

HIST 100: Western Civilization

Section 020: TR 1:30-2:45 (Lecture Hall 3)

Section 022: TR 3:00-4:15 (Lecture Hall 2)

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Office: Robinson Hall B rm. 375C

Office Hours: Tues. 12:30-1:30 pm & by appointment

Introduction: Western Civilization—A Tale of Two Seas

Exchanges, encounters, and expansion will provide the basic themes of this course as we explore the formation of western civilization from ancient to modern times. To provide a framework for our historical investigation, the semester will be divided into two units, each dedicated to one of the two major bodies of water at the heart of events: the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The first unit, covering roughly 1000 BC to 1400 AD, focuses on the Mediterranean as a site of composite cultures encompassing the ancient peoples of the Levant, the Greeks and their western colonies, the Hellenistic worlds of the east, and north Africa. This unit will culminate in a study of the highly cosmopolitan city-states of Italy in the medieval and early modern periods. The second unit (c. 1400 to present) will trace the gradual shift of history away from the Mediterranean and toward the Atlantic as colonial enterprises—initiated first by Spain and Portugal and later by England, France, and the Netherlands—created a broader context of interaction between the Americas and Europe. The rise of the Atlantic system, the international impact of revolution and the Enlightenment, nineteenth-century imperialism and industrialization, and finally, select major events of the twentieth century will occupy the remainder of this unit.

Course objectives: Students should leave this course with a better understanding of the major ideas and events that have shaped the world they live in today. These include:

- The interaction between civilizations and the ways in which those historical encounters helped define each respective society.
- Changing cultural trends in societies, households, roles of men and women, and notions of citizenship.
- The phenomenon of colonization and the evolving nature of political power.

In addition, students will work to improve their overall skills in written communication, research, argumentation, and other abilities key to succeeding in their future careers. Finally, it is my hope that you will find the content of this course contributes to your own interests outside of career pursuits!

Course Website

The website associated with this course can be found by logging in at the Mason Blackboard site: <https://courses.gmu.edu>. It is extremely important that you get access to this site and become familiar with its setup if you are not already. All papers will be submitted through Blackboard, you will be able to track your grade progress, and a major component of participation will take place via this online

format. It works best using a Firefox web browser, but otherwise should be compatible with both Macs and PCs. Please log on to the Hist 100 site sometime in the first week to make sure you have access. If you have any trouble, contact the ITU Support Center at (703) 993-8870.

Assignments

Requirements for this course will consist of the following:

1. **Three short-answer quizzes** centering on the content of lectures and the reading assignments. These in-class quizzes will be given according to the schedule below, and will last 30 minutes. These will be worth 10% each, or 30% of the final grade.
2. **Two formal papers** of 3-4 pages each, discussing arguments arising out of lecture content, course readings, and any additional readings supplied by the student. Please refer to the guideline sheet for writing these papers distributed by the instructor. The first of these papers is due on **October 6**, and the second is due **November 17th**. Once they are both written, students must select one for a final revision. This paper must be expanded to 5-6 pages, make improvements over the first version, and be turned in by the last day of classes, **December 10th**. The grade on the revised version will replace the earlier assignment grade. The expanded, revised paper will be worth 20%, and the unrevised paper will be worth 10%. Please note that a failure to turn in the revised paper will result in a zero for this portion (20%) of the final grade regardless of the grades on the original two papers.
3. A written **Critical Review** of 3-4 pages based on a visit to a museum, gallery, historic site, or musical performance in the Fairfax or Washington, DC area. See guideline sheet for expectations in completing this assignment. This report is worth 15% of the final grade, and **must be turned in by December 1st**.
4. **Participation** (20% of final grade), consisting of two main activities:
 - a. Students have the opportunity to ask and answer questions in class throughout the semester, but particularly during the scheduled days dedicated exclusively to the readings. These scheduled discussions are also intended to help sharpen the ideas to be explored in the two formal papers.
 - b. **Blackboard group reading discussions.** Students will be assigned to one of ten groups. Four times during the semester (once for each course text, sometime in the weeks prior to class discussion), students must post at least four comments and questions regarding course reading. These comments will only be read by members of each student's reading group, and by the instructor. At the end of the semester, students will select four of their highest-quality posts and submit them for instructor review in assessing the final Blackboard participation grade.

