

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Department of History & Art History

A Survey of Western Civilization
Summer 2012

Course	Building/Hall	Room	Days	Time
HIST 100-014	Planetary	212	Tuesday/Thursday	9.00-10.15 a.m.



The Storming of the Bastille – Paris, 14 July 1789

INSTRUCTOR:
OFFICE:
OFFICE HOURS:
TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL:

Dr Kevin Matthews
Robinson B 373B
10.30 a.m.-4.00 p.m. Thursdays, or by appointment
(Telephones have been removed from most offices;
I can be reached via E-mail)
cmatthe2@gmu.edu

REQUIRED TEXT & MATERIALS:

1. Levack, Brian, Edward Muir, & Meredith Veldman. *The West: Encounters & Transformations*. 3rd edition, Combined Volume (ISBN-13: 978-0-13-213284-8)
2. Three Scantron cards Form No. 882-E; three large - unsigned - blue books (11" x 8.5"). All three of your blue books **must** be delivered to the instructor in class by **Thursday, the 13th of September**. Failure to meet this deadline will be grounds for a failing grade on the first exam. **DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAMES ON THE BLUE BOOKS BEFORE TURNING THEM IN.** I will note your delivery of them to me. (Your unused blue books will be returned to you if you drop the course - after you have **officially** done so.) **Keep** your **Scantron** cards, but make sure you have one with you on each exam day.
3. You should expect to receive additional, brief reading assignments (excerpts, poems, etc.), via the internet, from the instructor. By this same method, students will also receive material - maps, cartoons, and other illustrations - to enhance the student's understanding (and, it is hoped, enjoyment) of the topics covered by this course.

THE GENERAL EDUCATION MISSION:

The mission of George Mason University's General Education Program is to educate, liberate, and broaden the mind, and to instill a lifelong love of learning. In conjunction with each student's major program of study and other electives, minors, or certificates, this program seeks to produce graduates with intellectual vision, creative abilities, and moral sensibility, as well as the skills to assure a well-rounded and useable education. The General Education Program seeks to fulfill four specific goals:

1. General education courses should first ensure that all undergraduates develop skills in information gathering, written and oral communication, and analytical and quantitative reasoning.
2. General education courses should expose students to the development of knowledge by emphasizing major domains of thought and methods of inquiry.
3. General education courses should enable students to attain a breadth of knowledge that supports their specializations and contributes to their education in both personal and professional ways.
4. General education courses should encourage students to make important connections across boundaries (for example: among disciplines; between the university and the external world; between the United States and other countries).

COURSE SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES - Making the modern world:

This course is designed to provide an overview of the history of what is commonly called "the West" from its origins in ancient Greece to the present. More to the point, it means to show how events over this expanse of time have shaped the world we live in today. Given the broad sweep of this course, it is impossible to cover every era and topic in detail. Instead, it will highlight various developments - political, economic, and social - that, together, have created a unique civilization. At the same time, this course will show how other civilizations - those of Africa, Asia, and the Americas - have influenced the West's own development even as these encounters have had often tragic results.

TEACHING TECHNIQUES & EXAMINATIONS:

Varied, although the emphasis will be on lectures, classroom discussions, and readings. Typically, I use what is called a “semi-Socratic” method of teaching. If you are prepared, your individual contribution to these discussions will lead to a more lively and interesting experience for everyone concerned. On a more prosaic level, your participation in class will benefit your final grade. Students who excel in this respect will benefit if their grades are borderline between a plus or minus; for example, a C might become a C+, or a B+ might become an A-.

All of the examinations will be composed of a mix of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. A study guide will be supplied prior to each of the three tests. The first exam will cover material assigned commencing with the first day of class up through the session prior to the exam itself. The second exam will only cover material between the first and second exams. Similarly, the final exam will only cover material after the second exam. In other words, these exams are **not cumulative**.

You are **personally responsible** for ensuring that you know the time and date of the exams and other assignments. You are expected to take each exam on the date set by the course instructor; students are not allowed to take exams at a time of their choosing. If you fail to show up for an exam without a **documented excuse** (usually medical in nature), you will **not be allowed** to take a make-up exam. You will, instead, be given a zero grade without appeal. This applies, in particular, to the final exam; the dates for these tests are given in the end of the syllabus calendar. (**Note**: the dates for the first and second exams are tentative.)

Make-up exams and quizzes will be administered at a time and date that are mutually convenient to the instructor and student. It is up to each student to resolve the matter of make-up work with the instructor - not the other way around. Also, students who are permitted to take exams at the **testing center** must obtain the paperwork needed to do so **prior to each examination**.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. You should see me about this matter immediately so that ODS can plan for the specific accommodation to assist you.

