

HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

HIST 100-004

Spring 2019

3 credit hours

Big Ideas, Momentous Events, and Important People of Western Civilization

Instructor: Professor Chris Elzey

Location: Planetary Hall 212

Day: M/W

Time: 9:00-10:15 a.m.

Office: Robinson B 369B

Email: celzey@gmu.edu (please use your MasonLive account when emailing)

Office Hours: M/W 12:00-1:00 p.m. (also by appointment)

Teaching Assistants:

- John Hanebuth (jhanebut@masonlive.gmu.edu)
- Chester Pelsang (cpelsang@masonlive.gmu.edu)
- Both are available by appointment; please contact through email

Prerequisites for the Course

None

Class Contacts

1. Name and phone number/email:
2. Name and phone number/email:

The Course

The History of Western Civilization explores the great events, issues, history makers, and social and cultural movements of the western world from antiquity to the present. Much of our time will be spent examining the people, ideas, and events that changed the course of western history.

Why take Western Civilization? One reason is that it allows you to better understand the world in which you live. Much of what has been identified as the “modern” experience—democracy, enlightened thinking, egalitarianism—owes itself in large part to western civilization. Another reason is that it provides an intellectual foundation to appreciate the various artistic, cultural, philosophical, and literary movements that have informed the world around you.

Course Objectives

Understanding how and why the western world developed the way it did is one of the primary aims of the course. You will learn about western history's important events and significant historical figures, and the ways the West has impacted the rest of the world. You will also learn the basics of the historian's craft: synthesizing and interpreting historical information from primary and secondary sources. An important part of that is being able to express your thoughts in clear and grammatically correct prose. Finally, you will have a better appreciation of how thousands of years of western history have influenced today's world.

In addition, HIST 100 fulfills the Mason Core requirement. According to the university's website on "Learning Outcomes" for "Exploration Courses" in the Mason Core, after completing the course you will be able to:

- "Demonstrate familiarity with the major chronology of Western civilization"
- "Demonstrate the ability to narrate and explain long-term changes and continuities in Western civilization"
- "Develop multiple literacies by analyzing primary sources of various kinds (texts, images, music) and using these sources as evidence to support interpretations of historical events"

For more information on the Mason Core requirements, see:
<https://masoncore.gmu.edu/western-civilizationworld-history>

Required Texts

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*

Perrottet, Tony. *The Naked Olympics*

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus I: My Father Bleeds History* and *Maus II: And Here My Trouble Began*

***In addition, primary and secondary source documents will be posted on Blackboard

Recommended Text

Hunt, Lynn, Thomas R. Martin, Barbara H. Rosenwein, and Bonnie G. Smith. *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures*, 5th Edition (Value Edition)

Course Requirements and Assignments

There are three required texts for the class (see above). **YOU ARE TO COME TO CLASS HAVING COMPLETED THE READING ASSIGNMENT FOR THAT DAY.** You are expected to read all of *The Naked Olympics*, *Things Fall Apart*, and *Maus I* and *Maus II*. *The Making of the West* is recommended but not required. The page references in the syllabus are for it. We will also read or look at several primary and secondary source documents, and perhaps devote a small amount of class time to these. These documents are referred to as "Blackboard Documents" in the course schedule.

You will take three exams. Each consists of multiple-choice questions, identifications, and short answer questions. At the start of each course unit (there are three), I will post a list of identification terms and short answer questions, which means you will have a majority of the questions weeks before each of the exams are given. For the exams, I will select a handful of identifications and short answer questions from the list. The exams will cover all material from class and the required readings. Each exam is worth one-fifth of your grade.

You are also responsible for writing one paper on *The Naked Olympics*, *Things Fall Apart*, or *Maus I and II*. I'll say it again: **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WRITING ONLY ONE PAPER.** The length of the paper is to be between 1,000 and 1,250 words. I will post the questions on Blackboard—you will respond to one question only—several weeks before each paper is due. **THE DUE DATES ARE:**

- **FEBRUARY 13 (THE NAKED OLYMPICS)**
- **APRIL 24 (THINGS FALL APART)**
- **MAY 6 (MAUS I AND II)**

You will be graded on content, use of historical evidence, and persuasiveness (which means you should pay particular attention to grammar, punctuation, etc.). **NO PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL.** The paper will count for one-fifth of your grade.

Lastly, you will take several quizzes and complete a handful of out-of-class assignments. Quizzes may be announced or unannounced. **ONE OF THE FIRST QUIZZES WILL COVER THE SYLLABUS. IT WILL BE GIVEN ON THE SECOND DAY OF CLASS. FOUR OTHER QUIZZES ARE ALSO SCHEDULED: THE NAKED OLYMPICS (FEBRUARY 11), A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS (MARCH 27), THINGS FALL APART (APRIL 22), AND MAUS I AND II (MAY 1).** All unannounced quizzes will cover the required reading, lecture material, and/or primary/secondary source documents. Please bring paper and a pen or pencil to every class. Attendance and class participation will also count for a quiz grade.

