



Western Civilization to 1648 (Late Start)

Fall 2017 (9/14/17 – 12/14/17)

Instructor: Nick Perrone

Course: History 4.1

Course Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4 – 6 PM

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-4

Class Location: Emeritus Hall 1678

nperrone@santarosa.edu

Introduction and Requirements:

This course is a survey of the history of western civilization from its beginning through the Renaissance. Emphasis will be on analyzing the major social, political, economic and cultural forces that have shaped European societies.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course you should be able to: 1. Analyze the significant developments in the history of western civilization to 1500, including political, economic and cultural aspects. 2. Investigate and analyze primary historical evidence relating to ancient, medieval and early modern western history, including textual documents, artifacts and visual images. 3. Present interpretations and analysis of historical events and issues in ancient, medieval and early modern western history by assessing secondary and primary historical evidence, including identification of multiple perspectives, quotation of sources, and evaluation of arguments.

Your performance will be evaluated based on your ability to: 1. Analyze the development of the major historical patterns and ideas that have shaped ancient, medieval and early modern western history. 2. Critically evaluate historical evidence from the ancient, medieval and early modern periods of western history, including secondary and primary sources. 3. Analyze the chronological development of Western Civilization from the fourth millennium B.C.E. through the 16th century.

Full and informed participation (attending class, keeping up with all assigned readings, and actively engaging with discussions) is expected of all students and will comprise 20% of the grade. Two short papers will yield 20% (each) of your grade. 20% of your grade will come from the midterm. The last 20% of the grade will be drawn from the final examination. Please be aware that there will be no late assignments accepted in this class. Failure to hand in any assignment by the deadline will result in a failing grade on that assignment. A word on e-mail: I will do everything in my power to respond to

student e-mails as quickly as I can (within 24 hours, whenever that's possible). That said, I will not accept any assignments via e-mail unless you have made arrangements with me prior to the due date. And I warn you that I don't always check e-mail more than once a day.

There will be numerous reading assignments and I will expect you to keep up with the readings from class meeting to class meeting. I will frequently ask you to draw upon the assigned reading in order to participate in class discussions. Some weeks will have more reading than others so be prepared to get a head start on some of the longer reading assignments.

I will provide study guides for the midterm and final one week before the exams. I will provide a prompt for the paper one month before the due date. I will also provide a writing guide for the paper. Writing is one of the most important components of the course. You will be graded on how well you organize and construct a coherent and persuasive argument throughout your paper. Furthermore, you should demonstrate that you comprehend the material we have covered, and can draw on your ability to think critically. If you have problems writing the paper and have struggled with writing in the past please consult the Writing Center (<https://english.santarosa.edu/writing-center-0>) before you contact me for advice on the basic mechanics of writing a good paper. Remember that spelling and grammar will be considered in your final grade.

Attendance:

In order to receive an A for this class you must attend all of the lectures/discussions. The exams and paper will draw from both the readings and the lectures. The more classes you miss the lower your grade will be.

Electronic Devices:

I will allow laptops in the class exclusively for note-taking. Please do not check email, facebook, twitter, or other websites during the class. I understand that you think that these actions will affect no one, but when you are on a website or looking at pictures on facebook everyone behind you is looking at your screen. Please be respectful of the instructor and your colleagues, and refrain from browsing the internet during class.

I will not allow any audio recordings during the class. Recording requires the consent of all students in attendance as well as the instructor.

Special Needs and Emergencies:

If you need disability related accommodations for this class, such as a note taker, test taking services, special furniture, etc., please provide the Authorization for Academic Accommodations (AAA letter) from the Disability Resources Department (DRD) to the me as soon as possible. You may also speak with me privately during office hours about your accommodations. If you have not received authorization from DRD, it is recommended that you contact them directly. DRD is located in the Bertolini Student Center on the Santa Rosa campus, and Jacobs Hall on the Petaluma Campus.

Similarly, in the event of serious illness, personal injury, death in the family, or other personal crisis, I will be sympathetic and flexible with assignments if you alert me quickly. A belated excuse for missing class, an exam, or failing to submit a paper will not suffice. For all medical excuses, you will need to provide appropriate and clear written documentation.

Academic Honesty:

Please make sure that all of your work is your own. Plagiarism is a serious violation and all students who violate the academic code of conduct with regard to plagiarism will be referred to the appropriate school officials for discipline. Please refer to this document for tips on avoiding plagiarism (<https://student-conduct.santarosa.edu/code-conduct-0>).

Plagiarism can result in academic probation and expulsion from the college. If you are ever in doubt about whether or not you should cite a source, err on the safe side and cite it. One paper is not worth jeopardizing your academic career. Please utilize these wonderful resources for more information on how you can avoid plagiarism:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/930/01/>.

Discussions:

Because this is a hybrid course, some of our work will be done online. This makes it imperative that you complete the assigned readings and answer the discussion questions before we physically meet on Saturday. You will not be required to answer all of the questions provided in the syllabus. I will tell you which ones to focus on for in-class and online discussions. Answering the questions is not necessarily all you need to do in order to receive full credit. You need to be sure to have some measure of analysis in your answer. I don't simply want you to report back what the sources said, but do some critical reading and demonstrate that you have the ability to think critically.

