Course Description:

This course offers an introduction to the history of Europe, focusing on the Middle Ages (c. 450-1450) and the early modern period (c. 1450-1800). We begin with some coverage of ancient Greece, Rome, and early Christianity, which will assist us in understanding what took place during the periods of European history called “medieval” and “early modern.”

Today, we often use the term “medieval” as a synonym for backwardness. The Middle Ages, however, witnessed developments of fundamental significance for contemporary societies: the propagation of the most popular religion on the planet (Christianity), the separation of church and state, the establishment of universities, experimentation with scientific procedure, as well as conflict and exchange between Christian and Islamic communities.

“Early modern” refers to a period often considered as the birth of the modern world. Its origins are located in the fifteenth century (sometimes earlier, sometimes later) with the advent of the printing press (1450), the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks (1453), and Christopher Columbus’s discovery of the New World (1492). Its closing boundary is often located sometime in the eighteenth century, with the beginning of the French Revolution (1789) and the Industrial Revolution. In between these two poles, the European world witnessed a period of transformation through nothing less than the Italian Renaissance, the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, the Scientific Revolution, and the Age of Discovery and Expansion, to name a few.

While this course centers on developments taking place in Europe, we also will consider why this period has significance not only for Europe but also for the world as a whole.

Required Texts:


**Recommended Texts:**

Students need only buy the two required texts listed above. For the texts listed below, students may choose either to purchase their own copies (any edition is fine) or to print the readings from an online source. Because all of the books below can be purchased cheaply through online used-book retailers, students may find purchasing their own copies of these texts to be the most economical choice. Regardless, students must bring a hard copy of the assigned readings to each class discussion. No laptops in class.

Augustine. *City of God*.
Bocaccio. *Decameron*.
Columbus, Christopher. *The Four Voyages*.
Descartes, René. *Discourse on Method*.
Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Praise of Folly*.
Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative*.
Las Casas, Bartolomé. *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*.
Luther, Martin. *On Christian Liberty*.
More, Thomas. *Utopia*.
Pascal, Blaise. *Pensées*.
Teresa of Ávila. *The Book of her Life*.
Voltaire. *Candide*.

**Optional Reference Works:**

While Wikipedia serves as a useful first reference to learn about things unfamiliar to us, we cannot cite it within formal papers. Please feel free to use Wikipedia for your own edification, BUT if you need to provide a citation for a paper, check the following sources instead:


**Prerequisite:**

All I expect in this class is a willingness to be diligent. Students need not have taken any history course prior to this one.
Grading and Requirements:
The instructor will evaluate students’ performance based upon three factors:

- **Attendance and Active Participation** constitute 20% of the student’s grade.
  - Attendance alone does not produce a strong grade; students are expected to attend class and participate actively; in addition to contributing in class, students can also participate through e-mail consultations and attending office hours
  - Students will sign an attendance sheet upon arrival in class; unexcused absences will detract from a student’s grade, as will late arrivals to class
  - Students who demonstrate the appropriate documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter) may bring laptop computers or other necessary devices to class; otherwise, no laptop computers, cell phones, or other electronic devices are allowed in class; students will bring hard copies of the required readings to class

- **Two Response Essays (600-750 words each)** constitute 40% of the student’s grade (20% each).
  - Essays address the assigned reading for a given class. Students should spend approximately one page crafting a concise summary of one of the readings. In that space, the student should explain what s/he considers the main point or purpose of the text and what elements of the text contribute to it. The second page can address one of a number of things: 1) how the given reading offers a similar or different perspective on a theme that has arisen in a previous class, 2) how the given reading relates to the other reading for the same meeting, 3) what was surprising about the given reading, etc.
  - Due to the instructor before the class in which the given reading is assigned (either via e-mail or hard copy in person); students can choose to respond to the readings for any meeting in the semester; given the flexibility of this assignment, there will be no extensions; in order to avoid leaving these papers for the semester’s end, students will complete at least one paper before fall break and (if necessary) another before Thanksgiving break
  - Students may and are encouraged to seek the assistance of the instructor; they may submit one essay draft to the instructor (at least 72 hours before the deadline); the instructor will require many students (possibly all) to rewrite their papers and resubmit them; should the re-written essay receive a higher grade, it will replace the original grade

