

Syllabus, Western Civilization 1

Rutgers University, Newark

1. Course and Instructor Information

Semester: Fall 2018

Time: Tuesdays, 2:30pm to 5:20pm

Location: Smith 241

Identifiers: Unit 21, Subject 510, Course 201, Section 1

Credits/Hours: 3

Instructor: Ray Ojserkis, PhD

Contact: ray.ojserkis@gmail.com

Office: Conklin 326, Tuesdays 1:00pm to 2:00pm, and by appointment

2. Synopsis

We will survey western civilization from the era before writing until 1700, reviewing selected social, political, economic, and military affairs. Key themes will include human origins, creation of agricultural societies, development of monotheism, Greek humanism, the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, Christianity, Latin Christendom in the medieval era, the Renaissance, European-based global empires, and the Scientific Revolution.

3. Goals

Our goals include

- A. basic knowledge of development of western civilization, especially its broad patterns
- B. familiarity with some common interpretations of the history of western civilization
- C. ability to engage critically with others who often do not share the same interpretations of events
- D. familiarity with use of primary sources, especially the connections between the author's goals and his or her arguments and his or her method of argumentation
- E. improved skills in synthesizing and communicating historical information, and constructing sound arguments

4. Grading Policy

Your course grade will be determined by weighting the graded components as follows:

Unannounced Reading Quizzes: 25%

Debate Notes: Cancels two lowest reading quiz grades.

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final (non-cumulative) Exam: 25%

Research Essay: 25%

Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

If you are absent or tardy your score for a quiz or exam will be an F unless the absence is excusable. According to the Rutgers catalog, “The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.” Documentation will be required.

5. Classes

Class sessions will be used for quizzes, examinations, debates, and lectures. Each lecture will detail a historic topic, as listed in the schedule below, and for each of these topics I will post a handout to Blackboard listing key points we’ll discuss. Some of these handouts will include primary reading in addition to that assigned below.

Learning can be a collaborative process, and I will involve the class in discussions. Never feel that your comments or questions aren’t appreciated.

6. Primary Sources

Primary sources are first-hand accounts, often created by participants or witnesses of events, and sometimes created by first-recorders of events. Examples include, but aren’t limited to, memoirs, speeches, documents, data, polls, and contemporary newspaper accounts. Secondary sources are sources created by people who didn’t participate or witness events, but often have the benefit of perspective, and typically draw from a variety of sources to create a nuanced and complex history that can account for multiple interpretations. Examples include history books and lectures.

We’ll try to balance the lectures by reading primary sources in our out-of-class reading. You will access the primary sources through hyperlinks in the schedule below.

Be prepared to discuss primary sources in class.

6. Research Essay

Your research essay will address a question from a list posted to Blackboard.

Write your essays using MS Word, and email them to me at the address above. I will not accept printed copies of your essay.

I will submit the essay to plagiarism software, and mark essays using Track Changes in MS Word. If you're not sure what plagiarism is, consider this: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>. Cite a source every time your essay makes use of an idea, quote, anecdote, study, or fact that you found in someone's work.

I call the essay a “research essay” to emphasize that the quality of your essay is largely dependent upon the quality of your research. Use at least four scholarly articles or published books. The phrase “at least” means you are allowed and encouraged to use more than four sources. The length of the essay should be 1,500 to 2,500 words.

Cite your sources wherever you rely on them, using footnotes, parenthetical notes or end notes. Be very specific when citing a source, using either the Chicago, APA, or MLA format throughout. For details, please consult the [Rutgers Library Guide](#). Cite a source every time you make use of someone's ideas.

7. Drop and Withdrawal Deadlines

The last date for students to drop a course with no penalty is September 11th, 2018, and the last date to withdraw from a course with a "W" grade is November 5th, 2018.

8. Academic Integrity Agreement and Honor Pledge

On all examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading, you will be required to sign the following statement:

On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).

9. Information for Students with Disabilities

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information, please contact the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219, by phone at [973-353-5375](tel:973-353-5375) or by email at odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu.

7. Calendar

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNED READING (to be done before class)
1	Sep 4	Humans Before Written History	n/a
2	Sep 11	Neolithic Revolution	<i>(Because humans weren't writing yet, our written accounts this week are secondary sources.)</i> Patricia Cohen, History That's Written in Beads as Well as Words, NYT, 2011 Jared Diamond, The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race, Discover, 1987
3	Sep 18	Mesopotamia and Hebrews	Advice of Akkadian Father to His Son, c. 2200 BCE Abraham Seeks to Convert Terah <i>(occurred approx. 2100-1900 BCE, according to much later written account)</i> Wikipedia article containing tale of Abraham & Idol Shop Hammurabi's Code, 18th century BCE <i>(Don't try to memorize: understand principles of the code.)</i>
4	Sep 25	Classical Greece	The Polity of the Athenians, c. 424 BCE Plato, The Allegory of the Cave (c. 380 – 360 BCE) Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, c. 340 BCE
5	Oct 2	Rome: from Republic to Empire	Appian, On The Civil Wars, excerpt: The Gracchi (describes events from 134 to 121 BCE) Tacitus, The End of the Republic (describes events before and during reign of Augustus, 27BCE to 14CE)
6	Oct 9	Roman Society, Fall, and Rise of Christianity	Laws of the Twelve Tables, c. 450 BCE Julian Marriage Laws Tacitus, Germania, late 1st century CE
7	Oct 16	Midterm Exam	n/a
8	Oct 23	Medieval Europe	King Clovis (of the Franks), Salic Law, c. 500 CE de Vitry, Life of the Students at Paris, 12th or early 13th centuries Boniface VIII, Clericis Laicos, 1296 Statute of the Laborers, 1351
9	Oct 30	Renaissance <i>(Also, pick debate topics.)</i>	Ascanio Condivi on Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel Vasari, Life of Leonardo Da Vinci, 1550 <i>Also, come to class with a suggested debate topic. Hope for a quiz, because these are the easiest readings of the semester.</i>
10	Nov 6	Oceanic Voyages, Mercantilism, and Global Empires	King Ferdinand's letter to the Tainos, c. 1493/4 Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olandah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Chapter 2 R. Hakluyt, Discourse on Western Planting, 1584

11	Nov 13	Debates, Part 1	If you are on a team debating today, email your notes by midnight today (after the debate). The notes must have citations – a list of sources does not constitute citations. Use footnotes each time you make use of an idea or fact that you read.
	Nov 20	No Class – Rutgers University Newark is on a Thursday schedule	
12	Nov 27	Debates, Part 2 <i>(Class is on Tuesday this week only.)</i>	If you didn't debate last class, you will debate in this class. Email your notes by midnight today (after the debate). The notes must have citations – a list of sources does not constitute citations. Use footnotes each time you make use of an idea or fact that you read.
13	Dec 4	Reformation and Counter-Reformation	J. Hus, <i>Final Declaration</i>, 1415 Lorenzo de Medici letter to his son, Cardinal Giovanni de Medici, c. 1489 J. Calvin, <i>Necessity of Reforming the Church</i>, Excerpt: <i>Reformation Required Without Delay</i>, 1543
14	Dec 11	Scientific Revolution	N. Copernicus, <i>Dedication of the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies</i>, 1543 K. Popper, <i>Science As Falsification</i>, 1963 <i>(This is a hard reading. Take your time.)</i>
	Dec 12	Research Essay due <i>(We don't have class this day.)</i>	Wikipedia, <i>Plagiarism</i> Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy
	TBD	Final Exam	n/a