You also need to have an argument. This is a good way to think about approaching any writing at the college level. We are beyond the point where you just need to prove that you did the reading. I don't want a book report, but instead I want you to demonstrate that you have the ability to construct an argument from the reading. If I ask about the similarities and differences between slaves and indentured servants, you should be able to make an argument about the nature of unfree labor (was it good? Was it bad? Were there winners and losers? If so, who were they? Was race an issue? If so, why? If not, why not?) The point here is that you can take any number of positions and make a convincing argument. This is the beauty of historical writing. There is not just one single right answer, there are a number of right answers (there are also wrong answers). There are a number of ways to make a convincing argument.

And this leads us to our final part of the argument, you must support your argument with evidence. We all have opinions, but they mean a lot less without evidence to support them. You can say that aliens built the pyramids, but without evidence it doesn't make for a very compelling argument (and you sound crazy). You should be able to find the primary source evidence that you need to support your arguments in the assigned readings. What you saw on the History Channel, or what your friend told you is not

evidence. These are not academic or primary sources. And since this is a college level course, you should be able to demonstrate that you can utilize college level sources.

Finally, be sure to make thoughtful, well-reasoned comments to your colleagues. Try and actually engage with the argument. You can be critical as long as you are constructive, respectful, and polite. Also, you will always lose points for being late or not following directions.

A Note on Terminology:

This is just a bit of guidance to help you navigate the sometimes-perilous subject of historical terminology. Some of the readings use the term “negro” when referring to African Americans. Most of these readings are from the nineteenth century or earlier. From the 1970s forward, that term falls out of favor with the people that it was used to describe, and thus becomes outdated and, in most cases, inappropriate. You should only use the term “negro” in quotes, as I have done, and only when referring directly to how people used the term in the past. It would be best to use the term African Americans at all times, unless directly quoting a text. The term “negro” is no longer appropriate and is offensive. The term African American did not exist in the nineteenth century or before, and the word “negro” was the most popular and, at the time, appropriate word for referring to Americans of African descent. Times have changed and that term is no longer appropriate.

The same goes for “colored people.” This term is no longer appropriate to use. It was used through the 1960s, but has really been out of favor and become offensive in the last 40 years. If you need to describe all racial minorities in one fell swoop, then the term “people of color” is best. But, you should try and distinguish between racial and ethnic groups at all times. The experiences and situations of minority groups is almost never the same, and thus you should use extreme caution when using the term anyhow.

I don’t make the rules, but you should be aware of what is and is not appropriate out in the wider world. Stick with “African Americans” and “people of color” and you should be alright. There are far more nuances to these terms, and more terms that are appropriate or even better to use under certain circumstances, but for now these are a couple good rules to get acquainted with.

Here is a good article to help explain the change over time and place:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2014/03/30/295931070/the-journey-from-colored-to-minorities-to-people-of-color> (Links to an external site.)

The same rules apply when referring to Hispanics (people who come from Spanish speaking countries), Latinx (people who come from Latin America), and Chicanx (people of Mexican origin). Confused? That’s alright, we’ll have a chance to discuss these terms and many more as we move through the course. Here’s a quick video to help you out if you need it: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/hispanic-latino-latinx-difference_us_57e40929e4b0e28b2b52b15e

One more note on terminology while we're at it. Please do not use the term "illegals" when referring to a person or group of people you believe to be in the United States without documentation. Only very serious misbehavior is generally considered "criminal" in our legal system. Violations of less serious laws are usually "civil" matters and are tried in civil courts. People accused of crimes are tried in criminal courts and can be imprisoned. Federal immigration law says that unlawful presence in the country is a civil offense and is, therefore, not a crime. The punishment is deportation (<http://www.tolerance.org/immigration-myths>). If you think about it, we don't even call people who have committed the most heinous crimes "illegal." People cannot be "illegal," simply by existing in a place where they are not citizens. Or better yet, people simply cannot be "illegal."



Course Texts:

The required books are listed below and available for purchase at the campus bookstore, or, if you prefer, via online vendors, and have been placed on reserve at the library.

Required:

Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*, (Schocken Press, 1995) ISBN 9780805210309

Reza Aslan, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, (Random House, 2014) ISBN 9780812981483

Miri Rubin, *The Middle Ages: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford University Press, 2014) ISBN: 9780199697298

Ross King, *Brunelleschi's Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture*, (Bloomsbury, 2013) ISBN 9781620401934

Recommended:

Cole, et.al., *Western Civilizations: Their History and Their Culture* (Brief Third Edition) (Vol. 1) (W.W. Norton, 2011) ISBN 9780393934885

A Note on the Readings:

The assigned readings are required. This course does not have one main textbook, but rather four different books that will cover different periods from antiquity through the Renaissance. If you need more context and detail to a broader swath of events and individuals in this period, then I recommend that you consult the *Western Civilizations* book listed above, or any other reputable textbook on this first survey of Western civilization. You can buy, rent, or view online this book from a variety of purveyors. It is widely available. We are covering a lot of territory in this class so a textbook like this is a good place to have some relative grounding as we move through roughly three centuries of complex history. The course is designed so that I will provide the textbook material

through my lectures and our in-class discussions. I believe that this method is more productive for a survey class such as this.

