

**THE WEST AND THE WORLD TO 1500
HISTORY 102**

MWF, 11:50-12:40
Fall Semester, 2016
Morey Hall 502
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Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday 1-2pm, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves as an introduction to ‘Western’ historical traditions that trace their roots back to the earliest human cities in the ancient Near East. The course takes a chronological and thematic approach to the history of Europe and its neighbors from the ancient world through the Middle Ages and Renaissance. We’ll focus on key social, political, economic, and religious attributes of each culture we encounter, using these to make meaningful comparisons between various time periods and societies. Whether we think of ourselves as ‘Western’ or not, modern American social, cultural, and intellectual environments have been shaped by the historical development of European and Mediterranean societies. This cultural inheritance is often described as ‘Greco-Roman’ or ‘Judeo-Christian’. As the hyphens suggest, however, no tradition developed in isolation. We will explore how people borrowed from, adapted, and reconciled various ideas to suit their own needs and how these, over time, formed a coherent set of cultural values. To this end, we will consider a number of themes throughout the semester. In addition to our emphasis on interactions between ‘the West’ and other cultures, we’ll look at changing models of political organization and rulership, understandings of individual rights and responsibilities, attitudes about gender, and conceptions of deities and divine power.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course has three main goals: **First**, it will serve as an introduction to major topics in pre-modern European and Mediterranean history. Given the broad chronological scope of this course, it will not be comprehensive. It will, however, offer a basic outline by following several themes over time. For those of you who plan to go on to more advanced coursework, the class will provide a framework that you can expand upon later.

Second, this course will introduce you to the practice of history. In lectures, you will encounter some of the ways in which historians think about the past. In class discussion and in writing assignments, you will have the opportunity to explore primary sources (i.e., original texts) from ancient, medieval, and early modern Europe. By the end of the semester, you will have an understanding of how to analyze primary sources and connect them to the larger interpretive frameworks of historical scholarship.



Finally, this course will develop writing and critical thinking skills. In the writing component of our class, we will stress the idea that a good paper involves reading critically, developing interesting and coherent ideas, and then conveying those ideas to the reader effectively. By engaging with a variety of primary sources, you will be challenged to draw and defend meaningful comparisons between different societies and moments in time and to ultimately relate historical knowledge to contemporary issues.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Website: Please check our course's Blackboard site regularly as I will post images and handouts from lectures, some course readings, and details about upcoming assignments.

Communication: Please come speak with me if you have any questions or concerns about the class. I can be more understanding of your needs if you bring them to my attention before they become a serious problem. I am available during regular office hours without an appointment. If you cannot make posted hours, please contact me to schedule a better time. You may also speak to me by e-mail or phone.

Attendance: Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. More than three unexcused absences will lower your grade for the course by ½ letter grade (e.g. from a B to a B-); each further absence will result in an additional ½ grade deduction. I reserve the right to withdraw students who have missed six or more meetings from the class. If you must miss class for an unavoidable reason, please let me know in advance.

Accommodations: I encourage you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully. Students requiring classroom accommodations should contact the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, 1-154 Dewey Hall, 585-275-9049. You can learn more about the accommodation process at: www.rochester.edu/college/cetl/undergraduate/disability.

Academic Honesty: All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/. You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another.

Writing Help: We will discuss each writing assignment in detail during class. I am also always willing to talk about writing assignments individually: to help you plan an essay, work through the process, or go over a past paper. I strongly encourage all students to take advantage of this by coming to office hours. Another very useful resource is the U of R Writing and Speaking Center, which is dedicated to helping writers at all skill levels to improve. You can reach them at 273-3577, by stopping by Rush Rhees G-121, or by scheduling an appointment at <http://writing.rochester.edu/help/index.html>.

READINGS

The course texts (listed below) are available for purchase at the bookstore or online. We will also read several additional texts not on this list. These will be available on the Blackboard site and are marked accordingly in this syllabus.

Our discussions in class will focus on the primary source readings. These will range from the brief but often dense selections in Perry's *Sources of the Western Tradition* to full-length texts, such as *Beowulf* or Augustine's *Confessions*, which allow us more in-depth insights into the past. You should approach these texts critically; that is, by considering the different historical contexts in which each source was written,

the social identity (including gender) of both the author and the people s/he writes about, and the author's purposes in writing.

