 2015, Monday 7:20-10:00 PM
Blueridge Hall 129

Instructor: Dr. T. Kurt Knoerl

Office Hours: Mondays 6:15-7:00 PM and by appointment in Robinson Hall, Room B336

Phone: (703) 945-8950 Email: kknorl@gmu.edu

Required Text:

Joshua Cole, Carol Symes, Judith Coffin and Robert Stacey, *Western Civilizations*, Brief 3rd edition combined volume (W.W. Norton, 2012, isbn 9780393934878).

Standage, Tom. *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*. Any edition is fine. New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2006, isbn 978-0802715524.

Suggested Text:

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, 2010. (6th edition or later) This is an excellent resource to have for writing papers in history and other topics.

Course Overview:

This course will cover the history of western civilization from prehistory to the present. By examining the major themes and events that occurred during this period you should obtain an understanding of Europe's political, cultural, and religious history. Sub themes for this course include the means by which historians gather and interpret information about the past and the important role the natural environment has played in connecting Europe to the wider world. The lectures, readings, and class discussions will help you understand the historian's craft and how to think and read critically. It will also enhance your knowledge of western history and how it affects us today.

Learning Objectives:

Students enrolled in this course are expected to:

1. Understand the foundations of western culture and society.
2. Identify major historical figures and connect them to their proper countries, time periods, and significant events.
3. Identify the social, economic and political forces at work in the development of western society.
4. Analyze complex historical sources and materials and reach conclusions based on interpretations of those materials.

Assignments: You will be required to use Blackboard frequently throughout the semester. If you have any questions about how to use Blackboard please see me. You should be in the habit of checking it regularly for announcements – these will also be emailed to you. Be sure to check your email and Blackboard regularly.

1.) **Reading Assignments and the Class Blog** – In addition to the course textbook, there will be reading assignments posted on Blackboard with links to historical documents, websites, etc. You

will be expected to carefully read these and discuss them in class. Over the course of the semester I will pose 12 questions to be answered either in class or on our class blog. Your answers should be well written and 200-300 words in length. Be sure to check the blog for the class question each week to see which format to use. On those weeks where you are directed to answer online you are also expected to read your classmates' responses and provide comments on at least one of them. Your posts and comments will be part of your grade. Please be constructive and respectful in your comments. No "flaming" or disrespectful comments will be tolerated. All reading responses and comments must be completed by 10:00 PM on the Sunday before class. Posts and comments submitted after that time but before class will receive a lower grade. Entries submitted after class will receive a 0. I will drop the lowest 2 grades. Despite the blog format all posts should be well written with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Use the same care and attention to detail as you would for a formal research paper.

2.) **Book Paper**– Each student will be required to write a paper this semester on the following book: *A History of the World in 6 Glasses* by Tom Standage.

The paper should be three to four pages in length, double spaced with one inch margins and 12 point font. The paper should address the following question: Which of the six drinks covered in the book do you think was the most influential in the history of western civilization. Your paper should have a clear argument (thesis) that is supported by specific examples from the book, the textbook, lectures, websites, and other sources covered in this class. It should also address why you feel the other drinks were not as influential. We will discuss this in more detail in class. Proper grammar, spelling, and footnotes should be used. Please use the Rampolla book as your guide. It's it fairly cheap and will help you for other classes you may take.

3.) **Final Exam** – The final exam (see the course schedule for specific dates) is worth 20 percent of your final grade. Exam questions will come from the textbook, assigned readings, and class discussions so be sure to take notes in all of these areas.

4.) **Website Review** – Each student will select a website dealing with some aspect of western civilization history and write a paper based on their review. Further details on the nature of the review will be provided in class. Each student will have 10 minutes to present their findings to the class.

5) **Extra Credit** – There are two opportunities to earn extra credit for this class.

1) You may read a second book: *Gilgamesh* (there is an online version here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/11794918/Epic-of-Gilgamesh-Andrew-George>) and write a second book paper following the technical guidelines outlined above. The paper should address the following question: What can the story tell us about the origins of western civilization that we might not have known had the story not been discovered? This assignment can earn you **up to 5** points.

2) You can visit a museum exhibit in the Washington DC area on any topic covered by our text book. Please see me in advance of your visit to gain approval for the topic. After visiting the exhibit you must write a three to four page paper following the guidelines I will provide. This assignment can earn you **up to 5** points

Assessment of Learning :

The final grade will be calculated based on a student's performance in multiple areas including class participation, reading responses, oral presentation, two formal papers, and a final exam. The breakdown of points is as follows:

Participation & Attendance:	20 points*
Reading Responses:	20 points
Web Site Review Paper:	15 points
Book Paper:	15 points
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>30 points</u>
Total:	100 points

Grading Scale:

A = 100 - 90 B = 89 - 80 C = 79 - 70 D = 69 - 60 F = 59 and below.

*0 absences = 20, 1 absence = 19, 2 absences = 17, 3 absences = 16, 4 absences = 14, 5 absences = 12, 6 absences = 0

Attendance

One of the keys to doing well in any class is attendance. You can't benefit from class lectures and discussions if you're not present. This is especially true in a class like ours that only meets once a week. It will be very difficult to do well in this class if you do not attend class regularly. Students should expect a lowered grade in the course if they have unexcused absences. Unexcused absences are those for which the student does not have a doctor's note confirming illness. Students are still responsible for completing the reading assignments and must still complete the blog entry for that week's question(s). Tardiness is very disruptive and if you are late an unreasonable amount additional work may be required. 3 tardies = 1 unexcused absence.

