

HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

HIST 100–013 (Spring 2017)

3 credit hours

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

Instructor: Professor Chris Elzey

Location: Exploratory Hall L004

Day: T/TH

Time: 3:00-4:15 p.m.

Office: Robinson B 369B

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

Office Hours: T/TH 10:30-11:30 a.m. (also by appointment)

Teaching Assistants:

- Donya Akhawan Jam (dakhawan@masonlive.gmu.edu)
 - Meg Ratliff (mratliff@masonlive.gmu.edu)
- Both are available by appointment; to request a meeting, 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*, 3rd 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*. I repeat: **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:**

- **FEBRUARY 14 (FOR THE NAKED OLYMPICS)**
- **APRIL 25 (FOR THINGS FALL APART)**
- **MAY 4 (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 may be announced or 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* (FEBRUARY 9), *A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS* (MARCH 28), *THINGS FALL APART* (APRIL 20), AND *MAUS I AND MAUS II* (MAY 2).** 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 (MAY 11).** 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, except for the one-page assignment that is due on the day of the third exam (see above), 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 accordingly. 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

- January 30 is the final day to drop the course and incur no financial penalty
- January 30 is the final day you can add the course
- February 24 is the last day you can drop the course (not using a selective withdrawal), but with a financial penalty
- March 31 is the last day for selective withdrawal

Course Schedule

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

January 24: Introduction; The Rule of Law and Writing in Mesopotamia and Egypt

January 26: Mesopotamia and Egypt (cont.); Moses and Monotheism

Reading: pp. 5-6, 13-16, 18-31, 36-47, 53-60 (**ALL PAGES REFER TO FRANKFORTER AND SPELLMAN**) (**QUIZ**)

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

*Primary Documents

January 31: Moses and Monotheism (cont.); Homer: Let Me Tell You a Story

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

February 2: Sparta and Athens; Let Me Ask You Something: The Socratic Method

Reading: pp. 82-93, 97-106; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 6-10

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

February 7: Socratic Method (cont.)

Reading: pp. 107-122, 125-135; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 11-14

February 9: *The Naked Olympics*, **DISCUSSION (QUIZ)**; *La Dolce Vita*: Life in Ancient Rome

Reading: pp. 135-145; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 15-18

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

*Primary Documents

February 14: Life in Ancient Rome (cont.); The Long and Winding Via Appia: *Pax Romana* to Empire's End

Reading: 145-152, 155-183

TURN IN PAPER ON THE NAKED OLYMPICS

February 16: *Pax Romana* to Empire's End (cont.)

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

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

*Primary Documents

February 21: Qui Était Charlemagne?

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

February 23: **EXAM #1**

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

February 28: The Church in Turmoil: the Avignon Papacy; Really? It Lasted That Long?: The Hundred Years' War

Reading: pp. 264-267, 281-287

March 2: Hundred Years' War (cont.); A Plague on All Your Houses: The Black Death

Reading: pp. 299-305 (start at paragraph that discusses Richard I), 318-335

Week 7: The Power of Conviction: Religiosity and Exploration

March 7: A Plague (cont.); Jeanne d'Arc, the Maid Who Became a Saint

Reading: pp. 340-362

March 9: Jeanne D'Arc (cont.); Ferdinand Magellan: Round the World
in...Three Years"

Reading: pp. 367-375

Week 8: Spring Break (Enjoy!)

March 14: No Class

March 16: No Class

Week 9: I Protest: The Reformation

*Primary Documents

March 21: Magellan (cont.); The Three Reformers: Luther, Calvin and Henry
VIII

Reading: pp. 380-395

March 23: Film: *A Man for All Seasons*

Reading: pp. 395-399

Week 10: Protestants vs. Catholics: The Religious Wars

March 28: Finish *A Man for All Seasons* (**QUIZ**); There Blew a Protestant Wind:
The Defeat of the Spanish Armada

Reading: pp. 399-403

March 30: Defeat of the Spanish Armada (cont.); To Defenestrate: the Start of
the Thirty Years' War

Reading: pp. 403-415

Week 11: "L'etat, C'est Moi": Absolutism Absolutely

April 4: Louis XIV: Le Roi du Soleil; The Enlightenment: Reason Over Faith

Reading: pp. 421-439, 451-461, 465-471, 475-485, 487-494

April 6: **EXAM #2**

Week 12: "You Say You Want a Revolution": France and Napoleon

*Primary Documents

April 11: The Start of the French Revolution

Reading: pp. 500-511; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 1-10

April 13: French Revolution (cont.); Terror!

Reading: pp. 511-516; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 11-18

Week 13: "Iron and Blood": Nationalism and Imperialism

April 18: "Europe Was at My Feet": the Napoleonic Era; Here We Go Again:
The Revolutions of 1848

Reading: pp. 517-524, 531-535, 539-546, 560-573; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters
19-22

April 20: Revolutions of 1848 (cont.); *Things Fall Apart*—**DISCUSSION (QUIZ)**
“When the World Went Mad”: WWI
Reading: pp. 591-600, 611-615, 620-626; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 23-25

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

April 25: WWI (cont.); “Revolution in Manners and Morals”: the U.S. in the 1920s; Schicklgruber or Hitler?: A Psycho History
Reading: pp. 631-638, 649-658, 660-662, 664-675, 680-684; start *Maus I*
TURN IN PAPER ON THINGS FALL APART
April 27: Schicklgruber or Hitler? (cont.); The Nazis’ Rise to Power
Reading: pp. 684-697, 697-702, 708-733; finish *Maus I* and start *Maus II*

Week 15: Us against Them: The Cold War

May 2: *Maus I* and *II*—**DISCUSSION (QUIZ)**; “An Iron Curtain...across the Continent”: The Cold War Begins
Reading: pp. 739-752, 754-761; finish *Maus II*
May 4: the Cold War Begins (cont.); The Tragic Games: The 1972 Munich Olympics
Reading: pp. 762-767, 772-785
TURN IN PAPER ON MAUS I and II

May 11: **EXAM #3 (starts at 1:30 p.m.)**

*****TURN IN ONE-PAGE ASSIGNMENT ON *DR. STRANGELOVE* OR *CASABLANCA***

- **SEE PAGE 3 OF SYLLABUS FOR DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT**
- **THE SCORE FOR THE ASSIGNMENT IS THE ONLY ONE THAT I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO DROP**