

History 100: Western Thought to 1600

University of Massachusetts Amherst
Prof. Brian W. Ogilvie
Teaching Assistants: Mr. Andre Cotton & Ms.
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Fall Semester 1998

Lecture: MW 10:10-11:00, Herter 227

Discussion:

Section 1, F 9:05-9:55, Herter 112

Section 2, F 10:10-11:00, School of
Management 106

Section 3, F 12:20-1:10, School of
Management 106

Section 4, F 1:25-2:15, School of
Management 5

Section 5, F 10:10-11:00, Stockbridge 114

Section 6, F 12:20-1:10, Machmer W-21

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This syllabus is an important document! Please read it carefully! You are responsible for all the policies set out in the syllabus.

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Hours: MTu 1:30-3:00, and by appointment. If you cannot come to scheduled office hours, please don't hesitate to make an appointment or to drop by.

Contact information for Mr. Cotton and Ms. McCaman was not available when the syllabus was xeroxed. It will be announced in discussion sections.

This syllabus is also available on the World Wide Web at the following URL:
<<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ogilvie/courses/fall98/100/index.html>>.
Updates to the syllabus, handouts, and assignments will be posted to this web page.

Brief course description

This course has two related purposes:

First, we will be reading classics of ancient Greek, ancient Roman, medieval, and Renaissance philosophy and literature, as a means of introduction to the Western intellectual tradition. This will necessarily be a selective introduction. My goal is not to "cover" all of Western thought in the last two and a half millennia—that would be impossible to do in a lifetime, let alone a semester. Instead, we hope to introduce you to the range of literature in this tradition and look at the ways in which different writers have dealt with some similar problems.

Second, we will consider the ways in which the Western tradition has been repeatedly reconstructed, as succeeding generations of thinkers turned to the past with new interests and aims. Classics, the "great books," are made, not born: from the variety of conflicting views expressed by past thinkers, societies select those which seem to offer guidance when confronting contemporary problems. This means that the interpretation of classic works can change dramatically as social and intellectual conditions change.

Course goals

The course description, along with the course schedule below, gives you an idea of the

subject matter addressed by this course. At the end of the course, you should be familiar with the texts we are reading, the ideas that they raise, and the historical contexts that produced them. As an educated woman or man living in a western society, you will find this knowledge to be helpful in understanding our common culture and the differences which separate us from the past.

The course has another goal: to help you learn to think historically. What does it mean to “think historically”? Historians might disagree on a precise definition, but they would all agree that historical thinking involves these three attitudes or skills:

- Understanding human actions and thoughts in the context which produced them. The historian’s cardinal sin is *anachronism*, which means a confusion of time. Every human society, past and present, has its own values and ways of thinking, and they are often very different from our own. For example, the ancient Greeks used the word “democracy” to describe one kind of government, but their notion of “democracy” is, in many respects, very different from our own. Avoiding anachronism means understanding the past on its own terms.
- Exercising critical judgment about what you read and hear. “Critical judgment” does not mean always being negative. Rather, it means that you should always weigh and consider the validity of what you have been told, in light of the source’s possible biases and the strength of its argument. Historical sources are like legal testimony and argument: they aren’t always true or convincing. The historian, like a judge, has to weigh and consider his or her sources and decide whether they are reliable.
- Knowing how to use historical sources—texts and objects—as evidence to make an argument about what happened in the past. History is imagination disciplined by evidence. Historians want to know not only *what* happened in the past, but *why* it happened and what its consequences were. Historical sources are the building blocks of historical explanation, but they must be interpreted.

To reach these goals, you will have to engage in “active learning.” If your high-school history classes involved nothing more than reading the textbook, listening to the teacher, memorizing names and dates, and regurgitating these facts in papers and tests, you are in for a surprise. History is much more interesting than that. But you will have to work: to think about the lectures and readings, and participate actively in discussions.

Your goals for the course

You have just read my goals for the course. You should now take the time to reflect on those goals and think about any others you might have. Everyone takes a college course for a reason: it might be simply to fulfill a distribution or a major requirement, but you probably have other reasons: otherwise you could have taken another course that meets those requirements. In the space below, you can write the reasons *you* are in this course and any goals on which you wish to concentrate during it.

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Course structure

Lectures, by Prof. Ogilvie, take place on Mondays and Wednesdays. Discussion sections will be held on Fridays and will be led by Mr. Cotton and Ms. McCaman. Both lectures and discussions are crucial parts of the course, and attendance at both is required. Reading necessary to understand the lectures will be assigned in conjunction with that lecture, but all the readings for a week will be discussed on Fridays. If you fall behind in the readings during the week, you should catch up by Friday in order to be prepared for discussion.