Assignments may consist of a short paper on primary or secondary source documents. I will announce these assignments in class and on Blackboard. **PLEASE CHECK BLACKBOARD REGULARLY.**

In addition, at the end of the semester there is a **SHORT PAPER** (about 300 words) due on the day of exam #3. The question is listed in the course schedule (see page 8).

At the end of the semester, I will drop the two lowest quiz scores and calculate the average. The score will count for the final fifth of your grade. **AS WITH THE PAPERS, NO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED ELECTRONICALLY.**

Grades for each quiz/assignment will be posted on Blackboard.

***NOTE: Blackboard may include an average for your cumulative score. **DISREGARD IT. BLACKBOARD DOES NOT CALCULATE SCORES ACCORDING TO WEIGHTED VALUES ASSIGNED FOR THE COURSE.**

Grade Breakdown

Exams (3)	60%
Paper	20%
Quizzes (average)	20%

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B+	88-89.99	C+	78-79.99	D	60-69.99
A-	90-92.99	B	83-87.99	C	73-77.99	F	0-59.99
		B-	80-82.99	C-	70-72.99		

Late Papers and Missed Exams and Quizzes

Make it easy on yourself—turn your paper in on time. Each day the paper is late (Saturdays and Sundays count as well), I will deduct 5 points from the final score. Only an emergency can remove the 5-point deduction, provided you show me a doctor's note or other documentation. In this case, if you miss an exam, a make-up will be given (most likely an essay exam). **THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES.** But I will drop your two lowest quiz scores when determining your final quiz grade.

Attendance and Participation

You are expected to come to class, and your attendance will be recorded. Knowing that certain emergencies will arise over the course of the semester, you will be excused from missing two classes. No need to show me a note for these absences.

Part of three classes will be devoted to discussion—one for *The Naked Olympics*, one for *Things Fall Apart*, and the other for *Maus I and II*. I expect you to participate.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit. But if you show improvement on your exams, you can earn improvement credit. Here's how it works: If you score higher on your third exam than you do on the first, I will divide the difference by three and add it to the score of your first exam. For example, if you score 75 on the first exam, 82 on the second, and 93 on the third, I would add 6 points ($93-75=18$; 18 divided by $3=6$) to the result of your first exam and calculate your final grade using that score. **IMPROVEMENT**

CREDIT APPLIES ONLY TO THE DIFFERENCE IN SCORES BETWEEN YOUR FIRST AND THIRD EXAM.

Electronic Devices

Cell phones, Smartphones, and other electronic devices that make any kind of noise are not permitted. I will allow PCs and tablets, but only for note taking. Do not abuse this privilege. It is distracting to those around you. **IF YOU ARE SEEN USING YOUR PC OR TABLET FOR SOMETHING OTHER THAN NOTE TAKING, YOU WILL FORFEIT YOUR RIGHT TO USE THE DEVICE IN CLASS. I WILL HAVE THE TEACHING ASSISTANTS MONITOR THE ROOM FROM TIME TO TIME.**

Academic Integrity

You are expected to do your own work. Students who violate the Honor Code will be dealt with severely. Information on the Honor Code and what constitutes a violation can be found at the website for the Office of Academic Integrity (<https://oai.gmu.edu>).

Students with Disabilities

Accommodations for students with disabilities are available. See the webpage of the Office of Disability Services (ODS) (<https://ds.gmu.edu>) or call 993-2474 for more information. You can also visit the ODS office. It is located in SUB I, rm. 4205.

Diversity

This course is in compliance with GMU's Diversity Statement: "George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth." For the full statement, see

<https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement>.

Important Drop and Add Dates

- January 29 is the final day you can add the course.
- February 5 is the final day you can withdraw from the course without a financial charge.
- March 25 is when selective withdrawal ends.

Course Schedule

Weeks 1 and 2: Creating Law and Order

January 23: Introduction; The Rule of Law and Writing in Mesopotamia and Egypt

January 28: Mesopotamia and Egypt (cont.); Moses and Monotheism

Reading: pp. 5-21, 26-31, 39-43 (**ALL PAGES REFER TO RECOMMENDED TEXT HUNT ET AL**) (**QUIZ**)

Weeks 2 and 3: Democracy and the Polis

*Blackboard Documents

January 30: Moses and Monotheism (cont.); Homer: Let Me Tell You a Story

Reading: pp. 34-39, 43-55; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 1-5

February 4: Sparta and Athens; Let Me Ask You Something: The Socratic Method

Reading: pp. 55-60, 61-63, 66-81, 91-95; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 6-10

Weeks 3 and 4: The City States: Ancient Greece

February 6: Socratic Method (cont.)