Required books

- *Sources of the Western Tradition*, ed. Marvin Perry. Volume 1: *From Ancient Times to the Enlightenment*, Brief Edition (Houghton-Mifflin, 2006), ISBN 0-618-53901-8
- *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Penguin, 1972) 978-0140441000
- Aristophanes, *Clouds* (Cambridge, 2012) ISBN 978-0521172561
- Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. F. J. Sheed. (Hackett, 1993), 0-87220-186-4
- *Beowulf*, trans. R.M. Liuzza (Broadview, 2000), ISBN 1-551-11189-6
- Dhuoda, *Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman's Counsel for Her Son*, trans Carol Neel (Catholic University, 1999) ISBN 978-0-813-20938-8
- *Christopher Columbus and the Enterprise of the Indies*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey Symcox and Blair Sullivan (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), ISBN 0-312-41021-2

Recommended books

- Judith Coffin and Robert Stacey, *Western Civilizations*, 2nd Brief Edition, Vol. 1 (Norton, 2009), ISBN 978-0-393-93235-5

ASSIGNMENTS

Papers: You will write 2 short (about 5 double-spaced pages) and one longer (7-9 double-spaced pages) papers. These will each consist of an analysis of a text (or group of texts) that we have already read and discussed. You may include information from course lectures but should not devote much space to regurgitating what we've covered. The emphasis here should be on developing an argument and demonstrating your ability to read, think, and write clearly. For each paper, I will post of list of possible topics a couple of weeks in advance. All papers must be double-spaced in 12 point type, have 1 inch margins on all sides, and have page numbers. Make sure to proofread your papers yourself for grammatical and spelling errors. Don't rely on spell-check; it misses far too many common errors.

Effective writing: A thoughtful writing process is an essential aspect of writing quality papers. The words we first put on paper are almost never as effective or as clear as they might be. A well-written, convincing paper is one that has gone through several drafts, has been read and commented on by others, and has been meaningfully rethought and rewritten. For that reason, we will conduct a joint process of review and revision for the short papers.

This consists of several stages. First, you will bring your initial draft to an in-class writing workshop where we'll discuss some common writing challenges and strategies. In this workshop, you will have the chance to review work by your peers and to receive their comments on your draft. With those comments in hand, you will revise your paper in preparation for a one-on-one meeting with me. After that meeting, you will revise again to produce what will be your final draft. You will submit this along with all of your previous drafts.

Please note that 'revise' does *not* mean proofread. To *proofread* is to scan your paper while making small fixes, correcting typos, adjusting a sentence, making sure a footnote is correct. To *revise* is to seriously reconsider your work and often involves significant rewriting and restructuring. Each iteration of your paper should look very different from the previous version. Although time constraints mean that we will be able to do this process formally and as a class only for the first two papers, I expect that you will continue to draft, revise, and seek comments on your final paper.

Exams: Both the mid-term and the final exams will include id's and short-answer questions. Each exam will be cumulative and require you to draw connections between different cultures, regions, and time periods. I'll be providing a study guide prior to each exam.

Class Participation: All students are expected to attend all class meetings and to notify me in advance if you must miss a class. Excessive unexcused absences will affect your grade. You should come to class having read the assigned texts and prepared to discuss them. Simple attendance is not enough; there is no such thing as passive participation. I expect and encourage a diversity of perspectives, as well as honest and respectful disagreement. If you are having difficulties speaking up in class, please come see me and we will develop some strategies together.

What does effective class participation look like? In terms of the class participation grade, the following rubric roughly outlines my expectations:

- A: regular class attendance, always fully prepared (= having completed *and* thought about the readings) and regularly contributes positive, thoughtful comments
- B: regular class attendance, usually prepared and makes a sincere effort to contribute often
- C/D: several absences and/or inconsistent preparation, occasional contributions to discussion
- F: many absences and/or usually unprepared, and/or vague or rare contributions

GRADING

Participation and attendance:	25%
Short papers	30% (15% each)
Longer paper:	25%
Exams:	20% (10% each)

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND READINGS

W Aug 31: Introduction / What is 'the West'?

