

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

Course: Western Civilization 100 (012)  
Time: 7.20pm – 10pm  
Location: Merten Hall 1200  
Instructor: Dr. Jessica Legnini  
Office: Rob B226A  
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 Cold 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, and be able to use that knowledge to assess our current society; they will be introduced to the fundamentals of historical analysis through the extensive use of primary source materials with the aim of refining intercultural competence; and they will be introduced to recent critiques of the idea of “western civilization” as a means of examining how current processes of globalization appear to be operating. Emphasis will be placed upon the application of history as a means for gaining a more meaningful conception of current political and social developments with the aim of supporting students in identifying and articulating their own viewpoints.

**Mason Core 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 them.

**Classroom Expectations:**

- Please do not arrive late to class, and please be considerate of others with your electronics usage.
- For a complete list of university-wide policies see: “Student Rights and Responsibilities” at <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/student-rights-responsibilities/>

## 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	August 28
No Class (Labor Day)	September 4
Columbus Day Recess	October 9 (Class meets Tuesday October 10 <sup>th</sup> – no Tuesday classes)
Thanksgiving Break	November 22 – 26
Reading Day	December 11
Final Exam	December 18 (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.

**Monday – 8/28:** Introduction/The Pre-Enlightenment World (Part 1)

- Lecture: Early Civilizations
  - Art of Early Civilizations

**Monday – 9/4: NO CLASS**

**Monday – 9/11:** The Classical and Post-Classical Eras

- Lecture: Philosophical Foundations
  - Classical Art and 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)

**Monday – 9/18: 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)

**Monday – 9/25: The Enlightenment**

- Lecture: The Enlightenment and Revolution
  - Joseph Wright of Derby, *A Philosopher Giving a Lecture at the Orrery*, (1765)
  - 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 Monday 10/2**

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

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

**Monday – 10/2: Industrialization**

- Lecture: Industrialization, Liberalism, and Communism

**In-Class Reading:**

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

**Tuesday – 10/10: Empire and Nation**

- Lecture: European Imperialism
  - Pear's Soap Ad.
  - "What is a Nation?"

**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)
- ❖ 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.

**Monday – 10/16:** Challenges to Liberalism.

- Lecture: Questioning Modernity.
  - Art of the 19<sup>th</sup> 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)

**Monday – 10/23:** 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).

**Monday – 10/30:** 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 Monday 11/6**

### 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.

**Monday – 11/6:** 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](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)

**Monday – 11/13: 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).

**Monday – 11/20: Cold War Ideologies**

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

**Monday – 11/27: Challenges to Western Dominance**

- Lecture: After the Soviet Union
  - European Union [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfN05WB\\_rYw](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/>

**In-Class Readings:**

- ❖ The Rise of China and the Future of the West
- ❖ Brexit <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>
- ❖ Dani Rodrik, “Populism and the Economics of Globalization” (2017)

**Topic 5: Review**

**Monday – 12/4: Review Class: Putting It All Together**

**Monday – 12/11: Reading Day (No Class)**

**Monday – 12/18: Final Assessment: 7.30pm - 10.15pm.**