

Syllabus, Western Civilization 1

Rutgers University, Newark

1. Course and Instructor Information

- Semester:** Fall 2020
Time: Thursdays, 6:00pm to 9:00pm (*This is a synchronous online course.*)
Location: Rutgers Blackboard
Identifiers: Unit 21, Subject 510, Course 201, Section 63
Credits/Hours: 3
Instructor: Ray Ojserkis, PhD
Contact: ray.ojserkis@gmail.com
Office: Email to set up a meeting in Blackboard.

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, Neolithic 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 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:** 20% (lowest two grades automatically dropped)
Exam 1: 20%
Exam 2: 20%
Exam 3: 20%
Research Essay: 20%

Your five letter-grades will be converted to numerical equivalents, using the Rutgers letter-grade scale:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Numerical Equivalent</u>
A	4.0
B+	3.5
B	3.0
C+	2.5
C	2.0
D	1.0
F	0.0

These numbers will be summed. For example, if you have a C+, A, A, C, and B on the five components, your total points are:

$$2.5 + 4.0 + 4.0 + 2.0 + 3.0 = 15.5$$

This is the table for converting the sum to a course grade:

18.75 ≤	A	≤ 20
16.25 ≤	B+	< 18.75
13.75 ≤	B	< 16.25
11.25 ≤	C+	< 13.75
7.5 ≤	C	< 11.25
2.5 ≤	D	< 7.5
0.0 ≤	F	< 2.5

The example above yields a **B** course grade.

(Note: only grades divisible by 0.5 are possible, and therefore the sum of your five components will also be divisible by 0.5.)

Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will have missed more than a quarter of the class time and will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the course to avoid an F.

If you are absent or tardy your score for an 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. Course Materials

A. Lecture Handouts (We review these in class.)

For each topic listed in the course schedule there will be a handout in the “Course Documents” section of our Blackboard course. Each handout will have a list of key arguments and terms that we’ll discuss. Many also have maps, tables, contemporary newspaper cartoons, and/or primary source readings in addition to those assigned in the links in the schedule.

The handouts are in MS Word, and some students take notes directly in their own copies of the handouts.

B. Primary Source Documents (You read these before class.)

You will access these through links on the schedule below. PDF versions are also posted in Blackboard.

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. We will discuss, and sometimes read, sections of the readings in almost all classes.

6. Research Essay

Your research essay will address one of the following questions.

- A. Why did early civilizations arise in river valleys?
- B. What was daily life like in Sumerian city states?
- C. At what time did Christianity become a distinct faith, rather than a sect of Judaism? How did this happen?
- D. To what extent did Greek civilization grow from civilizations in the Middle East?
- E. Why were the Greeks able to defeat two major Persian invasions during the years 492 BCE to 479 BCE?
- F. What were the core ideas of the Sophists in classical Greece?
- G. To what extent was Polybius correct in his assessment of why the Romans defeated the Carthaginians? Were there important factors that he did not include in his analysis?

- H. Should we regard Cicero's contributions to Roman politics as generally positive?
- I. What were the successes and failures of Queen Boudicca's revolt against Roman forces?
- J. Who was more important for the development and spread of Christianity: Paul or Constantine?
- K. Why did the church in Rome and the church in Constantinople excommunicate each other in 1054 CE?
- L. What were the causes and effects of the Baltic Crusades?
- M. What were the causes and effects of the medieval focus on punishing "witchcraft?"
- N. Why is William of Ockham famous?
- O. What effect did gunpowder have on European wars and politics from 1250 to 1400 CE?
- P. What were the effects of Vasco Da Gama's journey to India?
- Q. To what extent did the church in Rome reform itself during the "Catholic Reformation?"
- R. How revolutionary was the Scientific Revolution?

Write your essay using MS Word, and email it to me at the address above.

I will submit the essay to plagiarism software. 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 14th, 2020, and the last date to withdraw from a course with a "W" grade is November 2nd, 2020.

8. Academic Integrity Policy and Honor Pledge

This is the Rutgers academic integrity policy:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

On each examination, and on your research essay, you will be required to agree to the following statement:

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

9. Accommodation and Support Statement

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

For Individuals with Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to [University Policy 10.2.7](#) for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University's Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at <http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/>.

For support related to interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a **confidential resource** and does *not* have an obligation to report information to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out *TAO at Rutgers-Newark* for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: <https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO>.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.

10. The Writing Center

The Writing Center (<http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter>) offers writing tutoring and writing workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in Rutgers-Newark. Their tutors work to help students become more independent readers and writers capable of responding well to the demands of writing within the university. Writing Center services are free for students.

11. Technology Resources

Rutgers has created a page that explains “technology resources for Rutgers students, including information about web conferencing, learning management systems, and getting help with technology services and systems.”

Here is the link: <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/technology-resources-for-students/>

If you have unresolved technology questions, please contact OIT-Newark Help. Support is available via phone, web, or email. Here is the link for contact information: <https://runit.rutgers.edu/hd/>.

7. Calendar

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNED READING (to be done before class) Use the links, or the PDFs on Blackboard.
1	Sep 3	Humans Before Written History	<i>n/a</i>
2	Sep 10	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 17	Mesopotamia and Hebrews	Advice of Akkadian Father to His Son, c. 2200 BCE Abraham Seeks to Convert Terah (<i>occurred approx. 2100-1900 BCE, by later estimate</i>) Wikipedia article containing tale of Abraham & Idol Shop Hammurabi's Code, 18th century BCE (<i>Don't memorize: understand principles of the code.</i>)
4	Sep 24	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 1	Exam 1	Review your notes on lectures on primary sources.
6	Oct 8	Rome: from Republic to Empire	Appian, On The Civil Wars, excerpt: The Gracchi (<i>describes events from 134 to 121 BCE</i>) Tacitus, The End of the Republic (<i>describes events before & during Augustus's reign, 27BCE to 14CE</i>)

7	Oct 15	Roman Society, Fall, and Rise of Christianity	Laws of the Twelve Tables, c. 450 BCE Tacitus, Germania, late 1st century CE Epictetus, The Discourses (an excerpt), c. 108 CE
8	Oct 22	Medieval Europe, part 1	Las Siete Partidas: Laws concerning warfare and the military, c. 1265 Boniface VIII, Clericis Laicos, 1296
9	Oct 29	Medieval Europe, part 2	de Vitry, Life of the Students at Paris, 12th or early 13th centuries Marchione di Coppo Stefani, The Florentine Chronicle, 1370s or 1380s Statute of the Laborers, 1351
10	Nov 5	Exam 2 (non-cumulative exam)	Review your notes on lectures on primary sources after Exam 1.
11	Nov 12	Renaissance	Vasari, Life of Leonardo Da Vinci, 1550 A Condivi, Michelangelo Paints the Sistine Chapel, 1553
12	Nov 19	Oceanic Voyages, Mercantilism, and Global Empires	Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494 King Ferdinand's letter to the Tainos, c. 1493/4 Journal of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India (claims, possibly intentionally, that locals are Christians) Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Chapter 2
	Nov 26	No Class: Thanksgiving break	Enjoy the holiday.

13	Dec 3	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, 1543
14	Dec 10	Scientific Revolution	N. Copernicus, <i>Dedication of the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies</i>, 1543 K. Popper, <i>Science As Falsification</i>, 1963. (This is a hard reading. Take your time.)
	Dec 11	Research Essay due <i>(We don't have class this day.)</i>	Wikipedia, <i>Plagiarism</i> Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy
	Dec 17	Exam 3 (@ 6:20pm) (non-cumulative exam)	Review your notes on lectures on primary sources after Exam 2.