

HISTORY 100–003
Fall 2012 MWF 9:30–10:20 DK 2053
Dr. Ryan Swanson

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Office Hours: Monday 11:30-1pm, Friday by appointment.

15 VIPs

Course Description

Winston Churchill once said “History is written by the victors.” Was he right? I’m not sure. But what most history texts do reflect is the rather obvious reality that some individuals have affected their times in inordinate and radical ways. They were, to put it simply, VIPs—Very Important Persons. Over the course of this semester we will use 15 such individuals to anchor our look at the past. We will constantly recognize though, that these individuals are starting points rather than the entire stories of their times. Looking at the past 5000 years of history we will seek out patterns and explanations regarding how and why Western Civilization developed as it has.

History is a set of lies
agreed upon.
- Napoleon Bonaparte

Course Objectives

In this course, you will learn how to *gather, prioritize, analyze, and use* historical information. All historical facts and sources are not equal. Some people, places, and events are worth remembering. Others are not. You will during this semester learn how to distinguish between types of information. And hopefully you will learn to think like an historian.

Beyond these general goals, by the end of the class you should be able to:

1. Differentiate between primary and secondary sources
2. Outline the basic chronology of Western Civilization history
3. Identify a dozen or so of the major innovations that shaped the West
4. Write a thesis-driven, argumentative historical paper
5. Connect the narrative of western history to your own family history

Those who don't know history are
destined to repeat it.
- Edmund Burke

Structure

The course will utilize a combination of lectures and discussion sessions. Your final grade will result from 2 exams (including IDs and maps), 2 papers, reading quizzes, and a final. You will also receive credit for class attendance and your participation in discussions.

Required Readings The following books are available for sale in the bookstore:

Michael G. Baylor (ed), *The German Reformation and the Peasants War: A Brief History with Documents*
Paul Johnson, *Napoleon*
Tony Perrottet, *The Naked Olympics: The True Story of the Ancient Games*
Art Spiegelman, *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History*

Optional Textbook: *The West: A Narrative History* by Daniel Frankforter

History is not a burden on the memory
but an illumination of the soul.
- Lord Acton

Due Dates: Exams (10/5, 11/9); Papers (10/19, 11/26)

Assignment Weightings

Participation/Attendance/Facebooking/Reading Quizzes	15%
2 Exams	30%
1 Analysis Paper (2–3 pages)	15%
Current Events and History Paper	20%
Final Exam	20%

Office Hours:

I'm here to help. I want to talk history with you. In addition to scheduled office hours, please feel free to email me to set an alternative time to meet. Email is the best way to reach me; I regularly check my account Monday through Friday, and usually on the weekends. I will do my best to respond to all emails within 24 hours.

Description of Assignments

I. Attendance/Participation/Facebooking (15%). Your regular attendance and participation are vital. Many classes will have a portion of time where we discuss our readings or work in smaller groups. Your participation in these activities will be noted and used to calculate your participation grade. I will take attendance most days. **Absences:** Each student gets two free unexcused absences.

Each of the three discussion sections (for A or B groups) and history labs will count for triple normal attendance. Additionally, the "winning" teams in the history lab will receive bonus participation points.



We have a facebook group for the class. You are expected to post to the site **at least once every 2 weeks**. Facebook "deadlines" are listed on the syllabus denoted by the icon. On that date, facebook activity from the previous 2 weeks will be tallied. Examples for facebook activity include:

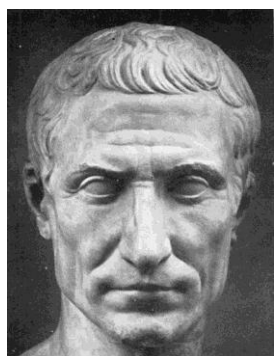
- Positing question for the class
- Raising a question during a class lecture
- Posting a related article
- Making a comparison to current news
- Answering a question posted by the TA, instructor, or one of your classmates
- Suggesting a slogan for the VIP of the week

Proper decorum and respect are expected, but this is a place for casual conversation and historical banter. Dig in!

In order to join the group, go to <http://www.facebook.com/groups/groupsatgeorgemason/> You will be asked to put in your Mason ID to join. Then search through the groups to "Hist 100-003." Click join.

* Check your privacy setting before joining. We (as a group) are not all becoming Facebook friends – just joining a common group. So whatever your settings allow, that's what your classmates will be able to see if they click to your page.

Reading Quizzes Six or seven (or maybe eight or nine) reading quizzes will be given periodically (and unannounced) throughout the semester. They will cover the reading material assigned for a given class period. I do not expect you to memorize (obviously), but I do expect that you have read the texts in preparation for class. Your lowest reading quiz grade will be dropped. **Reading quizzes cannot be made up for any reason.**



II. Exams (30%). Since factual knowledge is the basis of historical debate, there will be 2 fact-based exams during the semester. The quizzes will be drawn from study guide of people/places/events handed out in class. For each of the assigned terms, you are expected to know the "where, when, why it's important" details. You are expected to gather this information from the lectures, readings, and research. Exams cannot be made up (without a documentable excuse), so come to class and come on time.