- **One Country Project** constitutes 10% of the student’s grade
  - At the beginning of the semester, each student will select a country in Europe that s/he will “follow” throughout the semester
  - For each week, the student will conduct a small amount of research in order to learn something about what took place in the given country during the period of history examined during that week
  - At the end of the semester, the student will submit a document with at least fifteen entries, each of which need be no longer than a few lines

- **One Final Project** constitutes 30% of the student’s grade
Option 1 (Take-home essay: 3,000-4,000 words): Two weeks prior to the end of the term, the instructor will circulate a set of essay prompts; with instructor approval, students may also write about a different topic

- In answering the essay prompts, students will draw upon several topics covered over the course of the term
- Students may and are encouraged to seek the assistance of the instructor; they may submit a draft to the instructor (at least one week before the deadline)

Option 2 (Wikipedia entry & analytical essay: 1,500-2,000 words): No less than three weeks prior to the end of the term, the student will approach the instructor to discuss a Wikipedia entry (or a portion of one) that s/he would like to edit or create

- Because this project involves independent research (with the instructor’s guidance), the length of this option is less than the take-home essay; the 1,500-2,000 words include both the new text of the entry and an essay explaining changes/additions in content

**Schedule of Classes:**

Reading selections average 150 pages per week. The class meetings consist of both lecture and discussion, with the bulk of class time dedicated to the latter. If students wish to have additional background, I encourage them to begin by consulting the preliminary list of reference works listed above.

**Ancient Greece**

- Wed., Sep. 5: Introduction & The Study of History
  - Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, Chapter 1 (selection)

- Fri., Sep. 7: New Foundations
  - Plato, Apology & Crito (BB)

**Roman Republic & Empire**

- Mon., Sep. 10: Ideal & Decay of the Republic
  - Polybius, History (BB)
  - Sallust, The War with Catiline (BB)

- Wed., Sep. 12: Cicero & Caesar
  - Cicero, Handbook on Canvassing (BB)
  - Augustus, Record of His Accomplishments (BB)

**Early Christianity**

- Fri., Sep. 14: Religion & the Roman State
  - Gospel according to Matthew (BB)
  - Eusebius, Life of Constantine (BB)
- Mon., Sep. 17: St. Augustine
  - Augustine, City of God (BB: Bk I, preface, Ch I; Bk XIV, Ch 28 – Bk XV, Ch 6; Bk XIX, Ch 1-6, 12-15)

The Middle Ages

- Wed., Sep. 19: Monasticism
  - Gregory’s Account of Benedict’s Life (RWC)
  - Bede, Lives of Abbots (RWC)

- Fri., Sep. 21: Charlemagne and the Carolingians
  - Einhard, The Life of Charlemagne (RWC)
  - Regino of Pruem, On the Breakdown of the Carolingian Empire (RWC)

- Mon., Sep. 24: Feudalism & Manorialism
  - Lords, Vassals, and Tenants in the Norman Summa de legibus (RWC)
  - Exchange of Female Serfs (RWC)
  - The Manor of Alwalton (RWC)
  - Bills of Sale for Saracen Girl Slaves (BB)

- Wed., Sep. 26: NO CLASS (Yom Kippur)

- Fri., Sep. 28: Growth of Towns
  - Grant of a Market to the Archbishop of Hamburg (RWC)
  - Regulations of the Shearers Guild of Arras (RWC)
  - John of Viterbo, On the Government of Cities (RWC)
  - Grant of Land and Privileges to Jews (BB)

- Mon., Oct. 1: Separation of Church & State
  - The Life of the Emperor Henry IV / Henry IV’s position (RWC)
  - Dictatus Papae (RWC)
  - Concordat of Worms (RWC)

- Wed., Oct. 3: Crusades
  - Urban II, Speech at the Council of Clermont (RWC)
  - Letter of Innocent III to the Crusaders (RWC)
  - A Christian-Muslim Debate (BB)

- Fri., Oct. 5: Twelfth-Century Renaissance
  - Anselm, Prayers and Meditations (RWC)
  - Letter of Heloise to Abelard (RWC)
  - Bernard of Clairvaux, On Women, Marriage, and Celibacy (RWC)

