

HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATIONS

HIST-100 (Fall 2023)

Instructor: Vadim Staklo

TA:

Location: Online

Time: Asynchronous

Office: Virtual

e-mail: Please use Blackboard for communication

Office hours: by appointment

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 (ISBN 978-0205180950). You can use either a two-volume, a combined volume, or a digital version.

Additional weekly reading will be posted on Blackboard. Please pay special attention to these primary sources, and be ready to compare and analyze them; they will be part of the exams.

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, 21 August, at 10:00 AM EST (via Blackboard Collaborate).

After that, we will hold 1-3 informal live review sessions on BB Collaborate, dates to be announced.

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 class. 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. Lectures will supplement your reading and will help identify the most important events and concepts.

The midterm exam will consist of short answer questions and short essays—30%

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

Four quizzes will test your knowledge of the previous weeks' material and will mostly consist of multiple-choice or short identification questions—25%

One or two film responses—15%

All quizzes and exams are cumulative, and will be conducted online, and are time-limited. You can start them anytime on the day of the test. You are expected to show your knowledge of the lectures, primary source readings, and textbook material. Answers copied from any Internet resources, including AI-generated content, are not acceptable.

We understand real life emergencies, but please provide a letter from a doctor or some other form of proof if you are missing a class or a test. If you are forced to miss a midterm or a final, let us know immediately and we will arrange for a make-up. Late submissions may be accepted, with a loss of a grade.

Extra credit and Course Evaluation: While I don't believe in last-minute grade bumps from extra credit, you can choose to write two film essays instead of one. This lets you explore the subject more, and gives you a chance to improve your grade.

Your involvement matters. Take part in the end-of-term course evaluation to assess your

progress and help improve the course. Final grades will be raised by 1% for all participating students.

Yet, you need not wait for the evaluation period to voice concerns or suggestions. Feel free to share your input throughout the semester; your assistance in improving the course is valued.

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.

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use the Blackboard learning system. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system and a stable broadband Internet connection with a consistent 1.5 Mbps download speed or higher.

All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private to this class and should not be shared.

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 1202. *If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center*

(SSAC) at 703-993-3686 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Lecture 1 (8/21) Introduction to History, Terms and Concepts
Read: Frankforter, pp. xxxvi-xlvi
Strongly recommended: How to Read a Primary Source (see Course Content)
Optional: [Iceman documentary](#); videos on memory wars.

Lecture 2 (8/28) Early Civilizations
Read: Frankforter, pp. 1-63
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 3 (9/04) Greece
Read: Frankforter, pp. 66-123
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Quiz 1 (9/11)

Lecture 4 (9/11) Rome
Read: Frankforter, pp. 124-185

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 5 (9/18) The Emergence of Europe and the “Middle Ages”
Read: Frankforter, pp. 219-299 (optional: 186-335)
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 6 (9/25) Renaissance and Reformation
Read: Frankforter, pp. 339-415
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Quiz 2 (10/02)

Lecture 7 (10/02) The Age of Enlightenment and the French Revolution
Read: Frankforter, pp. 475-525 (optional: 421-525)
Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Midterm exam (10/16)

Lecture 8 (10/16) Napoleonic Era, Industrialization, and the Revolutions of 1848
Read: Frankforter, pp. 528-576

Lecture 9 (10/23) Nationalism, Imperialism and World War I
Read: Frankforter, pp. 586-663; 670-675

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Quiz 3 (10/30)

Lecture 10 (10/30) Marxism and the Russian Revolutions

Read: Frankforter, pp. 577-584; 664-669; 698-701

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 11 (11/06) Interwar Years: The Rise of Authoritarianism

Read: Frankforter, pp. 679-698

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Quiz 4 (11/13)

Lecture 12 (11/13) World War II

Read: Frankforter, pp. 707-733

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 13 (11/20) The Cold War and Beyond

Read: Frankforter, pp. 736-805

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 14 (11/27) Course review, Q&A

Final exam (12/11)

