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**The West and the World to 1500**

**History 102**

MWF, 11:50-12:40

Fall Semester 2021

Hylan Building 201

Instructor: Tom Devaney

Email: [thomas.devaney@rochester.edu](mailto:thomas.devaney@rochester.edu)

Office: Rush Rhees 452

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 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:* Much of our work will be coordinated through the course’s Blackboard site. Please check this regularly.

*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. Please contact me to schedule a time for us to discuss via Zoom. You may also communicate with me by e-mail.

*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

*Credit hours:* The College’s credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIST 102 are expected to devote at least one hour each week, *in addition to regular reading and writing assignments*, to closely examining the readings and/or researching in depth their topics for the final paper.

*Hybrid model:* It is the University’s expectation that all instructional activities will take place in person this semester. However, this is subject to change and it is possible that some international students will be unable to travel to the US for in-person learning. I will update you as soon as possible if any changes occur and please feel free to reach out to me with any concerns.

**Accommodation and Support**

*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 accommodations should contact the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, 1-154 Dewey Hall, 585-275-9049. You can learn more about the process at: [www.rochester.edu/college/cetl/undergraduate/disability](http://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/](http://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. 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. 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 schedule an online appointment with a writing tutor at <https://writing.rochester.edu/tutoring/virtual-tutoring.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 they wrote 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) ISBN 978-0140441000
* Aristophanes, *Clouds* (Cambridge, 2012) ISBN 978-0521172561
* Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. F. J. Sheed, 2nd edition (Hackett, 2007), 978-0872208162
* *Beowulf*, trans. R.M. Liuzza, 2nd edition (Broadview, 2013), ISBN 978-1554810642
* Dhuoda, *Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman's Counsel for Her Son*, trans Carol Neel (Catholic University, 1999) ISBN 978-0-813-20938-8

*Recommended books* (for those with less background in history)

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

**Assignments**

***Papers*:** ***Papers*:** You will write three short (2-3 double-spaced pages) and one longer (7-8 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 several 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.**

***Exams*:** Both the mid-term and the final exams will have a similar format and 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: 30%

Short papers 25% (8.33% each)

Longer paper: 25%

Exams: 20% (10% each)

**Schedule of Meetings and Readings**

**W Aug 25:** Introduction / What is ‘the West’?

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

**F Aug 27:** Mesopotamia

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

**M Aug 30:** Mesopotamia (cont.)

*Readings*: *Gilgamesh*, pp. 85-119

**W Sept 1:** Ancient Egypt

*Readings*: Perry, chap 1, docs 3-4, pp. 11-14.

**F Sept 3:** Hebrews and Phoenicians

*Readings*: Perry, chap 1, docs 6-8, pp. 18-24

**M Sept 6:** Labor Day (no class)

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

**W Sept 8:** Minoans and Mycenaeans

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

**F Sept 10:** The rise of the Greek *polis*

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

**M Sept 13:** 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.

**W Sept 15:** Greek society and culture **(Short paper #1 due)**

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

**F Sept 17:** Close reading – *Clouds*

*Readings*: Aristophanes, *Clouds*, first half

**M Sept 20:** Close reading - *Clouds* (cont.)

*Readings*: Aristophanes, *Clouds*, second half

**W Sept 22:** The Hellenistic world

*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>)

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

**F Sept 24:** The rise of the Roman republic

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

**M Sept 27:** Crisis and civil war **(Short paper #2 due)**

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

**W Sept 29:** The imperial world

*Readings*: Perry, chap. 3, docs. 3-4 and 6-7, pp. 77-82 and 89-94; Tacitus, “The Rebellion of Boudicca” **(on Blackboard)**

**F Oct 1:** Rome and the world

*Readings:* Pliny the Elder, *Natural History: A Selection*, trans. John F. Healy (New York, 1991), pp. 42-71 **(on Blackboard)**

**M Oct 4:** The fall of Rome?

*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/>).

**W Oct 6:** Religion in the late Empire

*Readings*: Perry, chap. 4, docs. 1-2,(Gospel according to Saint Matthew, Tertullian, Clement) and first part of doc. 3 (Jerome), pp. 104-10

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

**F Oct 8:** **Mid-term exam**

**M Oct 11:** Fall break (no class)

**W Oct 13:** Early monasticism

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

**F Oct 15:** Close reading – Augustine

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

**M Oct 18:** Close reading - Augustine

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

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

**W Oct 20:** Byzantium: heir to Rome in the East

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

**F Oct 22:** The rise of Islam

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

**M Oct 25:** ‘Barbarian’ Europe

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

**W Oct 27:** ‘Barbarian’ Europe (cont.)

*Readings*: *Beowulf*, second half

**F Oct 29:** The Roman church: a new order?

*Readings*: Perry, chap 5, doc. 4 (Bede), pp. 131-133; Benedict, *Rule for Monasteries* (**on Blackboard**)

**M Nov 1:** Charlemagne and the dream of Empire

*Readings*: Perry, chap 5, doc. 5 (Einhard, Charlemagne), pp. 133-136; Einhard, *Life of Charles the Great* (**on Blackboard**)

**W Nov 3:** Carolingian society

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

**F Nov 5:** Carolingian society (cont.)

*Readings*: Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*, second half

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

**M Nov 8:** Invasion and recovery **(Short paper #2 due)**

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

**W Nov 10:** Crusades and Conquest

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

**F Nov 12:** 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 15:** Enemies Within

*Readings*: Perry, chap. 4, doc. 5 (Chrysostom), pp. 114-117, and chap. 6, docs. 4 and 6 (Frederick, Albert, Libel of Ritual Murder, Maimonodes), pp. 149-151 and 154-157; and “The Albigensian Crusade” (**on Blackboard**).

**W Nov 17:** Artistic and scholastic revivals

*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 (Gregory, Aquinas), pp. 143-146, 151-154

**F Nov 19:** Women in Medieval Society **(Short paper #3 due)**

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

**M Nov 22:** Thanksgiving break (no class)

**W Nov 24:** Thanksgiving break (no class)

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

**F Nov 26:** The calamitous fourteenth century: war, famine, schism, and plague

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

**M Nov 29:** 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*, excerpts (**on Blackboard)**

**W Dec 1:** Tradition and innovation: the Italian Renaissance

*Readings*: Perry, chap 7, docs. 1-3 (Petrarch, Bruni, Mirandola, Machiavelli), pp. 176-187.

**F Dec 3:** Did women have a Renaissance?

*Readings*: Laura Cereta, *Letters* (**on Blackboard**)

**M Dec 6:** New Worlds and Last Thoughts

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

**W Dec 8:** **Final exam**

**W Dec 15: Final paper due at noon**