

George Mason University
HIST 100: History of Western Civilization
Spring Term 2017

Course: Western Civilization 100 (018)
Time: 7.20pm – 10pm
Location: Robinson Hall B201
Instructor: Dr. Jessica Legnini
Office: Rob B369A
Office Hours: By Appointment
Contact: jlegnini@gmu.edu

Course Description and Objectives:

The aim of this course is to enable students to gain a more thorough understanding of “the West” from its Mediterranean origins to its role in producing the “Modern World.” The course will begin with a consideration of pre-Enlightenment Europe in relation to the intellectual changes ushered in by the Enlightenment of the 1700s. The course will revolve around four specific, but chronological, topics: “Becoming Modern”; “Industrialization, Nation, and Empire”; “War, Violence, and the Nation-State”; and “The Gold War and Globalization.” The class will fulfill four specific objectives: students will gain a basic chronological understanding of Western history; they will be able to contextualize and gain a deeper understanding of key problems faced by “the West” since the 1700s; they will be introduced to the fundamentals of historical analysis through the extensive use of primary source materials; and they will be introduced to recent critiques of the idea of “western civilization.” Emphasis will be placed upon the application of history as a means for gaining a more meaningful conception of current political and social developments.

University General Education Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major chronology of Western Civilization.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to narrate and explain long-term changes and continuities in Western Civilization.
- Students will identify, evaluate and appropriately cite online and print resources.
- Students will develop multiple historical literacies by analyzing primary sources of various kinds (texts, images, music) and using these sources as evidence to support interpretation of historical events.
- Students will communicate effectively—orally, in writing, and/or using digital media—their understanding of patterns, processes, and themes in the history of western civilization.

Required Text:

Clifford R. Backman, *The Cultures of the West, Volume 2: Since 1350* (Oxford UP, 2nd Edition, 2016). ISBN 978-0-19-024047-9.

- Course readings are available on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to look over the in-class reading *before* class and be ready to discuss it.

Classroom Expectations:

- Please do not arrive late to class and please turn off the ringer on your cell phone.
- For a complete list of university-wide policies see: “Student Rights and Responsibilities” at <http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=29&navoid=6185#POL>

Honor Code

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses. Students that engage in academic dishonesty discredit not only themselves, but also the reputation of the university and, therefore, damage the reputation of their fellow students. Students will abide by the University's Academic Honor Code. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade. All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the applicable academic program. <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>

Attendance:

Due to the nature of the course regular attendance is expected. Students who fail to attend class regularly will be unable to keep up with the course's progression and continuity and, therefore, can expect their grade to suffer.

Course Requirements:

There will be two reflection assignments (40%) and a final assessment (40%). Class participation (attendance and frequency of contribution to discussion) will count for 20% of the overall grade. Grades will be given according to the following grading scale:

A+ : 98-100	B+ : 87-89	C+ : 77 -79	D+ : 67-69	F : 0-59
A : 93-97	B : 83-86	C : 73-76	D : 63-66	
A- : 90-92	B- : 80-82	C- : 70-72	D- : 60-62	

Important Dates:

Class Begins	January 26th
No Class (Spring Break)	March 13th to March 17th
Class Ends	May 4th
Final Exam	May 11th (7.30pm – 10.15pm)

Weekly Schedule

Topic 1: Becoming Modern

For This Topic, Read: Backman, *Cultures of the West*, Chapters 12 through 16, pp.399-619.

Thursday – 1/26: Introduction/The Pre-Enlightenment World (Part 1 and 2)

- Lecture: Early Civilizations and the Classical Era.
 - Art of early civilizations and classical art.
 - Medieval Art

In-Class Reading

- ❖ Plato, "The Nature of the Ideal State," from *The Republic* (360 BCE).
- ❖ Aristotle "On the Heavens" (350 BCE)
- ❖ John Philoponus, "Commentary on Aristotle's Physics" (c. 550).
- ❖ Magna Carta (1215)
- ❖ Thomas Aquinas, excerpt from *Summa Theologica* (1265-1274)

Thursday – 2/2: Early-Modern Era

- Lecture: The Renaissance and the Development of an Atlantic World
 - Michelangelo's *Pietà* (1499) and Raphael, *The School of Athens* (1509/10).
 - Vermeer *The Geographer* and *The Astronomer* (1660s).

In-Class Reading

- ❖ Letter from Columbus (1492)
- ❖ Martin Luther 95 Theses (1517)
- ❖ English Bill of Rights, 1689
- ❖ John Locke, reading from *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1690).

Thursday – 2/9: The Enlightenment

- Lecture: The Enlightenment and Revolution
 - Joseph Wright of Derby, *A Philosopher Giving A Lecture at the Orrery*, (1765) and David Casper Friedrich, *The Wanderer Above The Sea of Fog*, (1818).

