

## History of Western Civilization I

21:510:201

Monday & Thursday

8:30 – 9:50 a.m.

Conklin 342

Instructor: Katherine Sinclair

Email: [kms557@history.rutgers.edu](mailto:kms557@history.rutgers.edu)

Office:

Office hours:

This course provides a broad survey of western civilization, from the adoption of agriculture and creation of writing systems in the Fertile Crescent to the Peace of Westphalia and the expansion of modern states in the 1700s. We will discuss cultural, philosophical, and technological developments during this time period, and focus on the many ways that “western civilization” was created by interactions beyond the boundaries of Europe. We will also look at primary source material from each period we discuss, in order to learn how historians interpret and form arguments from historical documents.

In order to keep us grounded during this course, the cities of Byzantium/Constantinople/Istanbul, Toledo, and London will serve as touchstone points to which we will return periodically in class lectures. We will see Constantinople become the grand capital of the Byzantine Empire, and learn about its transformation into Istanbul, the cosmopolitan capital of the thriving Ottoman Empire. We will watch Toledo, the “city of three cultures,” transform from a hub of Christian learning to an important Arabic cultural center, and then to an outpost of the Spanish Reconquista and Inquisition. And finally, we will witness London grow from a provincial outpost of the Roman Empire to one of the world’s most powerful centers of science and commerce.

### Learning Goals

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Be familiar with the broad patterns and major historical events of the development of western civilization.
2. Be able to link historical patterns to contemporary events, and understand what these connections can tell us about our world today.
3. Be able to interpret and critically engage with written primary sources.
4. Be able to create and defend an original historical argument with evidence drawn from primary source documents.

### Textbook

- Brian Levack et al., *The West: Encounters and Transformations, Vol. 1*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. [ISBN: 9780134260280]
- Other course readings and supplementary materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Copies of the textbook will be available from the university bookstore, and can also be found through online retailers. You are welcome to use an earlier edition of the textbook [ISBN: 9780205948598] if it is more accessible to you.

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

- Attendance/participation and reading quizzes: 20%
- Primary source responses: 20%
- Primary source essay: 20%
- In-class midterm exam: 20%
- Final exam: 20%

Short, multiple-choice reading quizzes will be used to take attendance on certain days, in order to ensure that you are keeping up with required reading in the textbook; these quizzes will not be announced in advance.

Primary source responses are short (~500 words) responses describing and analyzing primary source readings. These responses will draw from class discussions and will be submitted online before the next class. You will complete six responses total during the semester, and your lowest grade will be dropped.

Your primary source essay will be a ~5 page essay that analyzes one of the primary sources we discuss in class. You may draw from material that you wrote in a response paper, but I expect an original argument that incorporates three or more secondary sources (academic articles, academic books, or other scholarly works). Primary source essays will be submitted via email or blackboard in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format.

### **Grading Scale**

A	90 or higher
B+	87 – 89.99
B	80 – 86.99
C+	77 – 79.99
C	70 – 76.99
D	60 – 69.99
F	59.99 and lower

### **Attendance Policy**

Because lectures will often diverge from material covered in the textbook, regular and prompt attendance is vital to this course. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you know that you will miss class ahead of time, please contact me as soon as possible. Official Rutgers policy states that excused absences 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.” Excused absences will not count against your attendance grade. However, any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences risks not earning credit in this class. These students are encouraged to withdraw from the course to avoid a failing grade.

### **Academic Integrity**

The work that you submit in this course should always be your own, and contributions from other authors and sources must always be properly cited. The History Department requires that the following honor pledge is written and signed on examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

For more information, please see the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>.

### **Drop and Withdrawal Deadlines**

The last day to drop this course without it appearing on your transcript is Tuesday, September 10. The last day to withdraw from this course for a “W” is Monday, November 4.

### **Rutgers Newark Writing Center**

Writing is an important component of this course, and an important skill to develop for your academic and professional future. The Writing Center of Newark, located in Room 126 of Conklin Hall, offers free individual tutoring and writing workshops for all students currently enrolled in courses on the Rutgers-Newark campus. You are encouraged to make at least one appointment at the Writing Center during the semester to take advantage of these services.

### **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. You may find guidelines for required documentation here: <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 website at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

For more information, please visit the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, Suite 219 or contact [odsnewark@rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@rutgers.edu).

### **Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance**

Rutgers faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. Rutgers has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University.

Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 10.3.12) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak with a staff member who is confidential and does not have this reporting responsibility, you may contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at (973)-353-1918, or at [run.vpva@rutgers.edu](mailto:run.vpva@rutgers.edu). Learn more about the office here: <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/vpva>.