- Mon. Oct. 8: Universities
  - Teaching Obligations in the Faculty of the Arts, Paris (RWC)
  - Raymond Lull, On the Study of Oriental Languages (RWC)
  - Jacques de Vitry, Life of the Students at Paris (BB)
- **Wed., Oct. 10: Religion, Philosophy, & Science**  
  - Thomas Aquinas, *On Christian Theology* (RWC)  
  - Ibn Rushd (Averroës), Selections from *On the Harmony of Religions and Philosophy* (BB)  
  - Roger Bacon, *On Experimental Science* (BB)

- **Fri., Oct. 12:** Independent Visit to Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM)

- **Mon., Oct. 15:** Mysticism and Renewal of Religious Life  
  - Francis of Assisi, *Rule of the Friars Minor & Testament* (RWC)  
  - Thomas of Celano, *Life of St. Francis* (RWC)

- **Wed., Oct. 17:** Class Visit to AMAM

- **Fri., Oct. 19:** Heresy and Suppression  
  - Peter Waldo, *Accounts of His Conversion and Translation of Scripture* (RWC)  
  - Jordan of Saxony, *On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers* (RWC)  

**Mon., Oct. 22 – Fri., Oct. 26:** **NO CLASS** (FALL BREAK)

- **Mon., Oct. 29:** Babylonian Captivity & the Great Schism  
  - Boniface VIII, *Clericis Laicos* and *Unam Sanctum* (RWC)  
  - Manifesto of the Cardinals against Urban VI (RWC)  
  - Letters of Catherine of Siena to Popes Gregory XI and Urban VI (RWC)

- **Wed., Oct. 31:** The Black Death & Early Italian Renaissance  
  - Matteo Villani, *Descriptions of Plague in Florence* (RWC)  
  - The Peasants' Revolt, England (RWC)  
  - Boccaccio, *Decameron* (BB)

The Renaissance & Reformation

- **Fri., Nov. 2:** Daily Life  
  - Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

- **Mon., Nov. 5:** Humanism as Political and Social Commentary  
  - Machiavelli, *The Prince* (BB)  
  - More, *Utopia* (BB)

- **Wed., Nov. 7:** Class Visit to AMAM

- **Fri., Nov. 9:** Christian Humanism and the Early Reformation  
  - Erasmus, *Julius Excluded from Heaven* (BB)  
  - Luther, *Letter to Pope Leo X* (BB)
- Mon., Nov. 12: Luther & Calvin
  o Luther, On Christian Liberty (BB)
  o Calvin, Institutes (BB)

- Wed., Nov. 14: Catholic Responses
  o Loyola, Constitutions of the Society of Jesus (BB)
  o Valdés, Instructions for Spanish Inquisitors (BB)

- Fri., Nov. 16: Religious Life
  o Teresa of Avila, The Book of her Life (BB)

Early Exploration and Colonization

- Mon., Nov. 19: Exploring and Claiming a New World
  o Columbus, Letters (BB)
  o Alexander VI, Inter caetera (BB)

- Wed., Nov. 21: Establishing and Reforming the European Presence
  o Las Casas, Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies (BB)
  o Paul III, Sublimis Deus (BB)

- Fri., Nov. 23: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Scientific Revolution

- Mon., Nov. 26, Theories of the Heavenly Bodies & the Church
  o Copernicus, Dedication of the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies (BB)
  o Galileo, Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany (BB)
  o Bellarmine, Letter on Galileo’s Theories (BB)

- Wed., Nov. 28: The New Science and Faith
  o Descartes, Discourse on Method (BB)
  o Bossuet, Letter to a Disciple of Malebranche (BB)

Enlightenment & Revolution

- Fri., Nov. 30: Education
  o Voltaire, Candide (BB)
  o Hume, On Miracles (BB)
  o Kant, What is Enlightenment? (BB)

- Mon., Dec. 3: Religious Responses
  o Locke, Reasonableness of Christianity (BB)
  o Pascal, Pensées (BB)

- Wed., Dec. 5: Slavery
  o Wesley, On Slavery (BB)
- Fri., Dec. 7: Governance
  o Hobbes, Leviathan (BB)
  o Locke, Two Treatises on Government (BB)

- Mon., Dec. 10: Counter Enlightenment?
  o Bossuet, Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture (BB)
  o The Trial and Confession of Elizabeth Sawyer, The Confessions of Johannes Junius, & The witch-hunt at Eichstaett (BB)

  o Rousseau, The Social Contract (BB)

- Fri., Dec. 14: Conclusion