Each component of the course has a different purpose. The textbook is intended to provide you with general background: that is, a context for understanding the lectures and the other readings. The other readings are contemporary documents and works of literature and philosophy. They are really the center of the course: by reading these texts, you will grapple with the sources of the Western intellectual and cultural tradition. The lectures will address difficulties in the readings, provide a context for them, and discuss problems of historical method. Finally, the discussion is a forum for you to clarify any points you don't understand and deepen your comprehension of the ideas with which the course deals.

Education specialists sometimes denigrate lectures as a form of "passive learning." In their view, a lecturer imparts information to students, who merely take it in. But effective attendance at a lecture requires more than passive absorption. You should think about what the lecture is about, distinguish important points from illustrative examples, and take careful notes. You should also ask yourself—and, if it seems important, the lecturer—any questions you might have. You should take the same approach to your reading. If you do this, you will have no problem finding something to say in the discussions; on the contrary, you will find that an hour goes by very quickly!

An electronic mailing list will be an *optional* component of the course. Students who have electronic mail addresses will be able to e-mail questions about the readings and lectures to Prof. Ogilvie. He will respond with answers that go out to the entire mailing list. Periodically, questions and answers will be posted to the course web page for students who do not have an electronic mail account. The WWW page is accessible from any campus computing lab (see p. 1 of this syllabus for the web address).

Course requirements, assignments, and grading

This course is an introductory survey. It has no prerequisites and requires no background in history or Western thought. Some of the readings are difficult, but they will be explained so that everyone can understand them, and discussions will help you deepen your understanding. But the course is not easy. You will need to consistently do the readings and attend class regularly in order to pass. To succeed in this class, you should plan to spend five to eight hours every week reading and studying. Some weeks won't require that much; other weeks may require more.

There are five basic requirements for the course:

1. Attendance at lectures and discussion sections.

Lecture and discussion are essential components of the course. In past semesters, students who missed class frequently have earned low grades. If you must miss a class, you should inform Prof. Ogilvie, Mr. Cotton, or Ms. McCaman in advance of the reason, or provide documentation (such as a note from the doctor) afterwards. You may send e-mail or leave messages on Prof. Ogilvie's voice mail or with the History Department (545-1330). Athletes should present a complete schedule of the days they will miss by September 23. If a religious holiday will prevent you from attending class, please inform Prof. Ogilvie, Mr. Cotton, or Ms. McCaman by September 23.

Students who do not attend the first lecture and discussion will be withdrawn from

the course and will need to petition to be readmitted.

2. Reading all assignments.

There will be occasional quizzes on the readings in lectures and discussion sections. If you have done the readings, the questions will be straightforward. The quizzes will also be used to monitor attendance at lectures.

3. Two papers.

Two short (4-5 page) papers will be required. Paper topics will be announced September 21 and November 16. A first draft of the first paper will be due **October 7**; a revised version two weeks later, on **October 21**. The second paper will be due on **December 2**. Papers will be graded on content (what you say), organization (how effectively you say it), and style (how clearly you say it). Comments on the papers will refer to Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Bedford Books, 1995), the style manual used in the College Writing course.

4. Two examinations.

A midterm examination will be given on **November 2**. The final will be given during exam week. The exact date will be announced after the exam schedule has been published. You will receive a study guide in advance of both exams.

5. Short, pass-fail assignments.

In addition to the two papers and two exams, each of which will receive a letter grade, there will be several short assignments. These will be graded pass-fail: it is important to hand them in and to try your best on them, but they don't need to be perfect (see below).

Grading system

The grading system used in this course is more complex than that often used in college courses. I think it is also more fair, because it distinguishes between assignments that develop skills and knowledge and assignments that test your mastery of those skills and knowledge.

There are two kinds of assignments in this course: graded assignments (two papers and two exams) and ungraded assignments (quizzes, in-class writings, and short homework assignments). The graded assignments will be graded on the standard UMass system (A, AB, B, etc.). The non-graded assignments will be graded Pass/Fail. An assignment that is not turned in, be it graded or non-graded, will receive a failing grade. You will also receive a grade for attendance and participation.

To receive a particular letter grade in this course, you must (a) earn that grade as an average on your graded work, and (b) pass a corresponding percentage of your ungraded assignments. The **lower** grade corresponding to your work will be assigned. The following table explains the system:

| Graded Average | P/F Assignments Passed | Course Grade |
|----------------|------------------------|--------------|
| A | 93-100% | A |
| AB | 88-92% | AB |
| B | 83-87% | B |
| BC | 78-82% | BC |
| C | 73-77% | C |
| CD | 68-72% | CD |
| D | 60-67% | D |
| F | < 60% | F |

Examples: Suzie Student averaged "BC" on her graded work and passed 85% of her P/F assignments. She will receive a BC for the course. Joe College averaged "AB" on his graded work and passed 71% of his P/F assignments. He will receive a CD for the course.

