

Teaching Assistants

Mr. Kyle Filter
Ms. Caitlin Hartweave
Ms. Jayme Kurland

Virtual Office Hours and Email:

The simplest way to communicate with us is by email. If you would like to talk face-to-face we would be happy to schedule a Zoom meeting with you. These office hours are the best times for us, but we can make arrangements to talk to you at other times if need be.

In order to insure that we can address your questions as quickly as possible, I have assigned each of you to a teaching assistant according to your last name. Of course, I am available to everyone in the class.

T 11:00-12:00 (Prof. Orens/jorens@gmu.edu)
R 1:30-2:30 (Mr. Filter/kfilter@gmu.edu) [Last names A-G]
F 11:00-12:00 (Ms. Heartweave/chartne@gmu.edu) [Last names H-Q]
R 11:00-12:00 (Ms. Kurland/jkurlan@gmu.edu) [Last names R-Z]

Please note: Whenever you email us you MUST send your message from your Mason account and you MUST include your name at the end of your message and identify the section you attend.

Required Reading on Blackboard

Weekly synopses of the history of western civilization
Primary Source Readings

Required Viewing on Blackboard

Weekly video talks about the primary sources

Course Description

This course will follow the political, economic, social, and cultural development of western civilization from its roots in antiquity to the present. We shall devote special attention to the beliefs and values that shaped the world in which we live and that continue to inform our understanding of who we are. Thus, ours will be more than a journey into the past. It will be a voyage of self-discovery.

Course Requirements

Because this course covers the whole story of western civilization in a single semester and because it does so entirely online, it presents unique challenges. ***It is essential, therefore, that you read this syllabus carefully, and that you understand all of the following requirements. They are intended for your benefit, and to do well in this class you must adhere to them faithfully.***

1. **Reading and Viewing.** The weekly reading and viewing assignments and the video talks are essential. *You cannot earn a good grade if you do not keep up with them.*

2. **Quizzes.** Beginning the fourth week of class, there will be four very simple open-book tests. We shall post the questions on a Thursday and your answers will be due the following Tuesday. You will find the dates the tests will be posted indicated by asterisks on the class schedule. These quizzes will account for 50% of your final grade.

4. **Midterm and Final Assignments.** The midterm and final assignments will ask you to analyze some of the primary source readings and to place them in their historical context. You will receive these assignments about two weeks before they are due. These essays will account for 50% of your final grade.

5. **Extra-Credit Paper** The final assignment will include an opportunity for you to earn extra credit. I shall choose a film that you can watch online and pose questions about it for you to answer. If you answer those questions well, up to ten points will be added to your grade on the final assignment.

Please note that given the reading and writing this course requires, you cannot earn a good grade unless you are fluent in the English language. You must be honest with yourself about this.

Grading Scale

A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-73, D = 60-69

Weekly Class Schedule Dates indicate the first day of the school week. We may make small changes to the schedule as we make our way through the semester. If we do, we shall let you know. (P = primary sources, * = quiz will be posted on Thursday this week):

Aug. 24	The Ancient Near East, Greek Civilization (Synopsis 1; P, Gilgamesh, Isis and Osiris, Moses)
Aug. 31	Classical and Hellenistic Greece, Roman Civilization (Synopsis 2; P, Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism [Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius], Cicero)
Sept. 7	Christianity, Decline and Fall, the Middle Ages (Synopsis 3; P, Sermon on the Mount)
Sept. 14*	Medieval Civilization and the Renaissance (Synopsis 4; P, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, Julian of Norwich).
Sept. 21	Renaissance and Reformation (Synopsis 5; P, Pico della Mirandola, Machiavelli, Luther)
Sept. 28	From Reform to Absolutism (Synopsis 6; P, Bossuet, Hobbes)
Oct. 5	Limited Monarchy (Synopsis 7; P, Locke)
Oct. 12*	The Age of Reason (Synopsis 8; P, Descartes, Voltaire, Kant)
Oct. 19	The Age of Revolution (Synopsis 9; P, Declaration of the Rights of Man, Olympe de Gouges, Burke), Midterm assignment due October 21
Oct. 26	The Age of Industrialism and Nationalism (Synopsis 10, 19-21; P, Mill, Mazzini, Treitschke, Wordsworth, Marx)
Nov. 2*	The Birth of Modern Culture (Synopsis 11; P, Social Darwinism, Certainty and Uncertainty, Nietzsche, Freud)
Nov. 9	War, Communism, and Fascism (Synopsis 12; P, Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini)
Nov. 16	Nazi Germany and the Second World War (Synopsis 13; P, Hitler)
Nov. 23	Postwar Europe and the Cold War (Synopsis 14; P, Gorbachev, Sartre, John Paul II. Kafka)
Nov. 30*	The Contemporary West (Synopsis 15)
Dec. 8	Final assignment due

MISSED PAPERS AND MISSED TESTS

If you cannot submit an assignment on time and you do not want to be penalized, you **must** offer a **compelling** reason for the delay.

EMAIL

From time to time we may send important information to your GMU e-mail address. Please make sure that your account is open and that your mailbox has room for messages. We are happy to answer questions you may have, but please *do not ask for information already contained in this syllabus*. To insure that we receive email messages from you, and in order to comply with student privacy laws, **make sure to send them from your GMU address**. Please remember to include your name and your section whenever you write.

DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please let me know and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations *must* be arranged through that office.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As in all your classes, you are expected to faithfully adhere to the university Honor Code. <<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>>

ADDING AND DROPPING CLASSES

The last day you may add a class is August 31. The last day you may drop a class is September 15.

GENERAL EDUCATION: A NOTE FROM THE MASON CORE COMMITTEE

The History of Western Civilization is part of the Mason Core program, a set of courses that are the foundation of all your undergraduate studies. The Core Committee hopes that in this class you will gain familiarity with the chronology of the history of western civilization, the ability to describe and explain long term changes and continuities in that history, the ability to cite online and print sources, an understanding of how to interpret primary sources, and the ability to communicate your ideas effectively.