III. Analysis Paper (15%). For this 2–3 page paper, you will use the readings from the course to address a specific question. The questions will be provided with plenty of advance by the professor. The papers must be thesis-driven (i.e. you must make an argument). Please use citations when using another author's words or specific ideas.

Papers will be graded on the following three criteria: *thesis* (is your point of view clear?), *evidence* (do you back up your argument with specifics from the texts?), and *style* (is your paper organized and easy to read?). Generally speaking, a paper that does a good job in each category is a B. A paper that almost does is a B-, and a paper that performs well in each category and goes beyond in one category is a B+. A paper that is satisfactory but weak in one or two categories is a C. A D paper is weak in three or more categories, or omits one criterion completely (i.e. lacks evidence). An A range paper performs exceptionally well in each category.

IV. Current Events and History Paper (20%). Can you connect the past to the present? By this point in the semester, you should be able to see connections and patterns across large periods of time. For this final assignment, you will pick a current news story and analyze it with an historical eye. More details to come.

V. Final Exam (20%) The final will cover the entire course and consist of short answer ID's and essays.

****NOTE** Deadlines are FIRM; requests for extensions will not be granted.** The *only* exceptions to the “no extensions” rule will occur in cases of serious illness (documented by doctor’s note) or family emergency of which I am informed *before* the assignment is due. *Lots of other work (or I have a job outside of class) does not count as an emergency.* You cannot make up a reading quiz – they are designed to be surprise tests meant to help you keep up with the material. With a documentable and serious excuse (ie a death in the family or serious illness), you may be allowed to make up a missed exam. The make up exam will cover the same material as the original exam, but usually not in the same format. **Make up exams will usually be in essay format.** Late papers will be penalized by a third of a letter grade per day, including weekends and holidays (a one day-late B becomes a B-). Plan responsibly; submit work on time.

Revolutions are the locomotives of history
- Karl Marx

Appealing a Grade: You are always welcomed and encouraged to discuss a paper with the professor. But if you want a grade reconsidered, you must first submit (by email is fine) a paragraph in which you evaluate your paper in each of

the 3 criteria. Having the appeal in written form ensures that you take the time to assess your own paper and that I will be able to fully consider your appeal. Please remember that a grade does not reflect process (it does not measure whether you worked hard) and it certainly does not reflect a value judgment about you as a person. Rather a grade constitutes an evaluation of the quality and analytical rigor of the thesis, evidence, and style of a single piece of work. Appeals must be submitted no later than one week after graded papers are returned in class.

Adds/Drops

Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course):

September 4, 2012

Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course):

September 28, 2012

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: 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.

Academic Honesty: Don’t cheat. It’s not worth it. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be turned over to the university honor council. A plagiarized paper or cheating on an exam will result, **at the very least**, in a zero for the assignment. If you are unclear what exactly constitutes plagiarism or cheating, see the *George Mason University Honor System and Code*: <http://www.gmu.edu/mlnavbar/finder/findex.html>.

Schedule

Week 1: Hammurabi: Creating Law

August 27 – Course Introduction

August 29 – Thinking History and the First Civilization - Mesopotamia and Irrigation

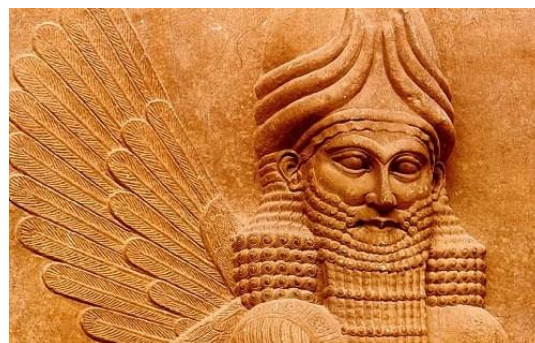
Malcolm Gladwell, “The Tipping Point,” *New Yorker* (Blackboard)
Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Introduction

August 31 – Egypt, Babylonia and the Origins of Law

PRIMARY DOCUMENT (ALL AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD):

Hammurabi’s Code (Excerpt)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 1-2



Week 2: Moses: Just One God

September 3 – No Class – Labor Day

September 5 - Changing Religion: The Hebrews and Monotheism

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *Old Testament* (Excerpt)

September 7 – Greece and the Greeks

Perrottet, *The Naked Olympics*, Ch. I-III

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *Athens* by Thucydides (Excerpt)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 3-4

Week 3: Socrates: Questions for All!

September 10 – Greece at War (Persian and Peloponnesian Wars)

Perrottet, *The Naked Olympics*, Ch. IV-VIII

September 12 – Greece's Golden Age and the Problem of Socrates

Perrottet, *The Naked Olympics*, Ch. IX-XIV

September 14 – Discussion Group A (Bring *The Naked Olympics* to Class)

Finish, *The Naked Olympics*

Week 4: Alex v. Julius: My Empire is Bigger than Yours!

September 17 – Discussion Group B (Bring *The Naked Olympics* to Class)

Finish, *The Naked Olympics*

September 19 – Alexander the Great and Hellenism

Perrottet, *The Naked Olympics*, XV-End

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *Alexander* by Plutarch (Excerpt)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 5

September 21 – Caesar and the Roman Empire

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *The Assassination of Caesar* by Plutarch (Excerpt)



Week 5: Attila the Hun: Here Comes...Oh Crap...

September 24 – The Fall of the Roman Empire and the Rise Medieval World

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *The Huns and the Goths* by Ammianus Marcellinus (Excerpt)

Optional Textbook Reading: Chi. 6, 7

September 26 – Feudalism, Popes, Lords, and Other Strongmen: The Organization of Europe

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *Feudalism* by the Archbishop of Cologne (Excerpt)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 8

September 28 – What was the “Renaissance” Anyway?

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: Read biography of Michelangelo (all three parts) and, while doing so, make note of the artist's masterpieces. <http://www.michelangelo.com/buon/bio-index2.html>

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 10, 11

Week 6: Martin Luther: I'm Not Paying for That

October 1 – Religious Conflict – The Crusades

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *Chronicle of the First Crusade* by Fulcher of Chartres (Excerpt)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 9, 11

October 3 – Martin Luther and His Theses

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *The 95 Theses of Martin Luther*,

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 13

October 5 – Exam 1



Week 7:

October 8 – No Class Columbus Day

October 9 – Individual Meetings (Voluntary, regarding upcoming paper or past exam)

October 10 – History in Modern Context - George Mason University Compared to the Renaissance University

October 12 – History Lab: Bring *The German Reformation: A Brief History with Documents*
Read Introduction. **You must bring your *Reformation* book or you will not be allowed to participate.**

Week 8: Isaac Newton: When Smart Ruled

October 15 – The Scientific Revolution

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *From the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies* by Nicolas Copernicus (Excerpt)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 15

October 17 – Putting Scientific Thought to Work – The Enlightenment

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *The Social Contract* by Jean Jacques Rousseau (Excerpt, Book I)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 16

October 19 – Europe's Explorations and Colonies

***** Analysis Paper Due**



Week 9: Thomas Paine: Mobilizing Those who Don't Know they Should be Offended

October 22 – The Slavery Nexus

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *A Defense of the Slave Trade* by Anonymous (Excerpt)



October 24 – The North American Colonies

October 26 – The American Revolution

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine (Read the portions listed on BB under the document title)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 17

Week 10: Marie Antoinette: Killed for Shopping too Much

October 29 – Hey, We Could Do That – The French Revolution

Johnson, *Napoleon*, pp. 1-72

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *The Tennis Court Oath* (Excerpt)

October 31 – Discussion Group A (Bring *Napoleon*)

Johnson, *Napoleon*, Finish

November 2 – Discussion Group B (Bring *Napoleon*)

Johnson, *Napoleon*, Finish



Week 11: Henry Ford: The Steve Jobs of the Industrial Era

November 5– The Results of Revolution: Constitutionalism v. the Reign of Terror and Napoleon

Johnson, *Napoleon*, pp. 73-145

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *Napoleon's Exile to St. Helena* in Comte de Las Cases' Diary (Excerpt)

November 7 – Changing Economies: Industrialization

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *The Principles of Scientific Management* by Frederick Taylor (Excerpt)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 18



November 9 – Exam 2

Week 12: Archduke Franz Ferdinand: Importance by Death

November 12 – Imperialism and the Scramble for Africa

The Guardian Article (Blackboard)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 21

November 14 – New Ideas about Government: Marxism

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *The Communist Manifesto*,

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 19

November 16 – The Archduke and Entanglement

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *The Murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo* by Borijove Jevtic,

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 22



Week 13: Woodrow Wilson: That's Their War

November 19 – Trenches, Gas, and Chemicals – Fighting the First World War

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *Four Weeks in the Trenches* by Fritz Kreisler (Excerpt)

November 21-23 – No Class; Happy Thanksgiving

Week 14: Adolf Hitler: Germany's Savage Avenger

November 26 – A Bad Peace? The Interwar Years and the Rise of Hitler

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler (Excerpt)

Optional Textbook Reading: *The West*: Ch. 24

***Current Events and History Paper Due

November 28 – The War and the Holocaust

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: View at least 10 *Pictures* from this Holocaust Survivors site:

<http://www.holocaustsurvivors.org/data.show.php?di=list&da=photos&so=title>

November 30 – Discussion Group A (Bring *Maus I*)

Read all of *Maus I*



Week 15: Anne Marie Frank: Even Children...

December 3 – Discussion Group B (Bring *Maus I*)

Read all of *Maus I*

December 5 – Pearl Harbor, the A-Bomb, and the End of the War

PRIMARY DOCUMENT: President Harry Truman's Press Release on the Bomb,

December 7 – Review for the Final Exam

Final Exam: Monday, 12/17, 7:30-10:15am