Unit 1: The Ancient Near East (Coffin and Stacey, chapters 1-2)

F Sept 2: Mesopotamia

Readings: *Gilgamesh*, pp. 61-84; Perry, chap 1, doc. 2, pp. 7-10

M Sep 5: Labor Day (no class)

W Sep 7: Mesopotamia (cont.)

Readings: *Gilgamesh*, pp. 85-119

F Sep 9: Egyptians and Hebrews

Readings: Perry, chap 1, docs 3-4, pp. 11-14; and docs 6-8, pp. 18-24

M Sep 12: Minoans and Mycenaeans

Readings: Perry, chap 2, doc. 1, pp. 27-30.

Unit 2: The Greeks (Coffin and Stacey, chapters 3-4)

W Sep 14: The rise of the Greek *polis*

Readings: Perry, chap 2, docs. 2-3, pp. 30-38.

F Sep 16: Greece in the Fifth Century B.C.E.: Crisis and Innovation

Readings: Perry, chap 2, docs. 4 and 6-9, pp. 39-41, 46-63.

M Sep 19: Greek society and culture

Readings: Perry, chap 2, doc. 5, pp. 41-46.

W Sep 21: Close reading – *Clouds*

Readings: Aristophanes, *Clouds*, first half

F Sep 23: Close reading - *Clouds* (cont.)

Readings: Aristophanes, *Clouds*, second half

M Sep 26: The Hellenistic world (**FIRST DRAFT OF SHORT PAPER #1 DUE BY EMAIL BY 8PM**)

Readings: Perry, chap 2, doc. 10, pp. 64-67. Plutarch, excerpt from *Life of Alexander* (at <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/ancient/plutarch-alexander1.asp>); Arrian, excerpt from *The Campaigns of Alexander* (at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/arrian-alexander1.asp>)

W Sep 28: Writing workshop (**sign up for individual meetings to discuss paper drafts**)

Unit 3: The Romans (Coffin and Stacey, chapter 5)

F Sep 30: The rise of the Roman republic

Readings: Perry, chap. 3, doc. 1, pp. 69-74.

M Oct 3: Crisis and civil war (**SECOND DRAFT OF SHORT PAPER #1 DUE**)

Readings: Perry, chap. 3, doc. 5, pp. 83-87.

W Oct 5: **Individual meetings to discuss paper drafts** (no class)

F Oct 7: The imperial world

Readings: Perry, chap. 3, docs. 3-4 and 6-7, pp. 77-82 and 89-94; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History: A Selection*, trans. John F. Healy (New York, 1991), pp. 42-71 (**on Blackboard**); Tacitus, “The Rebellion of Boudicca” (**on Blackboard**)

M Oct 10: The fall of Rome? (**FINAL DRAFT OF SHORT PAPER #1 DUE**)

Readings: Perry, chap. 3, doc. 9, pp. 97-101; Tacitus, *Germania*, pp. 69-82 (**on Blackboard**); Adam Kirsch, “Ideas are Viruses,” (at <http://www.slate.com/id/2299849/>).

Unit 4: The Rise of Christianity (Coffin and Stacey, chapter 6)

W Oct 12: Religion in the late Empire

Readings: Perry, chap. 4, docs. 1-2, and first part of doc. 3 (Jerome), pp. 104-10

F Oct 14: **MID-TERM EXAM**

M Oct 17: Fall break (no class)

W Oct 19: Early monasticism

Readings: Perry, chap. 4, docs. 3-4 and 6, pp. 110-114, 118-120; Jerome, *Letter to Laeta* (**on Blackboard**)

F Oct 21: Close reading – Augustine

Readings: Augustine, *Confessions*, books 2-5, pp. 23-83

M Oct 24: Close reading - Augustine

Readings: Augustine, *Confessions*, books 6-8, pp. 87-147.

Unit 5: After Rome (Coffin and Stacey, chapter 7)

W Oct 26: Byzantium: heir to Rome in the East

Readings: Procopius, excerpts from *The Wars* and *The Secret History* (**on Blackboard**); Perry, chap. 5, doc. 1, pp. 123-5.

