

Cedar Crest College
Department of History, Law, and Politics
Fall 2009

History 107. European Civilization: Ideas and Experiences
(An E-Companion Course)

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This course is an introduction to the historical foundations of European civilization from Classical times (Greece and Rome) to the age of the Scientific Revolution, the expansion of European power across the globe, and the emergence of recognizably “modern” nation-states. Because it is necessary to survey the experience of Europeans, and those they encountered elsewhere, over nearly two thousand years of recorded history, this course is selective rather than all inclusive in its subject matter. Our primary attention is directed to the ideas, values, and beliefs that shaped crucial moments or periods over this great expanse of historical time. These guiding ideas are articulated in the texts we will read. My lectures will complement the texts we read and will place particular emphasis on those events or experiences which proved most crucial in shaping the ideas and beliefs we are considering. Class discussion will provide every student with the opportunity to express her own reaction to the works we are reading and to respond to other students’ ideas.

We’re Supposed to Remember All this Stuff?
My Head’s Already Beginning to Hurt.

Salvator Rosa, Democritus in Meditation, 1660
(Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen)
<<http://www.wga.hu/art/r/rosa/democrit.jpg>>



Course Objectives

1. an appreciation of Western history as a panorama of human experience, shaped by ideas and beliefs which can be apprehended and understood through a critical, but simultaneously sympathetic, approach
2. an understanding of how the finite historical experience of human beings, in a given period of time, can be retrieved through written texts, though artistic representation, and through places, objects, and artifacts;
3. an improved sense of the chronology and geography of crucial chapters in the human past;
4. a better sense of what history is (and isn't), what historians do, how they think, and how they explain what they have thought about, and why the past, however distant, always remains "alive";
5. an enhanced understanding of the interaction among different civilizations and cultures over a broad expanse of historical time, through discovery and conquest, military conflict, material and commercial exchange, and religious and intellectual influences; in short, a sense of history as a global phenomenon.

Assessment

Achieving these outcomes requires regular attendance, completion of the reading assignments, participation in class discussion, two hour-long tests, and a final examination. The dates for the hour tests are indicated below, and we will discuss in advance of the tests what you will be responsible for and how you can best prepare. The same holds for the Final.

Your progress in achieving the course outcomes will be assessed as follows: each hour test—20 percent; the final exam—35 percent; attendance, participation, and overall contribution—25 percent (but see the attendance policy below). Regardless of mathematical averages, failure to complete any of the course components will result in an "F" for the semester.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at each class. 5 or more unexcused/unexplained absences will reduce your course grade by one-half a letter grade (e.g., a "B" will drop to a "B-"). 8 or more such absences will reduce the course grade by a full letter grade (a "B" will drop to a "C"). If you accumulate 10 unexcused/unexplained absences, you will receive an "F" for the semester.

According to College policy, your obligations for this course include attendance at the final exam, on the day and time scheduled by the Registrar's Office. Do not make travel arrangements until the final exam schedule is published. If you must make plans early, schedule your travel after the last final exam day.

Texts

The textbook is Donald Kagan, Steven Ozment, and Frank M. Turner, The Western Heritage, Volume 1 (to 1740), Prentice Hall, ninth edition (2007), ISBN 0131950681.

Specific reading assignments in The Western Heritage are listed on the accompanying handout.

The other required readings are:

Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound and Other Plays, Penguin paperback, ISBN 0140441123

St. Augustine, Confessions, Penguin paperback, ISBN 014044114X

Machiavelli, The Prince, Penguin paperback, ISBN 0140449159

Erasmus and Luther, Discourse on Free Will, Frederick Ungar paperback, ISBN 0804461406

René Descartes, Discourse on Method and Related Writings, Penguin paperback, ISBN 0140446990

The E-Companion Site

By enrolling in the course, you have also enrolled in the E-Companion section. The E-Companion site is accessed at <http://cedarcrestonline.net>. You must use your Cedar Crest GroupWise address for enrollment in the E-Companion site. To log on, enter your Student Identification Number and your personal password. If this does not bring you to the E-Companion welcome page, contact the Registrar's Office so that the problem can be corrected. Do not ask me to correct any problems you are having; take the problems to the Registrar.

Outlines for each week's classes are available at the E-Companion site. You may find it convenient to print these notes in advance of class, if for no other reason that it will save us valuable class time. I will provide further instructions for accessing the E-Companion site for this course at our first class meeting. Students who encounter difficulty in printing the class notes can ask for assistance at the IT Office.

