

## **History 305: Late Renaissance and Protestant Reformation, 1494-1648**

University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Prof. Brian W. Ogilvie  
Spring Semester 1998  
MWF 2:30-3:20, Herter 111

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Hours: TuTh 10:00-11:30 AM, and by appointment.

This syllabus is also available online at the following URL:  
<<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ogilvie/courses/305/index.html>>.  
Updates to the syllabus, handouts, and assignments will be posted to this web page.

### **Brief course description**

The sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in Europe are characterized, above all, by the Protestant Reformation and its ramifications in politics, society, and culture. In this course, we will examine the origins of the Reformation, the reformers' message, and the struggles surrounding it. War is one of the defining features of this period: the French Wars in Italy were followed by religious struggles in the Holy Roman Empire, the Wars of Religion in France, the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the rebellious provinces of the Netherlands, and most gruesomely, the Thirty Years' War. In addition to studying these intellectual and political conflicts, we will look at the cultural developments of the sixteenth century and the increasingly important contacts between Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

### **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 some important events and trends which characterized the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in Europe. You should also have an idea of the different approaches which historians have taken in understanding this period.

The course has another goal: to develop your ability 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.

### **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. 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**

The course is divided into seven units, each focusing on a different aspect of the history of the Reformation era. Each unit will comprise four or five lectures and one discussion. 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 the unit will be fair game for the discussion. If you fall behind in the readings, you should catch up by the end of the unit in order to be prepared for discussion.

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!

### **Course requirements**

This is an upper-division history course. It has no formal prerequisites. However, if you have not taken a 100-level history course or another upper-division history course, please see the instructor during office hours in the first or second week of the course. If this is your first upper-division history course, I urge you to read *How to Study History*, by Norman Cantor and Robert Schneider (on reserve).

In order to pass this course, you will need to consistently do the readings and attend class regularly. To do well, you should plan to spend six to ten hours outside of class every week reading and studying. Some weeks won't require that much, but other weeks may require more (when a paper is due, for example).

There are four basic requirements for the course:

**1. Attendance at lectures and discussions.**

If you must miss a class, you should inform the instructor 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 voice mail (545-1599). Athletes should present a complete schedule of the days they will miss by February 11. If a religious holiday will prevent you from attending class, please inform the instructor by February 11.

**2. Reading all assignments.**

There will be occasional quizzes on the readings in lectures and discussions. If you have done the readings, the questions will be straightforward.

**3. Four papers**

Four short (5-7 page) papers will be required. Paper topics will be announced Feb. 11, Mar. 4, Apr. 1, and Apr. 29. They will be due one week later: i.e., **Feb. 18, Mar. 11, Apr. 8, and May 6**. Papers will be graded on content (what you say), organization (how effectively you say it), and style (how clearly you say it). If you are dissatisfied with your grade on a paper, you will have the opportunity to rewrite it. At the end of the semester, the lowest paper grade will be disregarded when the course grade is calculated.

**4. Final exam**

A take-home final will be distributed on the last day of class. It will be due at the end of exam week. It will cover the entire course and will consist of four parts, each of which requires a 1-2 page answer.

The course grade will be determined according to the following criteria:

Attendance and participation in discussion:	20%
Best 3 out of 4 papers @ 20% each	60%
Final examination:	20%

**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.

**Books for course**

The following books are available for purchase at Food for Thought Books. They are also on reserve in the DuBois Library. The Montague Book Mill, Raven Books, and many other local used bookstores have copies of some of these books.

Bossy, John. *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Elliott, J. H. *The Old World and the New, 1492-1650*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Ginzburg, Carlo. *The cheese and the worms: The cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

Hale, J. R. *War and society in Renaissance Europe, 1450-1620*. Baltimore: Johns

Hopkins University Press, 1985.

*The portable Renaissance reader*. Edited by James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin. Revised ed. New York: Viking Penguin, 1968.

Rice, Eugene F., Jr., and Anthony T. Grafton. *The foundations of early modern Europe, 1460-1559*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1994.

If you do not already have it, you may want to get the *Anchor Atlas of World History*, vol. 1, which is a useful reference work for important political events and dates. Its interpretations are often outdated and unreliable, however.

In addition, a good guide to practical aspects of studying history is: Norman F. Cantor and Richard I. Schneider, *How to study history* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1967). This book is also on reserve.

A recommended reading list is appended to the syllabus. The books on this list are not on reserve; if you charge them out of the library, please be considerate to your classmates and do not keep them longer than you need them.

### A note on readings

This course has three kinds of readings. The textbook, Rice and Grafton's *Foundations of Early Modern Europe*, was chosen to give you a brief overview of important themes and processes in the period which this course covers (particularly the early part). Other secondary sources, like John Bossy's *Christianity in the West* and John Hale's *War and Society in Renaissance Europe*, provide powerful interpretations of the events of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century and their effects on society and culture. Finally, the primary sources for discussion will allow us, as a group, to question the interpretations offered by other historians and practice the craft of history.

The readings and the lectures are designed to be complementary. You will not be able to understand the lectures completely if you have not done the readings. The lectures, in turn, will provide context for points discussed by the readings, address difficulties in the readings, and link related themes.