F Oct 28: The rise of Islam

Readings: Perry, chap 5, docs. 2-3, pp. 125-130; Ibn Ishâq, *Biography of the Messenger of God*, in *The Islamic World*, ed. William H. McNeil and Marilyn Robinson Waldman (Chicago, 1973), pp. 13-27 (**on Blackboard**)

M Oct 31: ‘Barbarian’ Europe

Readings: *Beowulf*, first half (you may find it helpful to skim the introduction).

W Nov 2: ‘Barbarian’ Europe (cont.)

Readings: *Beowulf*, second half

F Nov 4: Charlemagne and the Church: a new order in the West?

Readings: Perry, chap 5, docs. 4-5, pp. 131-136.

M Nov 7: Carolingian society

Readings: Perry, chap 5, doc. 6, pp. 136-138; Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*, first half

W Nov 9: Carolingian society (cont.) (**FIRST DRAFT OF SHORT PAPER #2 DUE BY EMAIL BY 8PM**)

Readings: Perry, chap 5, doc. 6, pp. 136-138; Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*, second half

F Nov 11: Writing workshop (**sign up for individual meetings to discuss paper drafts**)

Unit 6: The High Middle Ages (Coffin and Stacey, chapters 8-9)

M Nov 14: Invasion and recovery

Readings: Perry, chap 6, doc. 1, pp. 141-143; “Annals of Xanten” (at <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/xanten1.asp>).

W Nov 16: Crusades and Conquest (**SECOND DRAFT OF SHORT PAPER #2 DUE**)

Readings: “The First Crusade” (**on Blackboard**).

F Nov 18: Interfaith contact and conflict

Readings: Fulcher of Chartres, “The Latins in the East” (**on Blackboard**); Usamah ibn Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman in the Period of the Crusades*, excerpts (**on Blackboard**); *The Song of My Cid*, excerpt (**on Blackboard**)

M Nov 21: Enemies Within

Readings: Perry, chap. 4, doc. 5, pp. 114-117, and chap. 6, docs. 4 and 6, pp. 149-151 and 154-157; and “The Albigensian Crusade” (**on Blackboard**).

W Nov 23: Thanksgiving break (no class)

F Nov 25: Thanksgiving break (no class)

M Nov 28: Artistic and scholastic revivals (**SHORT PAPER #2 DUE**)

Readings: Peter Abelard, *Historia calamitatum* (The Story of My Misfortunes), 3-43 (**on Blackboard**); Adelard of Bath, *Excerpts from Natural Questions* (**on Blackboard**); Perry, chap. 6, docs. 2 and 5, pp. 143-146, 151-154

W Nov 30: Women in Medieval Society

Readings: Perry, chap 6, docs. 7-8, pp. 158-163; Aelred, *The Nun of Watton* (**on Blackboard**); *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Hammer of Witches) (**on Blackboard**); *L’Avision-Christine* (**on Blackboard**)

Unit 7: The Late Middle Ages (Coffin and Stacey chapters 10-12)

F Dec 2: The calamitous fourteenth century: war, famine, schism, and plague

Readings: Perry, chap 6, doc. 9, pp. 163-166; Johannes de Trokelowe, “The Famine of 1315” (**on Blackboard**); John Gower, *Vox clamantis* (A Voice Crying Out) (**on Blackboard**)

M Dec 5: Looking beyond Europe: travelers, fantasies, and trade

Readings: “Mandeville on Prester John” (at <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/mandeville.asp>); Marco Polo, *The Travels*, excerpt (**on Blackboard**)

W Dec 7: Tradition and innovation: the Italian Renaissance

Readings: Perry, chap 7, docs. 1-3, pp. 176-187.

F Dec 9: New Worlds

Readings: *Columbus and the Enterprise of the Indies*, pp. 43-59, 105-113, 127-176.

M Dec 12: Final thoughts (**LONGER PAPER DUE**)

FINAL EXAM: Dec 18 (Sunday) 7:15pm (this is the “official date and time. Obviously, it’s not ideal, so we’ll revisit this as it gets closer)