



History 100

## History of Western Civilization

Prof. John Orens

**Office:** Professor Orens / 3210 Horizon  
Teaching Assistants / Adjunct and Teaching Assistant Suite, Third Floor, Horizon Hall

**Office Hours:** T 1:15-2:15 (Prof. Orens/jorens@gmu.edu)  
T 1:30-2:30 or by appointment (Tom Seabrook, teaching assistant/tseabroo@gmu.edu)  
Th 1:30-2:30 or by appointment (Dan Howlett, teaching assistant/dhowlett@gmu.edu)

Please let us know ahead of time if you would like to speak to us during our office hours. We encourage you to use video chat or Blackboard Collaborate when possible.

### Email Rules



We welcome your email messages, but we cannot answer your questions if we do not know who you are. **Please note that whenever you email us you MUST send your message from your Mason account, you MUST include your name at the end of your message, and you MUST identify the section you attend.** If the name you use to sign emails is different from your name on the class list, please include both.

### Required Reading on Blackboard

Weekly synopses of the history of western civilization  
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, it presents unique challenges. ***It is essential, therefore, that you read this syllabus in its entirety, and that you understand and pay careful attention to 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. **Attendance.** Our class meetings are the foundation of everything we do this semester. Although we shall not take attendance, *you cannot earn a good grade if you do not come to class or if you are inattentive in class.*



2. **No laptops or smartphones.** This class demands your careful and undivided attention. Because laptops and smartphones are almost always distracting to you and to those around you, unless you have a disability that requires their use *you may not use a laptop or a smartphone during class. Their use is strictly forbidden. Every time you use your smartphone for any reason during class, 2.5 points will be deducted from your average for the semester without exception.*

If you believe that you need to use a laptop because you have a disability, you must submit a note from the Office of Disability Services.

3. **Multiple-Choice Quizzes.** Beginning the fourth week of class, there will be four multiple-choice quizzes approximately every two to three weeks on either a Tuesday or a Thursday. The asterisks on the class schedule indicate the weeks on which there will be a quiz. We shall send you review questions a few days before the quiz (not the quiz questions themselves) to help you study. Together these quizzes will account for 66% of your final grade.

4. **Identification Quizzes.** During the week of September 27 and on November 29 there will be a short quiz consisting of identification questions. Together these quizzes will account for 34% of your final grade. Please note that the last multiple-choice quiz of the semester will take place on the same day as the last identification quiz.

☞ **There will be no midterm or final examination.** ☞

5. **Extra-Credit.** There will be one opportunity to earn extra credit. On the last day of class, December 1, I will show a film and then ask a few simple questions about it for you to answer in class. If you participate and your answers are acceptable, up to 5 points will be added to your average grade for the semester.

**Please keep in mind that given the reading and writing that 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 class meeting of the week. T = textbook chapters, P = primary sources, \* = multiple-choice quiz this week. \*\* = identification quiz this week. There may be changes to the schedule. We shall let you know if this happens.):

- Aug. 23 Introduction to History, the Ancient Near East, Greek Civilization (Synopsis 1; P, Gilgamesh, Isis and Osiris, Moses)
- Aug. 30 Classical and Hellenistic Greece, Roman Civilization, (Synopsis 2; P, Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism, Cicero)
- Sept. 6 Christianity, Decline and Fall, the Middle Ages (Synopsis 3; P, Sermon on the Mount).
- Sept. 13\* Medieval Civilization and the Renaissance (Synopsis 4; P, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, Julian of Norwich)
- Sept. 20 Renaissance and Reformation (Synopsis 5; P, Pico della Mirandola, Machiavelli, Luther)
- Sept. 27\*\* From Reform to Absolutism (Synopsis 6; P, Bossuet, Hobbes)

- Oct. 4\* Limited Monarchy and Scientific Revolution (Synopsis 7; P, Locke, Descartes)
- Oct. 13 The Age of Reason(Synopsis 8; P, Voltaire, Kant, Declaration of the Rights of Man)
- Oct. 18 The Age of Revolution (Synopsis 9; P, Olympe de Gouges, Burke)
- Oct. 25\* The Age of Industrialism and Nationalism (Synopsis 10; P, Mill, Mazzini, Treitschke, Wordsworth, Marx)
- Nov. 8 The Birth of Modern Culture (Synopsis 11; P, Social Darwinism, Certainty and Uncertainty, Nietzsche, Freud)
- Nov. 15 War, Communism, and the Birth of Fascism (Synopsis 12; P, Lenin)
- Nov. 22 The Age of Tyranny (Synopsis 13; P, Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler); The Second World War and the Holocaust (Synopsis 14)
- Nov. 29\*/\*\* Postwar Europe, the Cold War, and the Contemporary West (Synopsis 15; P, Gorbachev, Sartre, John Paul II, Kafka)

### MISSED QUIZZES

If you are going to miss a quiz and you do not want to be penalized, **you must let us know by the day of the quiz that you will be absent** and you must have a **compelling explanation** of your absence. Make-up quizzes must be given by the day of the next class meeting unless there is a serious reason for delay.

### EMAIL REMINDER

We shall be sending important information to your GMU email 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 your message, and in order to comply with student privacy laws, please remember to **make sure to send it from your GMU address. Your message must include your name and the section you attend.***

### DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474 (ods@gmu). 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 29. The last day you may drop a class without penalty is September 6.

### 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, an understanding of how to interpret primary sources, and the ability to communicate your ideas effectively.