The books by Reza Aslan and Miri Rubin will be used to write the two short papers. These papers will have prompts distributed about three weeks before the paper is due. We will also have some writing workshops in class to help guide your progress. I will provide a writing guide and supporting documents in advance of both papers.

Some weeks we will have short articles or book chapters to read. Be sure to refer to the syllabus for the links to all of these readings.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, buy the books!!!!!! (or rent them, or check them out from the library, or download them for free from a sketchy Russian website that will steal your identity and crash your computer) I am not particularly concerned with how you get the books. You will need the books to complete this course. There is no reason to wait until week three to purchase the books. If you are purchasing the books from an online purveyor that promises to deliver the books within three weeks, then be sure to have a way to access the assigned readings in the interim. If you email me to inform me that your books “are on the way” you will not receive an extension on your assignments. If you fall behind it can be difficult to catch up. If you get your books early, you will decrease your risk of falling behind.

One final reminder. This is a late-start course, so we will be completing the same amount of work that you would complete in a full semester, but in less time. This is an abbreviated course, but that does not mean that we will have less reading, writing, or discussion. If you do not think that you will be able to dedicate the necessary time to be successful in this course, please consider dropping the class. If you do choose to remain in the class then be prepared to stay on top of the readings and assignments. These classes go faster than you think and it can be very difficult to catch up, especially in a late start class.

Schedule:

Week One: Introduction/Origins of Western Civilization (3000-1200 BCE)

9/19 Syllabus/Course Introduction

9/21 Mesopotamia and Egypt

Reading: Pomeroy Preface & Ch. 1; ([Atrhasis: An Account of the Great Flood](#), [The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Flood](#))

Week Two: The Iron Age (1200-500 BCE)

9/26 The Assyrians & Persians

9/28 Discussion – Popular Portrayal of East v. West

Reading: Pomeroy Ch. 2 & 3; Herodotus: Histories ([The Persian Wars](#))

Week Three: Greek Civilization (1100-387 BCE)

10/3 Greek Identity

10/5 Sparta and Athens

Reading: Pomeroy Ch. 4 & 5; Sophocles, [Antigone](#)

Week Four: The Hellenistic World (387-30 BCE)

10/10 Hellenistic Culture

10/12 Alexander the Great

Reading: Pomeroy Ch. 6 & 7, Plutarch, [Alexander](#), Zealot Part I

Week Five: The Rise of Rome (753-27 BCE)

10/17 Roman Identity

10/19 The Roman Republic

Reading: Pomeroy Ch. 8 (online primary sources: [The Twelve Tables](#), Tacitus - [Germania](#)), Zealot Part II

Week Six: The Roman Empire (27 BCE – 284 CE)

10/24 Augustus and the Empire

10/26 The Roman Peace

Reading: Pomeroy Ch. 9 & 10 (online secondary source: [The Gospel according to Mary Magdalene](#)), Zealot Part III

Week Seven: Late Antiquity

10/31 The Christian Empire

11/2 **Paper #1** (due at the beginning of class)

Reading: Write your paper

Week Eight: The Eastern Mediterranean (500-1000)

11/7 Justinian and the Revival of the Eastern Empire

11/9 The Rise of Islam

Reading: Rubin Ch. 1; (online primary source: TBD)

Week Nine: The Kingdoms of Western Europe (500-1000)

11/14 The Western Church

11/16 **Midterm**

Reading: Rubin Ch. 2 & 3; (online primary source: [Pope Gregory VII: Letter to Bishop Herman of Metz](#))

Week Ten: The High Middle Ages (1000-1300)

11/21 The Crusades

11/23 The Growth of Royal Authority Thanksgiving (No Class)

Reading: Rubin Ch. 4; Geraldine Heng “The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages,” (article online);

Week Eleven: Reversals and Disasters (1300-1450)

11/28 Famine and Plague

11/30 **Paper #2** (due at the beginning of class)

Reading: Rubin Ch. 5, 6 & 7 (online primary source: [Giovanni Boccaccio: from The Decameron](#))

Week Twelve: The Renaissance in Northern Europe and Italy (1350-1550)

12/5 New Cultural Expression

12/7 The Medici and Florence

Reading: King Ch. 1-4 (online primary source: [Christine de Pisan: from The Book of the City of Ladies](#))

Week Thirteen: Reform in the Western Church (1490-1648)

12/12 Reform and Colonization

12/14 **FINAL** (Same time and place as regular class)

Reading: King Ch. 8-12 (online primary source: Ibn Battuta: from The Travels)

***Please note that this syllabus will change as we move through the semester. Inevitably, some discussions and topics will require more discussion than originally planned. This depends on a number of factors including but not limited to class dynamics and current events. I will add and subtract readings depending on the circumstances.**