In-Class Reading:

- ❖ J.J. Rousseau, “The Social Contract” (1762).
- ❖ Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence* (1776).
- ❖ Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” (1784).
- ❖ Marie Jean Antoine de Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1795).
- ❖ Olympe de Gouge, Declaration of the Rights of Women (1791).
- ❖ Excerpts from Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (1776).

Take-Home Written Reflection #1: Due Thursday 2/16

Topic 2: Being Modern: Industrialization, Nation, and Empire

For This Topic, Read: Backman, *Cultures of the West*, Chapters 17 through 23, pp. 621-897.

Thursday – 2/16: Industrialization

- Lecture: Industrialization, Liberalism and Communism

In-Class Reading:

- ❖ Friedrich Engels, reading from *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844).
- ❖ Excerpt from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848).
- ❖ Excerpt, John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859).

Thursday – 2/23: Empire and Nation

- Lecture: European Imperialism
 - Pear’s Soap Ad.

In-Class Reading

- ❖ Charles Darwin, excerpt from *On the Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection* (1859) and Herbert Spencer on Social Darwinism (1857).
- ❖ “What is a Nation?”
- ❖ Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” (1899).
- ❖ Edward D. Morel, “The Black Man’s Burden” (1903).

Topic 3: War, Violence, and the Nation-State

For this Topic, Read: Backman, *Cultures of the West*, Chapters 24 through 26, pp. 899-1027.

Thursday – 3/2: Challenges to Liberalism.

- Lecture: Questioning Modernity.
 - Art of the 19th and Twentieth Centuries

In-Class Reading

- ❖ Auguste Comte “General View of Positivism” (1848/1865).
- ❖ Excerpt from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1885).
- ❖ Sigmund Freud, “Civilization & Die Weltanschauung,” (1918).

Thursday – 3/9: WWI and Revolution

- Lecture: WWI and Russian Revolution
 - Photos of WWI: <https://www.theatlantic.com/projects/world-war-i-in-photos/>

In-Class Reading:

- ❖ Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est” (1917).
- ❖ Excerpts from *The Journal of Private Fraser*, 1915-1916.
- ❖ Excerpt from Vladimir Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1917).

Thursday – 3/16: SPRING BREAK- NO CLASS

Thursday – 3/23: Modern War and Civil Violence.

- Lecture: Depression, Fascism, and Genocide
 - Otto Dix and George Grosz Art
 - Numbers and Maps

In-Class Reading:

- ❖ Benito Mussolini, “What is Fascism?” (1932).
- ❖ Excerpts from *Triumph of the Will* (1934).
- ❖ WWII: Excerpts from Primo Levi *If This is a Man* (1947).

Take-Home Written Reflection #2: Due Thursday 3/30

Topic 4: The Post-Modern: The Cold War and Globalization

For this Topic, Read: Backman, *Cultures of the West*, Chapters 27 through 29, pp. 1029-1149.

Thursday – 3/30: Cold War and the Rise of US Hegemony

- Lecture: The Cold War
 - Cold War in Maps and Photographs
 - Atomic Bomb Detonations
 - *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51JoEE_znyI

In-Class Reading:

- ❖ George Kennan, “The Long Telegram,” 22 February 1946; and excerpt from Walter Lippmann, *The Cold War: A Study in U.S. Foreign Policy* (1947).
- ❖ Dwight D. Eisenhower, excerpt from the “Military Industrial Complex” speech (1960)

Thursday – 4/6: Consumerism, Globalization, and Revolution.

- Lecture: The 1960s

In-Class Reading:

- ❖ The art of Andy Warhol (1962).
- ❖ <http://www.worldofcoca-cola.com/>
- ❖ Malvina Reynolds, “Little Boxes” (1962).
- ❖ John Lennon, “Working-Class Hero” (1970).
- ❖ Jimi Hendrix, “Star-Spangled Banner” (1969).
- ❖ Timothy Leary, “The Declaration of Evolution” (1968).

Thursday – 4/13: NO CLASS: Watch *Fail Safe* (1964)

Thursday – 4/20: Cold War Ideologies

- Lecture: Art and Philosophy
 - Duchamp
 - Postmodern Art and Architecture
 - Postmodern Philosophy

Thursday – 4/27: Challenges to Western Dominance 1970s and 1980s

- Lecture: After the Soviet Union
 - European Union https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfN05WB_rYw
 - Collapse of USSR in Photographs <http://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2011/12/20-years-since-the-fall-of-the-soviet-union/100214/>
 - https://www.ted.com/talks/martin_jacques_understanding_the_rise_of_china

In-Class Readings:

- ❖ The Rise of China and the Future of the West
- ❖ “Why Populism Challenges Democracy from Within,” Marc Fleurbaey

Topic 5: Review

Thursday – 5/4: Review Class: Putting It All Together

Thursday – 5/11: Final Assessment: 7.30pm - 10.15pm.