As these examples show, not doing the ungraded work can significantly hurt your final course grade.

The **philosophy** behind this grading system is that the ungraded assignments are important parts of the course. In the aggregate, completing them successfully is necessary for learning everything that History 100 is supposed to teach. However, each individual ungraded assignment isn't going to make or break your course grade, and you should not feel under pressure to excel on each of them. They are not busywork; they will teach you the skills that you will need to do well on the graded assignments. In fact, putting effort into the ungraded assignments will improve your grade on the papers and exams.

The **graded average** will be determined according to the following criteria:

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| Attendance and participation in discussion: | 25% |
| Two papers @ 20% each: | 40% |
| Midterm examination: | 15% |
| Final examination: | 20% |

Examination point scores, not letter grades, will be used when calculating course grades. In other words, a high B (87%) will be worth more than a low B (83%).

Grading is one of the major sources of anxiety among college students (I know, I was one not too long ago!). My grading system is designed so that your course grade reflects, as accurately as possible, mastery of the course goals. The assignments, in turn, will be structured to help you master those goals. Please don't hesitate to talk to me or your TA if you are concerned about the grading system or your grade.

Policy on late assignments

With up to 120 students in this course, Prof. Ogilvie, Mr. Cotton, and Ms. McCaman have to plan their grading schedule carefully. Therefore, late assignments will be penalized.

Pass-Fail assignments will not be accepted more than two days late, except for the draft of the first paper, which will be accepted up to a week late (but you will then have much less time to react to comments).

Papers will lose one-half letter grade for each day that they are late, unless a different due date is arranged in advance.

Examinations may be made up only if the absence is arranged and a make-up date is scheduled in advance. Exceptions will be made only in the case of medical emergencies, and documentation will be required.

Quizzes cannot be made up.

Policy on academic honesty

Plagiarism is grounds for failure in the course. Plagiarism consists of either (a) copying the exact words of another work without both enclosing them in quotation marks and providing a reference, or (b) using information or ideas from another work without providing credit, in notes, to the source of the information or ideas. Submission of a paper copied from another work, or which contains fictitious or falsified notes, will result in automatic failure of the course. Please refer to the *Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities* booklet for the University's full policy on academic honesty.

Why is plagiarism so bad? Learning depends on trust--the student trusts the teacher to know the subject and to teach about it clearly, and the teacher trusts the student to show evidence of learning through exams and other assignments. Plagiarizing a paper breaches that trust. It is also theft of someone else's intellectual property.

Books for course

The following paperback books are available for purchase at Food for Thought Books

(106 N. Pleasant, Amherst). Most of them are also on reserve in the DuBois Library. You are advised to purchase all the books early in the semester, because bookstores begin to return unused copies around the middle of the semester. I have tried to select the least expensive editions.

The Holy Bible, King James Version (New York: Ivy Books, 1991). \$6. Feel free to use your own Bible if you have one.

Anthony Esler, *The Western world: A narrative history*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, *Prehistory to 1715* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996). \$22.40

Seamus Heaney, *The cure at Troy: A version of Sophocles's Philoctetes* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990). \$10.

The Rule of St. Benedict in English, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1982). \$3.

The Poem of the Cid, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957). \$12.

Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno of Dante*, trans. Robert Pinsky (New York: Noonday Press, 1996). \$8.

Martin Luther, *Christian liberty* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1943). \$3.50.

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The prince*, ed. and trans. David Wootton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995). \$3.

Thucydides, *On justice, power, and human nature: The essence of Thucydides' "History of the Peloponnesian War,"* ed. and trans. Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993). \$8.

In addition, there is a **required** course packet at Campus Design & Copy (Student Union 401-403, M-F 9:30 AM-5 PM). This packet contains the rest of the readings for this course. There will be a few copies of the packet on reserve.

Every college student should own a good dictionary. I recommend the *American Heritage College Dictionary* (ISBN 0-395-67161-2), which costs about \$24, but there are less expensive dictionaries. The readings for this course will occasionally have unfamiliar words, and you need to know what they mean.

A note on readings

This course has two different kinds of readings. The textbook, Anthony Esler's *Western World*, is intended to give you an overview of Western history and to provide background for readings. The book doesn't have the full-color photos, elaborate diagrams, and other bells and whistles of many modern textbooks. However, it has three advantages over other textbooks: it is concise, inexpensive, and most importantly, well-written.

