History 100: Western Thought to 1600

University of Massachusetts Amherst
Spring Semester 2001
Prof. Brian W. Ogilvie
Teaching Assistants: Bree Beal and Thomas Rushford
Lecture: Mon. & Wed., 2:30–3:20, SOM 120 (Schedule #241188)
Discussion:
  Section 1, F 10:10, SOM 107 (#241195)
  Section 2, F 9:05, Herter 110 (#241202)
  Section 3, F 12:20, Herter 110 (#241209)
  Section 4, F 11:15, Herter 202 (#241216)
  Section 5, F 12:20, Herter 222 (#241223)
  Section 6, F 9:05, Herter 114 (#241230)

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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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This syllabus is also available on the World Wide Web at the following URL: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ogilvie/courses/spring01/100/index.html>.

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. Our 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. Some of these writings have been considered foundations for an entire culture—Homer’s *Iliad* for ancient Greeks, the Bible for Christians—while others develop themes that are important for a culture.

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.

Summary of requirements: 2 papers and final exam; short, ungraded themes; attendance and participation.

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 that 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. 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 our 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 requirements, assignments, and grading

There are five basic requirements for the course:

1. Attendance at lectures and discussion sections

We expect you to attend class. If you must miss a class, you should inform Prof. Ogilvie and your TA 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). If you are an athlete, you should present a complete schedule of the days you will miss by **February 12** to Prof. Ogilvie and your TA. If a religious holiday will prevent you from attending class, please inform Prof. Ogilvie and your TA by **February 12**.

2. Reading all assignments

If necessary, 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 short papers

Two short (4-5 page) papers will be required. Paper topics will be announced **February 12** and **April 11**. A draft of the introduction to the first paper will be due **February 28**; the complete paper two weeks later, on **March 14**. The second paper will be due on **May 2**. Papers will be graded on content (what you say), organization (how effectively you say it), and style (how clearly you say it). You may rewrite papers if you are not satisfied with the grade.

4. Final examination (take-home)

A take-home final will be distributed in class on **May 14**. It will be due on **May 21**. You will receive a sample question the previous week; it will be discussed in discussion section and a sample good answer will be posted on the course web page. The final will require approximately 6-8 pages of writing (total) on 2-4 questions.

5. Short, pass/fail assignments

In addition to the two papers and the exam, each of which will receive a letter grade, there will be ten short assignments (1-2 pages each). These pass/fail (P/F) assignments will be due most Fridays in discussion (see the course schedule for questions and dates). Any paper that makes a genuine effort to answer the question will pass. These assignments are intended to give you practice in thinking and writing about the course subjects.

Grading

The final course grade will be determined as follows:

First paper	25%
Second paper	25%
Final examination	25%
Attendance and participation	25%

The attendance and participation grade will be based on the following principles:

- Everyone starts out with an "AB" in attendance and participation. To keep or improve that grade, you must earn it as follows:
- Do the pass/fail assignments. The grade will be reduced by one-half letter grade for the **second** and every subsequent F on the pass/fail assignments. For this purpose, the required draft of the first paper will count as a pass/fail assignment.

- Attend lecture and discussion. The grade will be reduced by one-half letter grade for the **third** and every subsequent unexcused absence from discussion. It will also be reduced by one-half letter grade for the **third** and every subsequent lecture missed, as determined by quizzes or attendance sheets. (In other words, you can miss up to 15% of the class meetings before your attendance and participation grade suffers.)
- Participate in discussion. The TAs, at their discretion, can raise or lower the grade by up to one full letter grade, to recognize frequent, well-prepared participation in discussion and to penalize infrequent or disruptive participation.

Furthermore, **you must pass every component of the course in order to pass the course**. If you fail any one of the four components—first paper, second paper, exam, or attendance and participation—you will fail the entire course. Why? Because a passing grade in this course indicates that you have adequately learned the history of western thought from the ancient world to 1600, not just some of it.

Policy on late assignments

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

Pass/fail assignments will not be accepted more than two working 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: The *maximum* possible grade on papers will be reduced by one-half letter grade for each working day that they are late, unless a different due date is arranged in advance.

Take-home final: The *maximum* possible grade on the final will be reduced by one-half letter grade for each working day that it is late. No exceptions will be made except in the case of a bona-fide emergency with documentation from the Dean of Students. If the final is not received by Friday, May 25 (the last day of finals), you will receive an F for the exam and the course.