Reading: pp. 81-91, 99-107; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 11-14

February 11: *The Naked Olympics*, **DISCUSSION (QUIZ)**; *La Dolce Vita*: Life in Ancient Rome

Reading: pp. 126-144; *The Naked Olympics*, chapters 15-18

Weeks 4 and 5: Expansionism; Or, Welcome to the Empire: Ancient Rome

*Blackboard Documents

February 13: Life in Ancient Rome (cont.); The Long and Winding Via Appia: *Pax Romana* to Empire's End

Reading: 145-151, 155-171

TURN IN PAPER ON *THE NAKED OLYMPICS*

February 18: *Pax Romana* to Empire's End (cont.)

Reading: pp.179-183

Weeks 5 and 6: Unification: The Frankish World of Charlemagne and Beyond

*Blackboard Documents

February 20: Qui Était Charlemagne?

Reading: pp. 172-178, 187-201, 204-211, 220-227

February 25: **EXAM #1**

Weeks 6 and 7: "...placed within the grasp of the Evil One": The Calamitous 1300s

February 27: The Church in Turmoil: the Avignon Papacy; Really? It Lasted That Long?: The Hundred Years' War

Reading: pp. 232-240, 259-273, 288-296, 298-308, 358-360

March 4: Hundred Years' War (cont.); A Plague on All Your Houses: The Black Death

Reading: pp. 345-348, 355-357, 361-364, 372-375, 379-385

Week 7: The Power of Conviction: Religiosity and Exploration

March 6: A Plague (cont.); Jeanne d'Arc, the Maid Who Became a Saint

Reading: pp. 368-372, 386-393

Week 8: Spring Break (Enjoy!)

March 11: No Class

March 13: No Class

Week 9: I Protest: The Reformation

*Blackboard Documents

March 18: Jeanne D'Arc (cont.); Ferdinand Magellan: Round the World
in...Three Years"

Reading: pp. 397-406

March 20: Magellan (cont.); The Three Reformers: Luther, Calvin and Henry
VIII

Reading: pp. 406-409

Week 10: Protestants vs. Catholics: The Religious Wars

March 25: Film: *A Man for All Seasons*

Reading: pp. 409-411

March 27: Finish *A Man for All Seasons* (QUIZ); There Blew a Protestant Wind:
The Defeat of the Spanish Armada

Reading: pp. 414-422

Week 11: Political Absolutism

April 1: Defeat of the Spanish Armada (cont.); To Defenestrate: The Start of the
Thirty Years' War

Reading: pp. 426-445

April 3: Louis XIV: Le Roi du Soleil; The Enlightenment: Reason Over Faith

Reading: pp. 445-454, 457-475, 504-506, 514-518, 522-530

Week 12: Revolution!

*Blackboard Documents

April 8: EXAM #2

April 10: The Start of the French Revolution

Reading: pp. 480-486, 490-498, 536-545, 551-561; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters
1-10

Week 13: Revolution and Napoleon

April 15: French Revolution (cont.); Terror!

Reading: pp. 561-575; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 11-18

April 17: "Europe Was at My Feet": the Napoleonic Era; Here We Go Again:
The Revolutions of 1848

Reading: pp. 579-595; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 19-22

Week 14: “Iron and Blood”: Nationalism and Imperialism

April 22: Revolutions of 1848 (cont.); *Things Fall Apart*—**DISCUSSION (QUIZ)**
“When the World Went Mad”: WWI

Reading: pp. 595-597, 600-605, 609-619, 625-638; *Things Fall Apart*, chapters 23-25

April 24: WWI (cont.); “Revolution in Manners and Morals”: the U.S. in the 1920s; Schicklgruber or Hitler?: A Psycho History

Reading: pp. 651-656, 675-686, 708-728, 732-738, 760-773; start *Maus I*
TURN IN PAPER ON *THINGS FALL APART*

Weeks 15 and 16: WWII and the Cold War

April 29: Schicklgruber or Hitler? (cont.); The Nazis’ Rise to Power

Reading: pp. 776-809; finish *Maus I* and start *Maus II*

May 1: *Maus I* and *II*—**DISCUSSION (QUIZ)**; “An Iron Curtain...across the Continent”: The Cold War Begins

Reading: pp. 814-828, 837-844; finish *Maus II*

May 6: Cold War Begins (cont.); The Tragic Games: The 1972 Munich Olympics

Reading: pp. 828-837, 848-862, 867-877

TURN IN PAPER ON *MAUS I* and *II*

May 13: **EXAM #3** (starts at 7:30 a.m.)

- **SHORT PAPER PROMPT:**
 - **CHOOSE TWO THINGS WE HAVE EXAMINED THIS TERM AND EXPLAIN IN 300 WORDS HOW AND WHY THEY ARE RELEVANT TODAY.**