

History 100, Spring 2017
Professor: Konstantin Avramov
Office Hours: TBA
Office: Robinson B 336
Email: kavramov@gmu.edu

Western Civilization

Course Content

This course examines the history of Western Civilization from the first records of human societies until present day. We will focus on the historical evolution of primarily European political, religious, cultural, and institutional aspects during its known history. We will explore the major events and transformation of this period, and focus on the great questions and ideas that have arisen from these transformations and that have in turn shaped the politics, social organizations, artistic culture, and economies of Western Civilization. We will read, analyze, and interpret certain primary works in order to gain insight into the contexts in which they originated.

Thus, the overarching questions for this course are:

When and why do societies or people perceive themselves to be at the "center" of the world?

Who becomes categorized as "superior" or "inferior," and why?

How and why do individuals identify themselves and others on the basis of race, class, religion, or gender?

*How do issues of individual identity contribute to the formation of nations and empires?
How is "power" defined?*

Course Goals:

- Understand the most significant developments in human and Western Civilization
- Gain an understanding of different trends in human development and the human condition based on Western experience
- Gain appreciation for variety and ingenuity of humankind's achievements
- Gain insight from humankind's mistakes and failures
- Learn to interpret primary and secondary sources in history
- Learn to develop coherent and evidence-based arguments

Assignments:

Midterm and Final Exams will count for 80% of your final grade. They will consist of multiple-choice questions covering material from class and assigned readings.

You will also have a primary source analysis exercise that will count for 20% of your total grade.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Primary Source Exercise (20%)

Midterm Examination (40%)

Final Examination (40%)

Like many of my colleagues, I really enjoy talking with students, so don't be shy about stopping by to get acquainted during office hours. At that time, I will be able to give you my full attention--unlike before and after class, when I have other duties that have to come first. If my regular office hours don't fit into your schedule, we can set up a different appointment time. I also answer questions via email (but please don't anticipate a quick turn-around). If you're facing a challenge in this course, I can help you to thrive.

Academic misconduct:

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Be sure to acquaint yourself with the expectations for honest conduct in your academic endeavors, and follow them fully. You can find official policies towards academic misconduct on the university website. It is my policy to report all incidents of academic misconduct so that they are handled through official procedures.

Plagiarism. Scholars are meticulous about documenting the words and ideas of others, whether they come from printed sources, electronic media, or personal conversation. You need to be careful about this, too. If you use someone else's words (direct quotations), or substitute other words to say the same thing (paraphrases), or even just present someone else's ideas, you need to acknowledge this intellectual debt appropriately. Historians use footnotes or endnotes to do this, and for this course, you are required to adopt this form of citation for work in this course. In the first exercise for this course, you will practice proper paraphrasing and footnoting. After that, you are responsible for using quotations, paraphrases, and citations correctly in your written work at all times.

Collusion. Although I encourage my students to study together, collaboration must cease when you begin to write your assignments—before you draw up outlines of answers or select examples. You must complete every assignment for this course yourself. If you ask someone else to do assignments for you, you are not only cheating--

and that is a serious violation of university rules, subject to penalties up to expulsion from the university--but you are also depriving yourself of an opportunity to learn. Also, don't share drafts of your answers for exercises and exams with classmates. If they hand your answers in as their own, you will get in trouble, too!

Required reading:

You will notice there is no textbook for the course, although I do recommend some below. It is my belief that history is best learned not through reading of dense textbooks, which are soon forgotten, but through in class study and participation. Therefore it is **absolutely essential** that you show up to class. Majority of your exams in this course will be based on material we discuss in class.

There will be additional readings. I will announce them in class and post these on the class website. It is your responsibility to make sure you are up-to-date on required material for each class period.

Recommended: *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures, Volume I and II*, Hunt, et al., or *A History of World Societies*, by John McKay, Bennett Hill and John Buckler, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Attendance:

Attendance is not required. You are grown adults in an institution of higher learning. However, as I mentioned before, vast majority of information on course exams will be from class lecture and discussion. If you want to do well in this class, attendance is a must! If for some reason you miss a class, please talk to one of your classmates in order to obtain notes from that day. I will not provide these to you.

All of the information on the syllabus is subject to change upon circumstances and you will be informed of the changes in class or via email.

Week 1: January 23, 25, 27

Introduction to the course

Watch: *Rashomon* (1950)

What is Western Civilization?

Week 2: January 30, February 1, 3

Rise of human beings

Ancient Civilizations: Mesopotamia, Egypt

Week 3: February 6, 8, 10

Ancient Greece

Week 4: February 13, 15, 17

Rome

Week 5: February 20, 22, 24

Rome continued

Week 6: February 27, March 1, 3

Medieval Europe

Renaissance

Week 7: March 6, 8, 10

Absolutism

Enlightenment

Midterm – March 8th

Week 8: March 13, 15, 17

Spring Break - NO CLASS

Week 9: March 20, 22, 23

Napoleonic Europe

Revolutions of 1848

19th Century – Colonialism

Week 10: March 27, 29, 31

World War I and Aftermath

Week 11: April 3, 5, 7

World War II

Week 12: April 10, 12, 14

Post- War II

Week 13: April 17, 19, 21

Cold War

Week 14: April 24, 26, 28

Collapse of the Soviet Union and aftermath

Week 15: May 1, 3, 5

Globalization and New World Order

Future of Western Civilization

Final Review

Final Exam: Please consult university webpage for exact times. I will also announce it in class. The exam will take place in our regular classroom.