

**HISTORY 100**

George Mason University  
Spring, 2017

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Robinson B-377D

*Western Civilization: From Ancients to Moderns*

This course considers the development of Europe and Europeans, and their exchanges with neighboring cultures. More than that, it introduces a method of historical study focused on the intelligent reconstruction of the thoughts, emotions and deeds of the people who built the civilization from which our own is derived. Using images and primary source texts, we will devote considerable attention to peering into the minds of men and women often far removed from us in time and space, in the hope of understanding not only our own roots but also in the hope of appreciating alternative paths. Intellectual curiosity is the only prerequisite for this course.

By the end of this course students will be able to:

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

**Requirements:**

Attendance at all class meetings; completion of assigned readings before class meetings; participation in discussion in class; three short essays; a mid-term and a final exam.

**Texts:**

The Internet History Sourcebook Project (Paul Halsall, ed.), and other web-based resources.

Additional recommended (but not required) text: *The Prentice Hall Atlas of Western Civilization* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), 2009.

**Policies:**

All work must be carried out or turned in at the appropriate time and place. Late work will not be accepted and exams may not be rescheduled without a valid medical excuse. 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.

Important dates to remember:

Last Day to Drop:

February 24, 2017

Selective Withdrawal Period:

February 27 – March 31, 2017

**Written Assignments:**

3 short essays (800 words) are required of every student. These essays, based on course readings, require no further research. The topics will be distributed at regular intervals throughout the course of the semester, normally one week before they are due. Each essay is due in class on the day specified on the syllabus below.

**Course Schedule:**

**Jan. 23:**

**Introduction: Thinking Through History  
Images of the Ancient Near East**

**Jan. 30:**

**Babylonian Beginnings** (Atlas, 12-17)

*The Code of Hammurabi*

*The Epic of Gilgamesh*

**The Greek System** (Atlas, 22-24)

Sophocles, *Antigone* (lines 332-338 only)

Plato, *The Republic*

Epicurus, *Maxims*

Homer, *The Iliad* (Book 1 only)

**Feb. 6:**

**Greek Culture and its Alternatives** (Atlas, 24-25)

Herodotus, *The Histories*

Thucydides, "Pericles' Funeral Oration" (from *History of the Peloponnesian War*)

**"I Came, I Saw, I Conquered"** (Atlas, 26-29)

Plutarch: *Life of Alexander*

Polybius: *The Histories*

Appian, *Mithridatic Wars*

**Feb. 13:**

**Rome of Bricks and Marble** (Atlas, 30-33)

*The Twelve Tables*

Polybius, "An Analysis of Roman Government" (from *The Histories*)

Tacitus, *Annals* (Selections)

Augustus, *Res Gestae*

Suetonius, "Caligula" (from *The Lives of the 12 Caesars*)

**Feb. 20:**

★Essay 1 Due★

**Christians and Barbarians** (Atlas, 34-39)

Pliny the Younger and Trajan, *Correspondence*

Tacitus, *Annals* (Selections)

Priscus, "Visit to the Court of Attila the Hun" (From *History of the Greeks*)

Salvian, *On the Government of God*

Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*

Ordeal Formulas

**Feb. 27:**

**Light in the Dark Ages** (*Atlas*, 40-43)

Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*

Theodoret, "Ambrose and Theodosius," (from *the Ecclesiastical History*)

*The Theodosian Code*

Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St. Benedict*

Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne* (Multiple excerpts)

**Mar. 6:**

MIDTERM EXAM

**Mar. 13:**

NO CLASS (*Spring Break*)

**Mar. 20:**

**Rome's Successors (Eastern Interlude)** (*Atlas*, 38-41)

Liutprand of Cremona, *Embassy to Constantinople*

Severus ibn al-Mukaffa,

*The Pact of 'Umar*

**Popes and Emperors**

Gregory VII, *Dictatus Papae*

Henry IV, *Letter to Gregory VII*

**Mar. 27:**

**Crusaders in the Holy Land** (*Atlas*, 46-49)

Robert the Monk, "Urban II's Speech at Clermont, 1095"

Fulcher of Chartres, *The Deeds of the Franks Who Attacked Jerusalem*

**The Seigneurial Revival**

*The Song of Roland* (Sections)

Fulbert of Chartres, *On Feudal Obligations*

*Magna Carta*

**Apr. 3:**

**Birds, Squirrels, and Heretics** (*Atlas*, 52)

St. Francis of Assisi, *The Rule of the Franciscan Order*

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*

Gregory XI, *The Condemnation of Wycliffe* and Wycliffe's reply

**Apr. 10:**

★ Essay 2 Due ★

**Plague** (*Atlas*, 54-55)

Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*

**Renaissance** (*Atlas*, 58-59, 62-63)

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *On the Dignity of Man*  
Petrarch, *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux*

**Apr. 17:**

**Dawn of a New Science**

Indictment of Galileo  
Francis Bacon, *First Book of Aphorisms*

**Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and War** (*Atlas*, 64-65)

Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian*  
*Decrees of the Council of Trent*  
De Thou, "The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre"

**Apr. 24:**

**What Is Enlightenment?** (*Atlas*, 75)

Voltaire, *Treatise On Toleration*  
Rousseau, *The Social Contract*  
Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*

**The End of the Ancien Regime** (*Atlas*, 67)

Duc de Saint-Simon, "The Court of Louis XIV"  
Frederick II, *Essay on Forms of Government*  
Catherine the Great, *Proposals for a New Law Code*

**May 1:**

★Essay 3 Due★

**The Age of Revolution** (*Atlas*, 76-81, 86-87)

*Declaration of the Rights of Man*  
Robespierre, *On the Principles of Political Morality*  
Burke, *Reflections On the French Revolution*

**Labor, Industry, and Modernity**

"Observations on the Loss of Woolen Spinning"  
Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (and other excerpts)

**May 15:**

FINAL EXAM