Schedule of Class Sessions

24.08 Class Organization

I. Classical Civilization (Read The Western Heritage, chaps. 2-5)

26.08 Isn't History Something That's Over and Done With?

28.08 Video: The Greeks—Crucible of Civilization, part 1

31.08 Law, Politics, War—Greek Style

02.09 Video: The Greeks—Crucible of Civilization, part 2

04.09 Religion, Philosophy, Drama; **Discussion of Prometheus Bound**

07.09 Labor Day (No Class)

09.09 The Limits of Athens' Genius and Power

11.09 Video: The Greeks—Crucible of Civilization, part 3

14.09 The Expansion of the World: Alexander and the Conquest of the East

16.09 Rome as a Republic

18.09 The Crisis of the 1st Century BC and the End of the Republic

21.09 Rome as the First World Empire

23.09 The Problem of Christianity and the Fall of the Roman Empire

25.09 The Legacy of Classical Civilization

28.09 Test I (Covers Everything We've Done So Far)

II. The Middle Ages (Read The Western Heritage, chaps. 6-9)

30.09 Video: Secrets of the Dark Ages, part 1

- 02.10 Opting Out: Monasticism and the Cloistered Life
- 05.10 Theology and Philosophy; **Discussion of the Confessions**
- 07.10 Feudalism, Chivalry, and Courtly Life
- 09.10 The Clash of Civilizations: Christianity, Islam, and the Crusades
- 12.10 Fall Break (No Class)**
- 14.10 The Transfer of Knowledge from East to West
- 16.10 The Revival of Urban Life: The Commercial Revolution

III. The Renaissance (Read The Western Heritage, chap. 10)

- 19.10 New Departures in Thought and Learning: Humanism as a Way of Life
- 21.10 The Political Culture of the Italian City State
- 23.10 President Ambar's Inauguration (No Class)**
- 26.10 The Study of "Power"; **Discussion of The Prince**
- 28.10 What Europe Knew of the Wider World: Philosophy, Geography, and Navigation
- 30.10 Video: The Conquistadors, part 1
- 02.11 Video: The Conquistadors, part 4
- 04.11 The Consequences of Discovery: Disease, Slavery, and Wealth
- 06.11 Test 2 (Covers Everything since Test 1)**

IV. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation (Read The Western Heritage, chaps. 11-12)

- 09.11 Complaints and Challenges inside the Church
- 11.11 Video: Martin Luther—part 1, The Attack on Rome and Its Church
- 13.11 Video: Martin Luther—part 2, The Spread of Luther's Rebellion
- 16.11 The Battle of the Texts; **Discussion of the Discourse on Free Will**
- 18.11 John Calvin and the Widening Reformation
- 20.11 The Catholic Reformation and the Counter-Reformation
- 23.11 Ideological Passions Unleashed: The Wars of Religion
- 25/27.11 Thanksgiving Holiday (No Classes)**

V. The Age of Reason and Science (Read The Western Heritage, chap. 14; okay to skip chap. 13)

30.11 Was There a “General Crisis” of Confidence in the 17th Century and How Was It Met?

02.12 Reason, Logic, Mathematics; **Discussion of the Discourse on Method**

04.12 The New Understanding of the Universe: How Decisive a Break with the Past?

07.12 Video: The Ascent of Man—The Starry Messenger

08.12 Last Class/Wrap Up (**Friday Schedule**)

Final Examination

Other Course Policies

Classroom Protocol: Each student has the right to a learning environment free of interruptions, distractions, and inconsiderate or uncivil behavior. Accordingly, cell phones and all other electronic/digital communication and entertainment devices are to be turned off during class. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Honor Philosophy: This course is conducted in accord with the College Honor Philosophy, as detailed in the Student’s Guide for 2009-10. Any work that you submit in this course must be original, including answers and essays on tests and exams. Texts, notes, crib sheets, and all other printed, written, or electronic aids to recall and recognition are prohibited when tests are being taken. All electronic devices, for communication, imaging, or other purposes, are similarly prohibited. Any student who employs any of the preceding aids while taking a test in this course will receive an “F” for the semester.

Documented Learning Disability: Please refer to the Student’s Guide for 2009-10 for the resources the College makes available to assist students. If special accommodations are needed in class, you should discuss these with me in the first two weeks of the semester.



What Does this Picture Tell Us? Diego Velázquez’s Painting (1635) of the Surrender at Breda, an Episode in the 80 Year-Long War between the Dutch and the Spanish (Prado, Madrid).
<<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/velazquez/breda.jpg>>