****Note that attendance is also included in overall participation grade.**

5. Two small **map exercises** at the beginning of each of the two units worth 2.5% each, or 5% total.

To sum up: quizzes, 30% (10% each); formal papers, 30% (10% for the unrevised and 20% for the revised); participation, 20%; map exercises, 5%; and critical review, 15%.

Grading

The following grading scale will be used to determine grades:

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>
93+	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
Below 60	F

Late work will be assessed a penalty of one-half letter grade for each day it is late. No assignment will be accepted later than seven days after its original due date.

All papers must be submitted through Blackboard as a .rtf, .doc or .docx file. Please make every effort to ensure a successful submission has been made in order to avoid late penalties.

Classroom Expectations

Students are expected to attend all classes and complete all assigned readings. **Two absences will be permitted without penalty in order to account for cases of sickness and other personal needs.** Anything above two absences will adversely affect a student's grade unless formal arrangements have been made with the instructor in cases of extended sickness or family emergency. Remember that class participation is based in part on attendance. In order to accurately assess students' attendance, a record will be kept.

While attending class, please turn off cell phones.

Students are reminded of the terms of academic honesty set out by the **Virginia university system Honor Code** which apply to all academic work submitted for grades. Plagiarism and cheating in matters related to academic work violate this code. Recall that any use of another author's ideas or writings, in full or in part, without assigning proper credit to that source, constitutes plagiarism. All

work submitted for this course must be original work. Cite all sources used for written essays carefully. If in doubt, contact me for further guidance.

If you are a student with disabilities or special academic needs, please speak with me and contact the Office of Disability Services at (703) 993-2474 to make arrangements.

Texts

The following textbooks are available at the campus bookstore, with many online suppliers, and on library reserve:

- Herodotus, *The Histories* (Penguin paperback, 2003)
- Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (Second edition, Penguin paperback, 2003)
- Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* (Penguin paperback, 2003)
- Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (Harper paperback, 1993)

Additional short readings listed on the accompanying reading schedule will be available either online or on e-reserve. **There is no textbook for this course**; therefore, class discussion and lectures are central to course content. However, if you find that you want more background reading, I suggest you consult Lynn Hunt, et al., eds., *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures*. A copy of this text has been placed on library reserve. I have noted the relevant page numbers from this text on the reading schedule.

General Education at George Mason

This course fulfills the Western Civilization Core Requirement of the University General Education program. The goal of the Core Requirement is to help encourage students to develop their broader understanding of the world and local communities while adding new perspectives on specific societies and cultures—in this case, the western tradition. For more information on General Education, please see the University Catalog, pp. 69-71, and the Provost's Office General Education website:

<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/gened/index.html>

Schedule of Topics

(Note: schedule of weekly topics subject to revision with advanced notice. **=required reading)

Part 1: The Mediterranean

Week 1 (September 1 and 3): Course Introduction

**Reading: START Herodotus, *The Histories* (see reading guide for assigned pages)

Week 2 (September 8 and 10): Eastern Mediterranean Civilizations and their People

**Reading: Continue Herodotus, *The Histories*

Cyrus the Great, [“The Decree of Return for the Jews”](#) (539 BC)

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 25-32, 38-126]

Week 3 (September 15 and 17): The Colonization of the Mediterranean West; the Rise of Rome

Thurs. September 17th: **Mediterranean map exercise due**

**Reading: Continue Herodotus, *The Histories*

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 129-210]

Week 4 (September 22 and 24): Discussion Week #1 (Herodotus)

Tues. September 22nd: Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 meet in class

Thurs. September 24th: Groups 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 meet in class

**Reading: FINISH Herodotus, *The Histories*, before scheduled discussion day
START Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (see handout for assigned pages)