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, tel. 253-5432). The books are listed in the order we will use them, but you should buy all the books early in the semester; bookstores begin to return unused copies around the middle of the semester. Please let me know if prices differ significantly from those I have listed.

J. M. Roberts, *The Penguin history of Europe* (London and New York: Penguin, 1998). ISBN 0-14-026561-9. $18.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A pocket guide to writing in history*, 3rd ed. (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001). ISBN 0-312-24766-4. $10.

Homer, *The essential Iliad*, trans. Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000). ISBN 0-87220-542-8. $7.

Seamus Heaney, *The cure at Troy: A version of Sophocles's* Philoctetes (New York: Noonday Press, 1990). ISBN 0-374-52289-8. $12.

Cicero, *On the good life*, trans. Michael Grant (London and New York: Penguin, 1971). ISBN 0-14-044244-8. $12.

The New American Bible for Catholics: Standard edition (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1988). ISBN 0-8146-1750-6. $15.

The Rule of St. Benedict in English, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1982). ISBN 0-8146-1272-5. $3.

The Poem of the Cid, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957). ISBN 0-520-01176-7. $12.

Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, trans. John Ciardi (New York: New American Library, 1993). ISBN 0-451-62804-7. $6.

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The prince*, ed. and trans. David Wootton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995). ISBN 0-87220-316-6. $3.

Martin Luther, *Christian liberty* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1943). ISBN 0-8006-0182-3. $4.

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

The books are all on reserve at the DuBois Library, 3rd floor, under "History 100" and Prof. Ogilvie's name. If you already own different translations of the books for this course, you may use those. However, the page numbers differ between different editions. Many of the books are divided up into "books," "chapters," "cantos," "sections," or other smaller divisions, and I have indicated those on the syllabus whenever possible. The translations I have chosen are easier to read than many others, and many of them contain useful introductions.

If you use a different version of the Bible, make sure that it is a *translation*, not a *paraphrase*. The Good News Bible and other modern paraphrases provide an interpretation of what the Bible says, not a translation of the actual text.

The edition of J. M. Roberts, *The Penguin history of Europe*, on reserve is titled *A history of Europe*, and it has slightly different pagination. If you use it, be sure to read the proper *book* and *chapter*, and ignore the page numbers in the reading assignment.

A pocket guide to writing in history is intended for your consultation; you should familiarize yourself with its contents and check it as necessary.

Finally, some of the readings are available on the Internet, in different versions. Check the course web page for some good translations. If you use Internet versions, take good notes and bring them to discussion. Don't use an Internet version unless you know who translated the text and when.

Course schedule, with assignments and readings

Wed. 1/31 Lecture—Introduction to Western Civilization

Fri. 2/2 Discussion
Read: **read** the syllabus *carefully*; Hesiod, *Works and Days* (handout from Wednesday).

P/F #1 (in-class writing): Read the two-page excerpt from Hesiod's *Works and Days* that was handed out in class on Wednesday. Write one paragraph (three to five sentences) describing what you can infer about the person and the culture that produced this poem. (*Skill developed: reading sources for historical information*.)

Mon. 2/5 Lecture—"Civilization" and its discontents • How to read a book
Read: Roberts, book 1, chapters 1 and 2 (through p. 43).
Familiarize yourself with the contents of Rampolla, *A pocket guide to writing in history*.

Wed. 2/7 Lecture—Homer: myth, memory, and history
Read: Homer, *Essential Iliad*, pp. 1-56 (books 1-6). (We prefer that you not read the introduction until after you've read the poem itself.)

Fri. 2/9 Discussion

P/F #2 (due 2/9): Review the scene between Hector and Andromache in Book 6 of the *Iliad*. In 1-2 pages, describe what you can infer from it about the relations between the sexes in Homeric Greece. (*Skill developed: using sources for historical evidence*.)

Mon. 2/12 Lecture—The world of Odysseus
Read: Homer, *Essential Iliad*, pp. 56-157 (books 7-24); read the Introduction (pp. ix-xlii) if you have time.

*** First paper assignment distributed ***

Wed. 2/14 Lecture—The rise of the *polis*

Fri. 2/16 Discussion

P/F #3 (due 2/16): "The assemblies of warriors in Homer's *Iliad* were basically democratic." Find passages in the *Iliad* about assemblies and assess whether they support or undermine this thesis. How would you revise the thesis to make it more convincing? (*Skill developed: relating evidence to a thesis*.)

Mon. 2/19 NO CLASS (Presidents' Day holiday)

Tues. 2/20 Lecture—The Golden Age of Greece

(Monday class schedule in effect)

Wed. 2/21 Lecture—Greek drama and society
Read: Heaney, *The cure at Troy*.

Fri. 2/23 Discussion

P/F #4 (due 2/23): Imagine that you are an Athenian citizen in the audience when *Philoctetes* was produced in 409 BC. Describe your reaction to the play. Hint: think about the religious and political context of the play in the Great Dionysia, and the Peloponnesian War that was raging at the time. (*Skill developed: making imaginative inferences from sources*.)

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Mon. 2/26 Lecture—The Mediterranean world and the rise of Rome
Read: Roberts, book 1, chapter 3 (pp. 44-64).

Wed. 2/28 Lecture—Philosophy in Greece and Rome
Read: Cicero, *On the good life*, introduction (pp. 7-47) and "Laelius: On Friendship" (pp. 172-227).

Draft of introduction to first paper due 2/28.
This draft counts as a P/F assignment.

Fri. 3/2 Discussion

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Mon. 3/5 Lecture—Roman society: *mos maiorum*, the customs of our ancestors
Read: Cicero, *On the good life*, "On Duties" (pp. 117-171).

Wed. 3/7 Lecture—The Roman world and the *pax romana*
Read: Cicero, *On the good life*, "The Dream of Scipio" (pp. 337-355).

*** First paper introduction draft returned ***

Fri. 3/9 Discussion

P/F #5 (in-class writing): If Cicero were in Neoptolemus's shoes in *Philoctetes*, what would he have done, and why? Refer to Cicero's writings to support your answer. (*Skill developed: relating primary sources to one another*.)

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Mon. 3/12 Lecture—Who wrote the Bible?
Read: Roberts, book 1, chapter 4 (pp. 65-88);
Bible: Genesis 1-9.17, 12-22; Exodus 1-12, 19-20 (see Rampolla, p. 80, for an explanation of biblical references).

Wed. 3/14 Lecture—From monolatry to monotheism
Read: Bible: I Kings 3, 6-11; Isaiah 44.6-20; Job 1-3, 38-42. *Read the entire Book of Job if you have time; if not, try to read it over break.*

***** First paper due *****
Reminder: Food For Thought Books will begin to return unsold books soon.

Fri. 3/16 NO DISCUSSION TODAY
There is a lot of reading from the Bible for next week; you might want to get started over spring break.

Mon. 3/26 Lecture—From Jesus to Christ: the early Christians
Read: Bible: Isaiah 9.1-6; Mark (entire book); Matthew 5-7, 13.24-30, 13.36-43, 25.31-28.20; Luke 22-24; John 1.1-18; Romans (entire book).

Wed. 3/28 Lecture—Pagans and Christians in the Roman world
Read: Bible: Acts (entire book).

Reminder: Today (March 28) is the mid-semester date. This is the last date to drop this course with a W.

Fri. 3/30 Discussion

P/F #6 (due 3/30): Compare the accounts of Jesus's trial in Matthew 27.1-26, Mark 15.1-15, and Luke 23.1-25. In what ways do the Evangelists differ in their treatment of Pontius Pilate? (*Skill developed: comparing primary sources*.)

Mon. 4/2 Lecture—The Christian world and the pagan past
Read: Roberts, book 2, chapter 1 (pp. 89-119).

Wed. 4/4 Lecture—Work and pray: the monastic ideal and the spread of Christianity
Read: *Rule of St. Benedict* (the whole book—it goes quickly).

Fri. 4/6 Discussion

P/F #7 (due 4/6): Compare the account of western monasticism in Roberts (pp. 96-98) with the monastic life as portrayed in the Rule of St. Benedict. What aspects of monasticism does Roberts emphasize, and why? What does he omit? (*Skill developed: comparing primary and secondary sources*.)

Mon. 4/9 Lecture—Politics in the Middle Ages: Fiefs and vassals
Read: Roberts, book 2, chapters 2-4 (pp. 120-182).

Wed. 4/11 Lecture—Christians, Muslims, and Jews
Read: *The poem of the Cid,* canto 1, pp. 1-44.

*** Second paper assignment distributed ***

Fri. 4/13 Discussion

P/F #8 (due 4/13): Review canto 1 of *The Poem of the Cid.* What point of view does the author of the poem represent? Which characters does he treat sympathetically, and which does he treat unsympathetically? (*Skill developed: identifying a writer's point of view*.)