The other readings are *primary sources*: prose and poetry written in the time we are studying. These sources can show us how people in the past understood their world. Because the interests and concerns of the men and women who wrote them aren't the same as ours, primary sources need to be *interpreted* by historians. Many of the lectures will address the problems of understanding primary sources.

You should plan to read each selection twice: once to get an overview, and a second time to take notes on the main points. Before the discussion, you can then go over your notes and skim the text a final time to make sure you have not missed anything.

It is important to take careful notes. You will find it much easier to write papers and study for the exams if your notes are well organized and easy to read. This is true of lecture notes as well as reading notes. If you are not sure how to take notes efficiently,

Learning Support Services (DuBois Library, 10th floor) offers a Note Taking Workshop several times each semester. They also offer workshops in time management and test taking should you feel in need of help in those areas.

For students who are interested in pursuing the course topics in more depth, I have indicated optional readings after the course schedule. These readings are not on reserve. If you check them out of the library, please return them as soon as you are done so that other students may use them. The textbook also contains extensive suggestions for further reading.

N.B. The edition of Dante's *Inferno* that is on reserve contains the same translation as the one in the bookstore, but the pagination is different because it contains illustrations. The reading assignments from Dante are given by canto rather than by page numbers.

Course schedule, with assignments and readings

Wed. 9/9 **Lecture—Introduction to Western Civilization**

Fri. 9/11 **Discussion**

Reading: read the syllabus carefully; handout from Wednesday.

*** P/F assignment no. 1 (in-class writing) ***

Mon. 9/14 **Lecture—The origins of civilization**

Reading: Esler, ch. 1.

*** P/F assignment no. 2 distributed ***

Wed. 9/16 **Lecture—Dark Age and Archaic Greece**

Reading: Esler, ch. 2, pp. 32-40; Reader, pp. 1-16 (Homer, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*).

Fri. 9/18 **Discussion**

*** P/F assignment no. 2 due ***

Mon. 9/21 **Lecture—Athenian democracy**

Reading: Esler, ch. 2, pp. 40-59; Reader, pp. 17-40 (Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens* and *Politics*).

*** P/F assignment no. 3 distributed ***

*** First paper assignment distributed ***

Wed. 9/23 **Lecture—The Peloponnesian War**

Reading: Thucydides, pp. 1-13, 15-37, 39-58, 89-95, 101-109.

Fri. 9/25 **Discussion**

*** P/F assignment no. 3 due ***

Mon. 9/28 **Lecture—Greek drama and society**

Reading: Heaney, *The cure at Troy*.

*** P/F assignment no. 4 distributed ***

Wed. 9/30 Lecture—The Hellenistic era

Reading: Esler, ch. 3.

Fri. 10/2 Discussion

*** P/F assignment no. 4 due ***

Mon. 10/5 Lecture—The Roman RepublicReading: Esler, ch. 4; Reader, pp. 41-49 (Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline*).**Wed. 10/7 Lecture—The Roman Empire**Reading: Esler, ch. 5; Reader, pp. 50-66 (*Deeds of the Divine Augustus*; Tacitus, *Annals*).

*** First paper draft due (= P/F assignment no. 5) ***

Fri. 10/9 Discussion

Mon. 10/12 NO CLASS (Columbus Day)**Wed. 10/14 Lecture—Hebrew civilization**Reading: Genesis 1-22, Exodus 1-12, 19-20, I Kings 1-11, Job (all in the *King James Bible*; the numbers refer to chapters of each book).

*** First paper draft returned ***

Fri. 10/16 Discussion*** P/F assignment no. 6 (in-class writing) ***

Mon. 10/19 Lecture—Early Christianity in the Roman EmpireReading: The Gospel according to St. Matthew; The Acts of the Apostles (both in the *King James Bible*).**Wed. 10/21 Lecture—The establishment of Christianity**Reading: Reader, pp. 67-79 (Pliny, *Letter to Trajan*; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical history*; *Nicene Creed*; Augustine, *Confessions*; Jerome, *Letter 22*).

*** First paper due (final version) ***

Fri. 10/23 Discussion

Mon. 10/26 Lecture—The Germanic PeoplesReading: Esler, ch. 6; Reader, pp. 80-87 (Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*).

*** P/F assignment no. 7 distributed ***

Wed. 10/28 Lecture—Western MonasticismReading: *Rule of St. Benedict*.**Fri. 10/30 Discussion**

*** P/F assignment no. 7 due ***

Mon. 11/2 MIDTERM

Wed. 11/4 Lecture—The Universities and Scholasticism

Reading: Esler ch. 8; Reader, pp. 88-113 (Charter of the University of Paris; Jacques de Vitry; Goliard poems; Aquinas, *Summa theologica*).