GRADING SCALE:

First examination	25 percent
Second (mid-term) examination	30 percent
Final examination	35 percent
Classroom participation/attendance/quizzes:	10 percent
Total:	<hr/> 100 percent

90-100	A - signifies remarkable, outstanding work showing complete mastery of the subject
	A+ 97 - 100
	A 93 - 96.9
	A- 90 - 92.9
80-89	B - signifies work that is above the average expectations for this course.
	B+ 87 - 89.9
	B 82 - 86.9
	B- 80 - 81.9
70-79	C - signifies work that meets average university standards.
	C+ 77 - 79.9
	C 72 - 76.9
	C- 70 - 71.9
60-69	D - signifies work that is far below average but which is passable.
59-below	F - signifies failure.

I do not grade on a curve. Nor is it possible to offer extra credit work - for any reason. Students should instead devote their energies to the assignments laid out in this syllabus. If a student merits an “A”, that is the grade that he or she will receive. At the same time, I do not distribute grades based on some sort of percentage basis, meaning that only a certain number of students can earn an “A”, a certain number a “B”, and so forth. If every student deserves an “A”, that is the grade that each student will be given. Having said that, I again point out that “A” work as defined above is genuinely outstanding and shows complete mastery of the subject. While I hope that every student will strive to meet this standard, **it will not be easy to obtain such a grade.**

ATTENDANCE:

Since lectures and discussions are the foundation of this course, **attendance of class sessions is mandatory.** Each student is responsible for all material and all announcements presented at each lecture. Students should also be aware that they will be tested on material covered in class but which will not necessarily be found in the assigned readings - and vice versa.. If a student **must** miss a class, (s)he should arrange to obtain class notes from a fellow student. Lecture notes **will not - under any circumstances - be provided** by the instructor.

A **great amount of reading is required** for this course and it is important that students stay ahead of these assignments to be prepared for class discussions. **Failure to attend class on a regular basis** makes it extremely difficult to keep abreast of the course; the result is a lower final or even a failing grade for the course. **Specifically,** the final course grades for students who fail to attend class on a **regular basis** (as determined by the instructor) will **drop an entire letter grade** - without exception. This is beyond the 10 percent part of your grade covered by “classroom participation/attendance and quizzes”. Valid excuses for missed lectures (again, usually medical in nature) must be in **writing.**

I understand that most students taking this course are not history majors; or, you may have had trouble with this subject in the past. Or, frankly, you simply may not like history in any way, shape, or form. If this applies to you, a **word of advice**: Because lectures are central to this course, the notes you take in class will be vital when it comes time to study for the exams. The best thing you can do for yourself is to **re-write** your lectures notes as soon as possible after class – **in complete sentences**.

There are **two advantages** to this approach. First, if you put these ideas into your own words, you will find them easier to understand - & you will readily see if the course is making sense to you. If it is not, you can arrange to see me so we can work any problems you are having. Second, - when it comes time to study for an exam, you will not waste time trying to figure out what you wrote in class days or weeks earlier. While the idea of re-writing your notes may be unattractive at first glance, it works.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Cheating and plagiarism - **Either offense will constitute grounds for failing the course.** The university has a code governing academic ethics. Any student who is caught cheating on a quiz or exam or who plagiarizes will have his or her case sent to the Dean's office for adjudication.

The Internet - The instructor's E-mail addresses is at the top of this syllabus & I will check messages on a regular basis. However, I prefer face-to-face communication. **Do not abuse** the internet. If a student repeatedly sends unnecessary messages, I will simply decline to respond.

Classroom decorum - Students are expected to **show up for class on time** and, once in class, to remain for the entire session, except in case of dire emergency. Arriving late or leaving in the middle of a lecture is disruptive and disrespectful to your fellow students. Those who violate this rule can expect to receive a lower course grade.