## Course Schedule

### Notes:

- “Levack et al.” refers to readings from your textbook, *The West: Encounters and Transformations*, vol. 1. Textbook readings must be completed by the beginning of the class for which they are assigned.
- Primary source readings will be discussed at length in class, so you should familiarize yourself with the readings beforehand. Certain primary source readings will be optional; I will specify these optional readings

### Week 1

Thursday, 9/5 – What is “Western Civilization?”

### Week 2

Monday, 9/9 – Early Civilizations

- Levack et al., chapter 1

Thursday, 9/12 – The Written Word

- Advice of an Akkadian father to his son:  
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/2200akkad-father.asp>
- The Precepts of Ptah-Hotep: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/ptahhotep.asp>
- Hammurabi’s Code [on Blackboard (Bb)]

### Week 3

Monday, 9/16 – The International Bronze Age

- Levack et al., chapter 2

Thursday, 9/19 – Monotheism

- Hymn to Aten [Bb]
- Exodus, excerpts [Bb]

### Week 4

Monday, 9/23 – Greek Civilization

- Levack et al., chapters 3 and 4 (selections)

Thursday, 9/26 – Athens, Sparta, Persia

- Xenophon, *The Polity of the Spartans*, excerpts:  
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/xeno-sparta1.asp>
- Herodotus, *Histories*, excerpts – The Persians Reject Democracy:  
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/herodotus-persdemo.asp>
- Plato, *Republic* (excerpts) [Bb]

## Week 5

Monday, 9/30 – Rome: from Republic to Empire

- Levack et al., chapter 5 and 6 (selections)

Thursday, 10/3 – On the Fringes of Empire

- Tacitus, *De Germania*, excerpts [Bb]
- Roff Smith, “London’s Big Dig Reveals Amazing Layers of History,” *National Geographic Magazine*, February 2016:  
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/02/artifacts-found-under-london-archaeology/>

## Week 6

Monday, 10/7 – The Breakdown of the Roman Empire

- Levack et al., chapter 7

Thursday, 10/10 – The Birth of Christianity

- The Gospel of Matthew, excerpts [Bb]
- Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule*, excerpts [Bb]
- **Midterm Review**

## Week 7

Monday, 10/14 – **MIDTERM**

Thursday, 10/17 – The Birth of Islam

- Levack et al., chapter 8 (selections)
- The *Qu’ran*, excerpts [Bb]
- The Pact of Umar, excerpts [Bb]

## Week 8

Monday, 10/21 – The Latin West

- Levack et al., chapter 9

Thursday, 10/24 – An Age of Conversions

- Chronicle of 754, excerpts [Bb]
- Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam, *Narrative of the Conquest of Al-Andalus*, excerpts [Bb]
- Speech of Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont, two accounts [Bb]

## Week 9

Monday, 10/28 – Medieval Civilization, from Consolidation to Crisis

- Levack et al., chapters 10 and 11 (selections)

Thursday, 10/31 – Medieval Society

- Jacques de Vitry, “Life of the Students at Paris”: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/vitry1.asp>
- The Trial of Joan of Arc, excerpts: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/1431joantrial.asp>
- Christine de Pizan, excerpts from selected works [Bb]

## Week 10

Monday, 11/4 – The Renaissance and Beyond

- Levack et al., chapter 12

Thursday, 11/7 – Renaissance Society

- Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, excerpts [Bb]
- Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, excerpts [Bb]
- Vasari, *Life of Leonardo da Vinci*: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/vasari1.asp>

## Week 11

Monday, 11/11 – Global Encounters

- Levack et al., chapter 13

Thursday, 11/14 – The Costs of European Expansion

- Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, excerpts [Bb]
- The Code Noir, [Bb]
- Michel de Montaigne, “That It Is Folly to Measure Truth and Error by Our Own Capacity,” *Essays* [Bb]

## Week 12

Monday, 11/18 – The Reformation

- Levack et al., chapter 14 (selections)
- Martin Luther, selected letters [Bb]

Thursday, 11/21 – Shifting Identities in Early Modern Society

- Jean de Coras, *Arrest memorable*, excerpts [Bb]
- Eric Dursteler, “Fatima Hatun née Beatrice Michel,” in *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Johns Hopkins University Press (2011) [Bb]

## Week 13

Monday, 11/25 – An Age of Religious Strife

- Levack et al., chapter 15

Tuesday, 11/26 – **Class will not meet.** Work independently on your primary source paper.

#### **Week 14**

Monday, 12/2 – Expansion of State Control

- Levack et al., chapter 16 and 17 (selections)
- **Primary Source Paper due by 11:59 p.m.**

Thursday, 12/5 – The Global Scientific Revolution

- Isaac Newton, *Principia*, excerpts [Bb]
- Simon Schaffer, “Newton on the Beach: The Information Order of *Principia Mathematica*,” in *History of Science* 47.3 (2009), 243-276.

#### **Week 15**

Monday, 12/9 – What is modern?

- **Final Exam Review**

**Final Exam:** Monday, 12/23, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m., location TBD