*** P/F assignment no. 8 distributed ***

Fri. 11/6 Discussion

Mon. 11/9 Lecture—The Culture of Chivalry

Reading: *The poem of the Cid*.

Wed. 11/11 NO CLASS (Veterans' Day)

Fri. 11/13 Discussion

*** P/F assignment no. 8 due ***

Mon. 11/16 Lecture—The Late Middle Ages

Reading: Esler ch. 9; start reading for Wednesday.

*** P/F assignment no. 9 distributed ***

*** Second paper assignment distributed ***

Wed. 11/18 Lecture—Dante's vision of the world

Reading: Dante, *Inferno*, cantos 1-5, 8-11, 13-15, 19-23, 26-34. (If you have time, read the whole poem.)

Fri. 11/20 Discussion

*** P/F assignment no. 9 due ***

Mon. 11/23 Lecture—The Renaissance in Italy

Reading: Esler ch. 10; start reading for Wednesday.

Wed. 11/25 Lecture—Machiavelli's pragmatic politics

Reading: Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

Fri. 11/27 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Mon. 11/30 Lecture—The Renaissance in Northern Europe

Reading: Esler, ch. 11.

Wed. 12/2 Lecture—The Protestant and Catholic Reformations

Luther, *Christian Liberty*.

*** Second paper due ***

Fri. 12/4 Discussion

Mon. 12/7 Lecture—The beginnings of European imperialism

Reading: Esler, ch. 14.

*** P/F assignment no. 10 distributed ***

Wed. 12/9 Lecture—The conquest of America

Reading: Reader, pp. 114-120 (Columbus, *Letter on the newly discovered islands*).

Fri. 12/11 Discussion

*** P/F assignment no. 10 due ***

Mon. 12/14 Lecture—Review

Finals week Final examination (time and place to be announced after the final exam schedule has been published)

Suggested reading

Esler's *Western World* provides some excellent bibliographies of further reading on the topics covered in this course. The following list includes a few important books and essays not included in Esler's list.

Ancient Greece

Finley, M. I. *The world of Odysseus*. 2nd ed. London: Chatto and Windus, 1977. The most widely read text on Dark Age Greece.

Martin, Thomas R. *Ancient Greece: From prehistoric to Hellenistic times*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996. Poorly illustrated but concise and readable overview. A companion to the online Perseus Project < <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>>, a collection of ancient Greek texts, translations, and archeological images.

Weil, Simone. "The *Iliad* or the poem of force." Reprinted in *The Simone Weil* reader, edited by George A. Panichas. New York: McKay, 1977. An eloquent reflection on violence in antiquity and during the Second World War.

Rome and early Christianity

Crawford, Michael. *The Roman republic*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. Concise political and social history, with selected bibliography and a chronological table.

Garnsey, Peter, and Richard Saller. *The Roman empire: Economy, society and culture*. London: Duckworth, 1987. Short introduction to the subject. Easy to read.

Lane Fox, Robin. *Pagans and Christians*. Harmondsworth: Viking, 1986. Long study of ancient paganism, early Christianity, and their conflicts.

Brown, Peter. *The making of late antiquity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978. A brief survey by the acknowledged master of the subject. Brown's biography of St. Augustine is also a good introduction to many aspects of the period, though it presumes some background knowledge.

The Christian Middle Ages

Le Goff, Jacques. *Medieval civilization, 400-1500*. Trans. Julia Barrow. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988. The French original is now 34 years old, but this is still an excellent account. The first part of the book provides a chronological overview; the second part addresses several important themes in medieval civilization.

Bartlett, Robert. *The making of Europe: Conquest, colonization and cultural change, 950-1350*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. Recent synthesis focusing on the "homogenization" of western and central Europe.

Southern, R. W. *Western society and the Church in the Middle Ages*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970. Standard survey by a distinguished scholar.

Renaissance and Reformation

Bossy, John. *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985. A clear, persuasive account of late medieval Christianity and the changes wrought in it by Protestant and Catholic Reformations.

Hale, J. R. *The civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994. Recent survey by a great living historian; detail often drowns out any generalizations.

Nauert, Charles G., Jr. *Humanism and the culture of Renaissance Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Useful survey, very clear on important concepts. Excellent bibliography of material in English.

Grafton, Anthony T., with April Shelford and Nancy Siraisi. *New worlds, ancient texts: The power of tradition and the shock of discovery*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992. Lucid, well-illustrated introduction to the impact of overseas discoveries on European scholarship and culture. Brief bibliography.

Acknowledgements

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