Use of tape-recorders & lap-top computers - These are permitted during lectures unless they are disruptive to other students in which case you must discontinue their use. Also, your use of lap-tops or other such devices will be banned if you use them during lectures to play video games, etc. **Nor should students use class time to engage in social media.** Continued violation of this rule after you have been warned about the matter will result in a failing grade for this course - **without appeal.**

Cell phones are to be **turned off** at the beginning of each class. Repeated failure to do so will adversely affect your course grade. Any attempt to use unauthorized devices during an examination will constitute grounds for failing the course. You are welcome to bring drinks to class. However, **eating** in class is **forbidden**. Put another way, **I don't lecture in your kitchen; don't eat in my classroom.**

IMPORTANT DATES & READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Week 1 27 – 31 August **The Greco-Roman World**

The life which is unexamined is not worth living..
- Socrates

Readings: Introduction, “What is the West”; skip chapters 1-2, but read, “Troy: A City of Legend” (p. 50) & “The Civilization of the Hebrews” (p. 64-72); read chapters 3-5

Week 2 3 – 7 September **Rome’s decline/Christianity’s rise**

Blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church..
- Tertullian (A.D. 160-240), early Christian theologian

3rd - Labor Day holiday; university closed

4th - **Last day to add a course or drop a course for a 100% refund**

Readings: Chapters 6-7

Week 3 10 – 14 September **The Middle Ages & Renaissance**

Abandon hope, ye that enter.
- Dante

Readings: Chapter 8 - skim, p. 232-244, read 244-261; chapter 9 - skim to p.272, read to p. 296; chapter 10 - read only p. 319-322; chapter 11 - read p. 330-336; chapter 12 - skim the chapter

Week 4 17 – 21 September **Exploration & Reformation**

Here I stand; I can do no other.
- Martin Luther

Readings: read chapters 13-14; chapters 15 - read only sections mentioned in lectures

Week 5 24 – 28 September **Age of Absolutism/Age of Science**

L'état c'est moi (I am the state).

- Attributed to Louis XIV

24th – Mid-term progress reporting period begins (ends 19 October)

27th - **First examination** (tentative)

Readings: Chapters 16-18 – read to p. 579; chapter 19

Week 6 1 – 5 October **Revolutions**

[Asked to assess the impact of the French Revolution:] *It's too soon to tell.*

- Chinese Premier Chou En-lai to Henry Kissinger, 1972

Readings: Chapters 18 - p. 579 to the end of the chapter; chapter 20

Week 7 8 – 12 October **The Industrial Revolution**

Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.

- Karl Marx

8th - Columbus Day holiday

9th - Monday classes meet on Tuesday; Tuesday classes **do not meet** this week

11th - Thursday's session of HIST 100/014 **will meet** this week

Readings: Chapter 21

Week 8 15 – 19 October **Nationalism**

I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor food; I offer only hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death. Let him who loves his country with his heart, and not merely with his lips, follow me.

- Giuseppe Garibaldi

19th – Mid-term progress reporting period ends

Readings: Chapters 22-23

Week 9 22 – 26 October **Imperialism & its legacy**

Whatever happens, we have got / The Maxim gun, and they have not.
- Hiliare Belloc

Readings: Chapter 24

Week 10 29 October – 2 November **The Great War**

If any question why we died / Tell them, because our fathers lied.
- Rudyard Kipling, Epitaphs of the War, 1914-1918

1st - **Second examination** (tentative)

Readings: Chapter 25 - to p. 807

Week 11 5 – 9 November **Age of extremes (1): Bolsheviks**

He is the new Genghis Khan. He will slaughter us all.
- Nikolai Bukharin on Josef Stalin

Readings: Chapter 25 - p. 807 to the end of the chapter; chapter 26 - to p. 828

Week 12 12 – 16 November **“Dark Valley”: the 1930s**

[Asked if there was any historical parallel to the Great Depression:] *Yes. It was called the Dark Ages, & it lasted 400 years.*

- John Maynard Keynes

Readings: (To be supplied by course instructor)

Week 13 19 – 23 November

Age of extremes (2): Fascists

[Speaking after the Nazi takeover of France:] *What General Weygand called the Battle of France is over; I expect the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization.*

- Winston Churchill

20th - HIST/014 **will meet** this Tuesday

21st-25th – Thanksgiving recess; Mason will be closed on these days

Readings: Chapter 26 - p. 829 to the end of the chapter

Week 14 26 – 30 November

A “close-run thing”: World War II

The refusal of the British and Russian peoples to accept what appeared to be inevitable defeat was the great factor in the salvage of our civilization.

- George C. Marshall

Readings: Chapter 27

Week 15 3 – 7 December

Out of the ashes: the West after 1945

A very wise man whom I knew in the United States, Dwight Morrow, used to say: “There are two kinds of people - those who want to be someone, and those who want to do something.”

- Jean Monnet

Readings: Chapters 28-29

Week 16 10 – 14 December

Final exam

Hist 100/014

Thursday

13th December 7.30 a.m. - 10.15 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL DATES AND ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO SLIGHT MODIFICATION DEPENDING UPON UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES.