

**HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION**  
HIST 100–003 (fall 2016)  
3 credit hours

**Big Ideas, Momentous Events, and Important  
People of Western Civilization**

**Instructor:** Professor Chris Elzey

**Location:** Exploratory Hall L004

**Day:** MWF

**Time:** 12:30-1:20 p.m.

**Office:** Robinson B 226A

**Email:** celzey@gmu.edu (please use your MasonLive account when emailing)

**Office Hours:** MW 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (also by appointment)

**Teaching Assistants:**

- Eric Gonzaba (egonzaba@masonlive.gmu.edu)
  - Donya Akhawan Jam (dakhawan@masonlive.gmu.edu)
- Both are available by appointment; please email.

**Prerequisites for the Course**

None

**Class Contacts**

1. Name and phone number/email:
  
2. Name and phone number/email:

**The Course**

The History of Western Civilization explores the great events, issues, history makers, and social and cultural movements of the western world from antiquity to the present. Much of our time will be spent examining the people, ideas and events that changed the course of western history.

Why take Western Civilization? One reason is that it allows you to better understand the world in which you live. Much of what has been identified as the “modern” experience – democracy, enlightened thinking, egalitarianism – owes itself in large part to western civilization. Another reason is that it provides an intellectual foundation to appreciate the various artistic, philosophical, and literary movements that have informed the world around you.

**Course Objectives**

Understanding how and why the western world developed the way it did is one of the primary aims of the course. You will learn about western history’s important events and significant historical figures, and the ways the West has impacted the rest of the world. You will also learn the basics of the historian’s craft: analyzing and synthesizing historical information gleaned from primary and secondary

sources. An important part of that is being able to express your thoughts in clear and grammatically correct prose. Finally, you will have a better appreciation of how thousands of years of western history have influenced today's world.

### **Required Texts**

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*

Frankforter, A. Daniel and William M. Spellman. *The West: A Narrative History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

Perrottet, Tony. *The Naked Olympics*

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus I: My Father Bleeds History* and *Maus II: And Here My Trouble Began*

\*Several primary and secondary source documents (most will be posted on Blackboard)

### **Course Requirements and Assignments**

We will be reading parts of the textbook, *The West: A Narrative History*. Your reading assignments for that book are listed in the course schedule. **YOU ARE TO COME TO CLASS HAVING COMPLETED THAT DAY'S READING ASSIGNMENT. ALL PAGE REFERENCES IN THE COURSE SCHEDULE REFER TO THE TEXTBOOK.** You are expected to read all of *The Naked Olympics*, *Things Fall Apart*, and *Maus I* and *Maus II*. We will also read or look at several primary and secondary source documents – some are pictures – and devote a small amount of class time to these.

You will take three exams. Each consists of multiple-choice questions (which may or may not include questions about geography), identifications and short answer questions. About two weeks before each exam, I will post a list of identification terms and short answer questions. From that list, I will select a handful of identifications and short answer questions for the exam. The exams will cover all material from class and the readings. Each exam is worth one fifth of your grade.

You are also responsible for writing one paper (4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1"-margins) on *The Naked Olympics*, *Things Fall Apart*, or *Maus I* and *II*. Let me repeat myself: **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WRITING ONLY ONE PAPER.** I will post the questions on Blackboard – you will respond to one question only – roughly two weeks before each paper is due. **THE DUE DATES ARE:**

- **SEPTEMBER 21 (FOR THE NAKED OLYMPICS)**
- **NOVEMBER 18 (FOR THINGS FALL APART)**
- **DECEMBER 9 (FOR MAUS I AND MAUS II)**

You will be graded on content, use of historical evidence, and persuasiveness (which means you should pay particular attention to grammar, punctuation, etc.). **NO PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL.** The paper will count for one fifth of your grade.

Lastly, you will take several quizzes and complete a couple of out-of-class assignments. Quizzes might be announced and unannounced. **ONE OF THE**

**FIRST QUIZZES WILL COVER THE SYLLABUS. IT WILL BE GIVEN ON THE SECOND DAY OF CLASS. FOUR OTHER QUIZZES ARE ALSO SCHEDULED: THE NAKED OLYMPICS (SEPTEMBER 16), A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS (OCTOBER 21), THINGS FALL APART (NOVEMBER 14), AND MAUS I AND MAUS II (DECEMBER 5).** All

unannounced quizzes will cover the required reading in the textbook or primary/secondary source documents for that particular day. Please bring paper and a pen or pencil to every class. Attendance and class participation will also count for a quiz grade.

Assignments may consist of a short opinion piece on primary or secondary source documents. I will announce these assignments in class and on Blackboard.

**PLEASE CHECK BLACKBOARD REGULARLY.**

There is one announced assignment. Toward the end of the semester, I would like you to watch **ONE** of two movies: *Casablanca* or *Dr. Strangelove*. You are to write a one-page response on the following question: How does knowing the history of western civilization help you better understand the movie? **YOU ARE TO HAND IN THE ASSIGNMENT ON THE DAY OF EXAM #3 (DECEMBER 19).** The assignment will count as a quiz. A copy of each movie will be on reserve in Gateway Library in the Johnson Center.

At the end of the semester, I will drop the two lowest quiz scores and calculate the average. The score will count for the final fifth of your grade. **AS WITH THE PAPERS, NO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED ELECTRONICALLY.**

Grades for each assignment will be posted on Grade Center on Blackboard.

**\*\*\*Note:** Blackboard may include an average for your cumulative score. Disregard it. Blackboard does not calculate the scores according to the weighted values assigned for the course. I will keep a separate grade book and I will consult it when I determine your final grade.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Exams (3)	60%
Paper	20%
Quizzes (average)	20%

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100	B+	88-89.9	C+	78-79.9	D	60-69.9
A-	90-92.9	B	83-87.9	C	73-77.9	F	0-59.9
		B-	80-82.9	C-	70-72.9		

### **Late Papers and Missed Exams and Quizzes**

Make it easy on yourself – turn your paper in on time. Each day the paper is late (Saturdays and Sundays count as well), I will deduct 5 points from the final score. Only an emergency can remove the 5-point deduction, provided you show me a doctor's note or other documentation. In this case, if you miss an exam, a makeup will be given (most likely an essay exam). **THERE ARE NO MAKEUP QUIZZES.** But I will drop your two lowest quiz scores when determining your final quiz grade.

### **Attendance and Participation**

You are expected to come to class, and your attendance will be recorded. Knowing that certain emergencies will arise over the course of the semester, you will be excused from missing two classes. No need to show me a note for these absences.

Three classes will be devoted to discussion – one for *The Naked Olympics*, one for *Things Fall Apart*, and the other for *Maus I and II*. I expect you to participate.

### **Extra Credit**

There is no extra credit. But if you show improvement on your exams, you can earn improvement credit. Here's how it works: If you score higher on your third exam than you do on the first, I will divide the difference by three and add it to the score of your first exam. For example, if you score 80 on the first exam, 84 on the second, and 95 on the third, I would add 5 points ( $95-80=15$ ;  $15$  divided by  $3=5$ ) to the result of your first exam and calculate your final grade using that score. **IMPROVEMENT CREDIT APPLIES ONLY TO THE DIFFERENCE IN SCORES BETWEEN YOUR FIRST AND THIRD EXAM.**

### **Electronic Devices**

Cell phones, Smartphones, and other electronic devices that make any kind of noise are not permitted. I will allow PCs and tablets, but only for note taking. Do not abuse this privilege. It is distracting to those around you. **IF YOU ARE SEEN USING YOUR PC OR TABLET FOR SOMETHING OTHER THAN NOTE TAKING, YOU WILL FORFEIT YOUR RIGHT TO USE THE DEVICE IN CLASS.**

### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to do your own work. Students who violate the Honor Code will be dealt with severely. Information on the Honor Code and what constitutes a violation can be found at the website for the Office of Academic Integrity (<http://oai.gmu.edu>)

### **Students with Disabilities**

Accommodations for students with disabilities are available. See the webpage of the Office of Disability Services (ODS) (<http://ods.gmu.edu>) or call 993-2474 for

more information. You can also visit the ODS office. It is located in SUB I, rm. 4205.

### **Diversity**

This course is in compliance with GMU's Diversity Statement: "George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth." For the full statement, see

<http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement>.

### **Important Drop/Add Dates**

- September 6 is the final day to drop the course and incur no financial penalty
- September 6 is the final day you can add the course
- September 30 is the last day you can drop the course (not using a selective withdrawal), but with a financial penalty
- October 28 is the last day for selective withdrawal

## **Course Schedule**

### Week 1: Creating Law and Order (and I Don't Mean the TV Series)

August 29: Introduction; The Rule of Law and Writing in Mesopotamia and Egypt

August 31: Mesopotamia and Egypt (cont.)

Read: pp. 5-6, 13-16, 18-31, 36-47 (**ALL PAGES REFER TO FRANKFORTER AND SPELLMAN UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**) (**QUIZ**)

September 2: Moses and Monotheism

Read: pp. 53-60

### Week 2: Democracy by the Polis (Not the One with Sting as Lead Singer)

#### \*Primary Documents

September 5: No class (Labor Day)

September 7: Homer: Let Me Tell You a Story

Read: pp. 71-82; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 1-5

September 9: Sparta and Athens

Read: pp. 82-93, 97-106; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 6-8

### Week 3: Build Me an Empire: Ancient Greece and Alexander the Great

September 12: Sparta vs. Athens (cont.)

Read: pp. 107-113; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 9-11

September 14: Let Me Ask You Something: The Socratic Method

Read: pp. 113-122, 125-135; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 12-15

September 16: *Naked Olympics*, Discussion (**QUIZ**)

Read: *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 16-18

### Week 4: Expansionism; or, Welcome to the Empire: Ancient Rome

#### \*Primary Documents

September 19: LA Dolce Vita?: Life in Rome

Read: pp. 135-145

September 21: Life in Rome (cont.)

Read: pp. 145-152, 155-183

**TURN IN PAPER ON THE NAKED OLYMPICS**

September 23: The Long and Winding Via Appia: Pax Romana to Empire's End

Read: pp. 189-200, 205-215, 219-237

### Week 5: Unification: The Frankish World of Charlemagne and Beyond

#### \*Primary Documents

September 26: Qui Était Charlemagne?

Read: pp. 237-246, 255-261, 267-273, 297-299 (stop at paragraph discussing Richard I)

September 28: **EXAM #1**

September 30: The Church in Turmoil: The Avignon Papacy

Read: pp. 264-267, 281-287

Week 6: “...placed within the grasp of the Evil One”: The Calamitous 1300s

October 3: Really? It Lasted That Long?: The Hundred Years’ War

Read: pp. 299-305 (start at paragraph discussing Richard I), 318-335

October 5: A Plague on All Your Houses: The Black Death

Read: pp. 340-356

October 7: Jeanne d’Arc, the Maid Who Became a Saint

Read: pp. 357-362

Week 7: The Power of Conviction: Religiosity and Exploration

October 11 (Tuesday): Jeanne d’Arc (cont.); Ferdinand Magellan: Round the World in...Three Years”

Read: pp. 367-375

October 12: Ferdinand Magellan (cont.); The Three Reformers: Luther, Calvin and Henry VIII

Read: pp. 380-386

October 14: The Three Reformers (cont.)

Read: pp. 386-395

Week 8: I Protest: The Reformation

\*Primary Documents

October 17: Film: *A Man for All Seasons*

Read: pp. 395-399

October 19: Film: *A Man for All Seasons* (cont.)

October 21: Finish *A Man for All Seasons* (**QUIZ**)

Read: pp. 399-403

Week 9: Protestants vs. Catholics: The Religious Wars

October 24: There Blew a Protestant Wind: the Defeat of the Spanish Armada

Read: pp. 403-405

October 26: To Defenestrate: the Start of the Thirty Years’ War

Read: pp. 405-415

October 28: Louis XIV: Le Roi du Soleil

Read: pp. 421-439

Week 10: “L’etat, C’est Moi”: Absolutism Absolutely

October 31: **EXAM #2**

November 2: The Enlightenment: Reason Over Faith

Read: pp. 451-461, 465-471, 475-485, 487-494

November 4: The Start of the French Revolution

Read: pp. 500-513

Week 11: “You Say You Want a Revolution”: France and Napoleon

\*Primary Documents

November 7: Terror!

Read: pp. 514-516; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 1-5

November 9: “Europe Was at My Feet”: the Napoleonic Era

Read: pp. 517-524; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 6-10

November 11: Here We Go Again: the Revolutions of 1848

Read: pp. 531-535, 539-546, 560-573; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 11-16

Week 12 and 13: “Iron and Blood”: Nationalism and Imperialism

November 14: *Things Fall Apart*—Discussion (**QUIZ**)

Read: *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 17-25

November 16: “When the World Went Mad”: WWI

Read: pp. 591-600, 611-615, 620-626, 631-638

November 18: WWI (cont.)

Read: pp. 649-658, 660-662, 664-675

**TURN IN PAPER ON THINGS FALL APART**

November 21: “Revolution in Manners and Morals”: the U.S. in the 1920s

Read: pp. 680-684; start *Maus I* and *II*

November 23 and 25 (No class, Thanksgiving Break)

Week 14: “Arbeit Macht Frei”: Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust

November 28: Schicklgruber or Hitler? A Psycho History

Read: pp. 684-697; continue *Maus I* and *II*

November 30: The Nazis’ Rise to Power

Read: pp. 697-702, 708-733; continue *Maus I* and *II*

December 2: The Nazis’ Rise to Power (cont.)

Read: continue *Maus I* and *II*

Week 15: Us against Them: The Cold War

December 5: *Maus I* and *II*—Discussion (**QUIZ**)

Read: pp. 739-752, 754-761; finish *Maus I* and *II*

December 7: “An Iron Curtain...across the Continent”: the Cold War Begins

Read: pp. 762-767, 772-785

December 9: The Tragic Games: The 1972 Munich Olympics

**TURN IN PAPER ON MAUS I and II**

December 19: **EXAM #3** (starts at 10:30 a.m.)

**TURN IN ONE-PAGE PAPER ON CASABLANCA OR DR.  
STRANGELOVE (PROMPT IS ON PAGE 3 OF SYLLABUS)**