Mon. 4/16 NO CLASS (Patriots Day)

Wed. 4/18 Lecture— The chivalric ideal of the Middle Ages
Read: *The poem of the Cid*, cantos 2-3, pp. 47-139.

Fri. 4/20 Discussion

P/F #9 (due 4/20): Review *The Poem of the Cid.* How historically accurate do you think it is? Why do you think so? Consider both its literal accuracy and its usefulness for understanding the mindset of medieval warriors. (*Skill developed: assessing historical evidence*.)

Mon. 4/23 Lecture—The medieval Church and the papacy
Read: Roberts, book 2, chapter 5 (pp. 183-204).

Wed. 4/25 Lecture—Scholasticism and gothic
Read: Dante, *Inferno*, through canto 17.

Fri. 4/27 Discussion

Mon. 4/30 Lecture—Dante's vision of the world
Read: Dante, *Inferno*, canto 18-end.

Wed. 5/2 Lecture—The Renaissance: Christianity and the pagan past revisited
Read: Roberts, book 2, chapter 6 (pp. 205-230).

***** Second paper due *****

Fri. 5/4 Discussion

Mon. 5/7 Lecture—The life and times of Machiavelli
Read: Machiavelli, *The prince* (try to read the whole book for today).
Note: A sample exam question will be distributed in class today.

Wed. 5/9 Lecture—The Machiavellian moment
Finish *The prince* if you did not have time to finish it for Monday.

Fri. 5/11 Discussion

P/F assignment #10 (due 5/11): In *The Prince*, Machiavelli claims that it is better for a prince to be feared than loved (though it is best to be both). Cicero, in "On Duties," claimed that "to make people frightened is the way not to maintain one's position but to lose it" (p. 131). What does each author presuppose about human nature, and to what extent does Machiavelli contradict Cicero? (*Skill developed: identifying presuppositions, reading between the lines*.)

Mon. 5/14 Lecture—The end of Christendom
Read: Roberts, book 2, chapters 1-3 (pp. 231-290).
Luther, *Christian Liberty*.

***** Take-home final distributed in class *****

Wed. 5/16 Lecture—"The West" and "the Rest"
Read: Roberts, book 2, chapter 5 (pp. 316-340).

Mon. 5/21 Take-home final due at 5 PM in Herter 624!

Tips for success

History 100 is not an easy course, but if you keep a few simple points in mind, it will be a lot easier. Here are some tips for doing well in the course. They all are really aspects of one overarching principle: TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN EDUCATION!

- Read the syllabus carefully, and write down in your organizer the dates on which assignments are due. This will help you budget your time for the weeks when there is more work than normal.
- Complete all the assigned readings every week in a timely fashion, preferably in one or two study sessions, and jot down important points in your notes after finishing the readings. This should take about three hours every week, or possibly more. As you read each assignment, think about how it relates to earlier readings and lectures, and jot down some of those thoughts in your notes. Don't use a highlighter for note-taking.
- Look up unfamiliar words in a good dictionary. Look up unfamiliar names or concepts in an encyclopedia. The *Columbia Encyclopedia* is a good one-volume encyclopedia; the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, available online at britannica.com, is a good multi-volume encyclopedia.
- If your apartment or dorm room aren't quiet places to study, go to the library or somewhere else quiet. The main level of DuBois Library is a good place because it has lots of dictionaries and encyclopedias. If you need coffee while studying, try the Newman Center. Study a lot during the day, then you can relax in the evening without feeling stressed out or guilty.
- Ask questions about what you don't understand, but only after you have tried to answer them yourself. Part of your college education is learning to be self-reliant. Who should you ask? Prof. Ogilvie and your TA, of course; if your question is factual, you can also ask a reference librarian.
- Take advantage of Prof. Ogilvie's and your TA's office hours. We are there to help you in the course! We can give you more help, though, if you come with specific questions or issues to discuss.
- Come to each class prepared to discuss at least two or three of the issues raised by the readings, and to write a five-minute theme on them.
- Arrive for class on time, and pay attention to lectures and discussions. Take good notes. If you need guidance on note-taking, 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.
- Start work on each written assignment as soon after you receive it as your schedule allows. Complete a rough draft of all papers at least five days before they are due, and revise your papers at least once before you hand them in. Be sure to copyedit and proofread your papers carefully.
- Consider forming a study group.
- Talk to Prof. Ogilvie or your TA if you feel overwhelmed or if you are falling behind in the course.