

HISTORY 100
George Mason University
Fall, 2010

Professor Dan DeSelm
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Robinson B-347

Western Civilization: From Ancients to Moderns

This course considers the development of Europe and Europeans, and their exchanges with neighboring cultures. More than that, it introduces a method of historical study focused on the intelligent reconstruction of the thoughts, emotions and deeds of the people who built the civilization from which our own is derived. Using images and primary source texts, we will devote considerable attention to peering into the minds of men and women often far removed from us in time and space, in the hope of understanding not only our own roots but also in the hope of appreciating alternative paths. Intellectual curiosity is the only prerequisite for this course.

Requirements:

Attendance at all class meetings; completion of assigned readings before class meetings; participation in discussion in class; five short essays; a mid-term and a final exam.

Texts:

The Internet History Sourcebook Project (Paul Halsall, ed.), and other web-based resources.

Additional recommended (but not required) text: *The Prentice Hall Atlas of Western Civilization* (2nd edition), 2009.

Policies:

All work must be carried out or turned in at the appropriate time and place. Late work will not be accepted and exams may not be rescheduled without a valid medical excuse. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Important dates to remember:

Last Day to Drop:

September 4, 2012

Selective Withdrawal Period:

October 1 – October 26, 2012

Written Assignments:

3 short essays (800 words) are required of every student. These essays, based on course readings, require no further research. The topics will be distributed at regular intervals throughout the course of the semester, normally one week before they are due. Each essay is due in class on the day specified on the syllabus below.

Course Schedule:

Aug. 30:

**Introduction: Thinking Through History
Images of the Ancient Near East**

Sept. 6:

Babylonian Beginnings (Atlas, 12-17)

The Code of Hammurabi

The Epic of Gilgamesh

The Greek System (Atlas, 22-24)

Sophocles, *Antigone* (lines 332-338 only)

Plato, *The Republic*

Epicurus, *Maxims*

Homer, *The Iliad* (Book 1 only)

Sept. 13:

Greek Culture and its Alternatives (Atlas, 24-25)

Herodotus, *The Histories* (first three sections only)

Thucydides, "Pericles' Funeral Oration" (from *History of the Peloponnesian War*)

"I Came, I Saw, I Conquered" (Atlas, 26-29)

Plutarch: *Life of Alexander*

Appian, *Mithridatic Wars*

Sept. 20:

Rome of Bricks and Marble (Atlas, 30-33)

The Twelve Tables

Polybius, "An Analysis of Roman Government" (from *The Histories*)

Tacitus, *Annals* (Selections)

Augustus, *Res Gestae*

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

Sep. 27:

★Essay 1 Due★

Christians and Barbarians (Atlas, 34-39)

Pliny the Younger and Trajan, *Correspondence*

Tacitus, *Annales* (Selections)

Priscus, "Visit to the Court of Attila the Hun" (From *History of the Greeks*)

Salvian, *On the Government of God*

Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*

Ordeal Formulas

Oct. 4:

Light in the Dark Ages (Atlas, 40-43)

Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*

Theodoret, "Ambrose and Theodosius," (from *the Ecclesiastical History*)

Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St. Benedict*

Beowulf, (chapters 11 & 12 only)

Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne* (Multiple excerpts)

Oct. 11:

MIDTERM EXAM

Oct. 18:

Popes and Emperors

Gregory VII, *Dictatus Papae*

Henry IV, *Letter to Gregory VII*

Crusaders in the Holy Land (*Atlas*, 46-49)

Robert the Monk, "Urban II's Speech at Clermont, 1095"

Fulcher of Chartres, *The Deeds of the Franks Who Attacked Jerusalem*

The Seigneurial Revival

The Song of Roland (Sections)

Fulbert of Chartres, *On Feudal Obligations*

Magna Carta

Oct. 25:

Birds, Squirrels, and Heretics (*Atlas*, 52)

St. Francis of Assisi, *The Rule of the Franciscan Order*

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*

Gregory XI, *The Condemnation of Wycliffe* and Wycliffe's reply

Plague (*Atlas*, 54-55)

Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*

Nov. 1:

★Essay 2 Due★

The City Air Makes You Free

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Renaissance (*Atlas*, 58-59, 62-63)

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *On the Dignity of Man*

Petrarch, *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux*

Indictment of Galileo

Francis Bacon, *First Book of Aphorisms*

Nov. 8:

Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and War (*Atlas*, 64-65)

Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian*

Decrees of the Council of Trent

De Thou, "The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre"

Nov 15:

What Is Enlightenment? (*Atlas*, 75)

Voltaire, *Treatise On Toleration*

Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*

The Ancien Regime (*Atlas*, 67)

Duc de Saint-Simon, "The Court of Louis XIV"

Frederick II, *Essay on Forms of Government*

Catherine the Great, *Proposals for a New Law Code*

Nov 22:

NO CLASS (*Thanksgiving*)

Nov. 29:

The Age of Revolution (*Atlas*, 76-81, 86-87)

Declaration of the Rights of Man

Sieyes, *What is the Third Estate?*

Darwin, *The Descent of Man*

Labor and Industry

"Observations on the Loss of Woollen Spinning"

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Dec. 6 :

★Essay 3 Due★

Modernity and Beyond (*Atlas*, 82-83, 92-99)

Ferry, "Speech Before the French Chamber of Deputies"

Hobson, *Imperialism*

Mazzini, *An Essay On the Duties of Man*

von Moltke, *On the Nature of War*

Dec. 14:

FINAL EXAM