

HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATIONS

HIST-100 (Spring 2021)

Instructor: Vadim Staklo
Location: Online
Time: Asynchronous

Office: Robinson Hall B, 369
e-mail: Please use Blackboard for communication
Office hours: by appointment, using Blackboard Collaborate

Course description

The History of Western Civilization course explores the events, personalities, and complex social, political, and cultural changes that have contributed to the genesis of today's world. It follows the great civilizations of Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages, the advent of the Renaissance and the emergence of modern democracy, the rise of the Industrial Age and the collapse of old empires and political systems in the course of the great wars and revolutions. It will also touch upon the key terms, concepts and methods that historians use in their work.

The goal of this course is to gain a better understanding of the western tradition as you learn about primary and secondary sources, historical methodology, periodization, major economic and social developments; and to sharpen your independent study, analytical and writing skills.

Required text:

Frankforter, Daniel and William Spellman, *The West: A Narrative History*, 3rd edition
Additional weekly reading will be posted on Blackboard.
(It is best to read the assigned chapters and primary sources before listening to the lecture).

Lectures:

Recorded lectures will be posted on Blackboard every week.
We will have the first online meeting, which will serve as an introductory lecture, on Monday, 25 January, at 9:00 AM (via Blackboard Collaborate).

After that, we will hold regular informal live review sessions on BB Collaborate, approximately once every three weeks.
All live sessions will be recorded and available for those who cannot make it at the time of the meeting. You are always welcome to write me with any questions that you may have.

Course requirements

This course requires mostly independent work by students. You will not be supervised in the way you organize your time and learning. We will read the textbook and the primary source documents assigned for every week. It is your responsibility to keep up with the readings and lectures as we have no dedicated recitations apart from the informal online review sessions. Online lectures will supplement your reading and will help identify the most important events and concepts. We will also watch two films this semester.
The midterm exam will consist of short answer questions and short essays—25%

The final exam, similar in format to the midterm, will test your knowledge of the entire course—30%

There will be four quizzes. They will mostly consist of multiple-choice or short identification questions—25%

All quizzes and exams will be time-limited, but available to start during the entire day of the test.

One analytical paper, 4-5 double-spaced pages—20%. You will have three options to write the paper: 1) on the first film; 2) on both films (prompts will be provided); 3) on a contemporary important issue of your choice, from a historical perspective. **IMPORTANT:** you have to see me for the approval if you decide to take the third option and explore your own subject. These decisions have to be made before the end of February. Writing prompts will be posted on BB. All written assignments will be evaluated based on their thesis/argument, use of evidence, and grammar/style. Late papers will result in a 5-point final grade deduction for each day past the deadline.

This course is taught in asynchronous mode, and relies almost exclusively on Blackboard for communication, delivery of class materials, and grading. Please make sure you are familiar with the program and its functionality.

This course meets the following Mason Core learning outcomes for Western Civilizations/World History courses:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with the major chronology of Western civilization or world history.
2. Demonstrate the ability to narrate and explain long-term changes and continuities in Western civilization or world history.
3. 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.
4. Communicate effectively— through speech, writing, and use of digital media— your understanding of patterns, process, and themes in the history of Western civilization or the world.

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 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual

robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

As a faculty member and designated “Responsible Employee,” I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per university policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434), Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380), Student Health Services, or Mason’s Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; cde@gmu.edu).

CLASS SCHEDULE

Lecture 1 (01/25) Introduction (live online via Blackboard, 9:00 AM EST)
Read: Frankforter, pp. xxxvi-xlvi

Lecture 2 (02/01) Early Civilizations
Read: Frankforter, pp. 1-63
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 3 (02/08) Greece
Read: Frankforter, pp. 66-123
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Quiz 1 (02/15)

Lecture 4 (02/15) Rome
Read: Frankforter, pp. 124-185
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 5 (02/22) The Emergence of Europe and the “Middle Ages”
Read: Frankforter, pp. 219-299 (optional: 186-335)
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 6 (03/01) Renaissance and Reformation
Read: Frankforter, pp. 339-415
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content
Movie: *The Man for All Seasons*

Quiz 2 (03/08)

Lecture 7 (03/08) The Age of Enlightenment and the French Revolution
Read: Frankforter, pp. 475-525 (optional: 421-525)
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content
Movie: *Danton*

Midterm exam (03/11)

Lecture 8 (03/15) Napoleonic Era, Industrialization, and the Revolutions of 1848
Read: Frankforter, pp. 528-576
Paper due: First option (*The Man for All Seasons*)

Quiz 3 (03/22)

Lecture 9 (03/22) Nationalism, Imperialism and World War I
Read: Frankforter, pp. 586-663; 670-675
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 10 (03/29) Marxism and the Russian Revolutions

Read: Frankforter, pp. 577-584; 664-669; 698-701
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Paper due: Second or third option (*Danton vs. The Man for All Seasons* or Approved topic)

Lecture 11 (04/05) Interwar Years: The Rise of Authoritarianism
Read: Frankforter, pp. 679-698
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Quiz 4 (04/12)

Lecture 12 (04/12) World War II
Read: Frankforter, pp. 707-733

Lecture 13 (04/19) The Cold War and Beyond
Read: Frankforter, pp. 736-805
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Final exam (05/03)