Students must know the last date to withdraw without a grade penalty; after that date no class can be dropped except in specific exceptional circumstances, which must be documented. Any student wishing to drop this class *must do so for himself or herself* by following George Mason University procedures.

If you are absent from class it is **YOUR** responsibility to request any handouts you did not receive as well as information about assignments/papers/exams, etc.

Inclement Weather:

University closings, class cancellations, late openings, or other weather related changes in the university's operating schedule will be announced on:

- University Information: 703-993-1000;
- On line: Homepage, Mason News, and department websites as appropriate;
- The university's emergency notification system (Mason Alert);
- GMU-TV; and
- all local media outlets (although media coverage cannot be guaranteed)

Policy for Make-up Exams:

****NOTE** Deadlines are FIRM; requests for extensions will not be granted.** The only

exceptions to the “no extensions” rule will occur in cases of serious illness (documented by doctor’s note) or family emergency of which I am informed before the assignment is due. Lots of other work (or I have a job outside of class) does not count as an emergency. If you miss an exam you must see me in office hours or by appointment, preferably before the exam missed. The make-up exam may be different than the regular one. **I reserve the right to give you a zero for any assignment, quiz, or exam missed.**

Academic Honesty:

Neither cheating nor plagiarism will be tolerated. If you are found cheating or plagiarizing you will receive a grade of 0 and the incident reported to the department and dean. When such misconduct is established as having occurred, it subjects you to possible disciplinary actions ranging from admonition to dismissal, along with any grade penalty the instructor might, in appropriate cases, impose. For more information see the George Mason University Honor System and Code here: <http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Course Rules:

- 1.) It is **your** responsibility to understand the syllabus. If you have any questions about the syllabus please contact me as soon as possible.
- 2.) Do not arrive tardy to class. If you are late, take your seat quietly. For every 3 late days you will be charged with an unexcused absence. If you are tardy for exams or quizzes you may be penalized by not being allowed to participate.
- 3.) Do not leave class early unless you inform me **before** class begins. If you are sick and have to leave please do, but tell me why at the earliest possible time. If you leave, do so quietly without disrupting the class.
- 4.) Try to avoid causing distractions in class. This means do not engage in private conversations during the lecture and tests. Do not read or do other schoolwork after class begins. You **must** turn off your cell phone and/or beeper when you come to class. This does not mean silencing the phone, but turning it off completely. **Texting during class is not allowed.** If you are texting you are not paying attention and could miss important information; also, it is rude. A ringing phone or loud beeper disrupts you, your classmates, and me. Any or all of these distractions may result in my asking you to leave in front of the entire class. If I see your cell phone out at all you will receive an unexcused absence for that class. If you have an emergency situation that requires you to have your cell phone on vibrate inform me about it before class begins.
- 5.) I do not provide copies of my notes. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you miss class it is your responsibility to get the notes from a classmate.
- 6.) You may use a laptop in class, but I will occasionally check during class to see if you are using it to only take notes. If I find you online or playing games, you will lose the right to use a laptop in class.
- 7.) In addition to attending class the next best thing you can do to help with your grade is to do the assigned readings. They convey important information and if you haven’t read them you

won't be able to contribute to the class discussion. Raising your hand and offering your insights is part of your participation grade. Finally, take notes on both your readings and the class discussions. Writing down your impressions not only forces you to think about what you've just read or heard but it also reinforces your memory of those impressions. It makes it much easier at test time if you have good legible notes to review.

8.) If you are having problems, come see me. I am here to help, and the earlier you notify me the sooner we can try to solve it. I want all of you to succeed and enjoy the class.

Weekly Schedule:

Week 1: Aug. 31	Class Introduction: Syllabus Review and discussion on history and other stuff.	What is history? Why should you care? Catching up: the story so far. Expectations for this class.
Week 2: Sept 7 NO CLASS	Chapters 1 & 2:	Students are still expected to read the material and answer the blog questions.
Week 3: Sept. 14	Chapters 3 & 4:	
Week 4: Sept.21	Chapters 5 & 6:	
Week 5: Sept. 28	Chapters 7 & 6:	
Week 6: Oct. 5	Chapters 9 & 10:	
Week 7: Oct. 12	Chapters 11 & 12:	
Week 8: Oct. 19	Chapters 13 & 14:	Website Paper Due
Week 9: Oct. 26	Chapters 15 & 16:	
Week 10: Nov. 2	Chapters 17 & 18:	
Week 11: Nov. 9	Chapters 19 & 20:	
Week 12: Nov. 16	Chapters 21 & 22:	
Week 13: Nov. 23	Chapters 23 & 24:	
Week 14: Nov. 30	Chapter 25	
Week 15: Dec. 7	Chapter 26 & 27:	Book Paper Due
Week 16: Dec 14	Chapter 28 & 29	Extra Credit Work Due

***Final Exam: Thursday, Dec 21st, 7:30 pm**