Week 5 (September 29 and October 1): The Early Christian Church, East and West; Islam and North Africa

**Reading: Continue Boccaccio, *The Decameron*
Tacitus, [“Nero’s Persecution of the Christians”](#) (1st century AD)
Yakut, [“Baghdad under the Abbasids, c. 1000 C.E.”](#)

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 245-307]

Week 6 (October 6 and 8): Nobles, Merchants, Peasants, and Medieval Society; Italian City States

Tues. October 6th: **FIRST FORMAL PAPER DUE** (turn in via Blackboard)

**Reading: Continue Boccaccio, *The Decameron*
[“Asnapium: An Inventory of One of Charlemagne’s Estates, c. 800”](#) (800 AD)
Bishop Gebhard, [“Allocation of Serfs to Crafts”](#) (990 AD)

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 340-345, 369-387, 409-422, 426-459]

Week 7 (October 15): Europe and the Americas, North and South

Tues. October 13: **NO TUESDAY CLASSES** (Columbus Day holiday)

Thurs. October 15: **QUIZ 1** on Mediterranean history

**Reading: FINISH Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, before scheduled discussion day

Part 2: The Atlantic

Week 8 (October 20 and 22): Discussion Week #2 (Boccaccio)

Tues. October 20th: Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 meet in class

Thurs. October 22nd: Groups 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 meet in class

**Reading: START Equiano, *Interesting Narrative* (see handout for assigned pages)
Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *True History of the Conquest of New Spain* (1568)
Bartolomé de Las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians* (1552)

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 463-471, 569-577]

Week 9 (October 27 and 29): The Atlantic Economy and the Atlantic Slave Trade
Enlightenment Revolutions in a World Context

Tues. October 27th: **Atlantic map exercise due**

**Reading: Continue Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*
Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776)
[“The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizen”](#) (1789)
Abbé Sieyès, [“What is the Third Estate?”](#) (1789)
Olympe de Gouge, [“Declaration of the Rights of Women”](#) (1791)

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 600-671, 717-723]

Week 10 (November 3 and 5): Industrialization, Reform, and Socialism

Thurs. November 3rd: **QUIZ 2** on Atlantic history

**Reading: Continue Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*
Parliamentary Inquiry, [“Women Miners in the English Coalpits”](#) (1842)
Louis Blanc, [“The Organisation of Labour”](#) (1840)

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 707-713, 766-771, 833-834]

Week 11 (November 10 and 12): Discussion Week #3 (Equiano)

Tues. November 10th: Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Thurs. November 12th: Groups 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

**Reading: FINISH Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, before scheduled discussion day
START Browning, *Ordinary Men*

Week 12 (November 17 and 19): New Imperialism; Modernity, Mass Politics, and Consumption

Tues. November 17th: **SECOND FORMAL PAPER DUE** (turn in via Blackboard)

**Reading: Continue Browning, *Ordinary Men*

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 799-821]

Week 13 (November 24): World War and Western Civilization in Crisis

Thurs. November 26th: **NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING**

**Reading: Continue Browning, *Ordinary Men*

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 843-896]

Week 14 (December 1 and 3): Interwar Upheavals; Fascism & Nazism; Holocaust

Tues. December 1st: **Last day to turn in Critical Review paper**

**Reading: Continue Browning, *Ordinary Men*

[Optional textbook readings: Hunt, *Making of the West*, pgs. 900-942, 946-954, 1043-1050]

Week 15: (December 8 and 10): Discussion #4, Post-War Challenges, and Course Review

Tues. December 8th: All-class discussion, Browning, *Ordinary Men*

Thurs. December 10th: **REVISED FORMAL PAPER DUE** (turn in via Blackboard)

**Reading: FINISH Browning, *Ordinary Men*, before Tuesday discussion
Amartya Sen, "A World Not Neatly Divided" (in class reading)

****QUIZ 3:**

Section 20 (TR 1:30 section): Thursday, December 17th, 1:30-4:15 pm

Section 22 (TR 3:00 section): Tuesday, December 15th, 1:30-4:15 pm