The course schedule gives a detailed breakdown of reading assignments for each lecture and discussion. I suggest that you skim the reading for each unit and identify the main points before focusing closely on each particular assignment; that way you won't miss the forest for the trees.

### Course schedule, with assigned readings

**Wed. 1/28 Introduction to the course**

**Fri. 1/30 Reading history and doing history**  
Reading: handout to be distributed in class.

**Mon. 2/2 Europe, 1494-1648: an overview**  
Reading: Portable Renaissance Reader (PRR), pp. 91-119.

*Suggested reading for weekend:* skim all of Rice and Grafton. This will provide a context for many of the particular issues we will address in the course.

**Unit 1. Traditional Christianity and the Reformation**

- Wed. 2/4**     **“Traditional Christianity” and everyday life**  
Reading: Bossy, pp. 1-56; PRR, pp. 644-652, 712-721.
- Fri. 2/6**     **The late medieval Church**  
Reading: Bossy, pp. 57-87; PRR, pp. 615-644.
- Mon. 2/9**     **Origins of the Reformation**  
Reading: Rice/Grafton, pp. 146-169; PRR, pp. 652-660.
- Wed. 2/11**   **The Reformers’ ideas**  
Reading: Bossy, pp. 89-114; PRR, pp. 84-86, 721-726, 733-737.  
  
\*\*\* First paper topic announced \*\*\*
- Fri. 2/13**    **DISCUSSION**  
Readings: PRR, pp. 677-711.
- Mon. 2/16**   **NO CLASS (Presidents’ Day)**

**Unit 2. The Political Setting of the Reformation**

- Wed. 2/18**   **The Valois Monarchy in France**  
Reading: Rice/Grafton, pp. 110-124; PRR, pp. 279-284, 305-327.  
  
\*\*\* First paper due \*\*\*
- Fri. 2/20**    **The Empire of Charles V**  
Reading: Rice/Grafton, pp. 124-145; PRR, pp. 175-181, 294-305.
- Mon. 2/23**   **The Reformation spreads in Germany**  
Reading: Rice/Grafton, pp. 178-202; PRR, pp. 661-665, 234-241.
- Wed. 2/25**   **The English Reformation; Calvinism**  
Reading: PRR, pp. 672-676, 738-741.
- Fri. 2/27**    **DISCUSSION**

**Unit 3. Catholic Reformation and Confessionalization**

- Mon. 3/2**     **The Council of Trent**  
Reading: Rice/Grafton, pp. 169-177; PRR, pp. 665-672.
- Wed. 3/4**     **The Jesuits and the “reconquest” of Protestant lands**  
Reading: Bossy, pp. 115-152; PRR, pp. 742-754.  
  
\*\*\* Second paper topic announced \*\*\*
- Fri. 3/6**     **The confessional state**  
Reading: Bossy, pp. 153-171.

- Mon. 3/9**    **Confessionalism and culture**  
Reading: Ginzburg, pp. viii-61.
- Wed. 3/11**   **The moral police**  
Reading: Ginzburg, pp. 62-128; PRR, pp. 258-262.  
  
\*\*\* Second paper due \*\*\*
- Fri. 3/13**    **DISCUSSION**

**Unit 4. Society and culture in the Reformation era**

- Mon. 3/23**   **Two Europes? Village and city**  
Reading: Rice/Grafton, pp. 45-76; PRR, pp. 165-175, 208-226, 347-354.
- Wed. 3/25**   **“Popular culture” and its transformation**  
(No reading for today; read ahead for next week.)
- Fri. 3/27**    **Men and women**  
(No reading for today; read ahead for next week.)
- Mon. 3/30**   **Burghers and courtiers: The European elite**  
Reading: Rice/Grafton, pp. 77-109; PRR, pp. 181-202, 227-233, 241-244.
- Wed. 4/1**    **Learning and the new science**  
Reading: Rice/Grafton, pp. 1-26; PRR, pp. 396-408, 414-420, 531-540, 563-572, 580-611.  
  
\*\*\* Third paper topic announced \*\*\*
- Fri. 4/3**    **DISCUSSION**

**Unit 5. Europe and the world**

- Mon. 4/6**    **European expansion overseas**  
Reading: Rice/Grafton, pp. 26-44; PRR, pp. 146-152.
- Wed. 4/8**    **The intellectual impact of the discoveries**  
Reading: Elliott, pp. 1-53; PRR, pp. 157-162.  
  
\*\*\* Third paper due \*\*\*
- Fri. 4/10**   **The economic and political impact of the discoveries**  
Reading: Elliott, pp. 54-104; PRR, pp. 152-157, 202-207.
- Mon. 4/13**   **Europe and its Asian neighbors**  
Reading: PRR, pp. 70-74, 244-257, 372-375.
- Wed. 4/15**   **DISCUSSION**

**Fri. 4/17 NO CLASS (Instructor in North Carolina)**  
Reading: Hale, pp. 7-74 (to get started).

**Mon. 4/20 NO CLASS (Patriots Day)**

**Unit 6. Eighty years of war**

**Wed. 4/22 The military revolution**  
Reading: Hale, pp. 75-99.

**Thurs. 4/23 The Wars of Religion in France (Monday schedule in effect)**  
Reading: Hale, pp. 100-126.

**Fri. 4/24 The Dutch Revolt and the Eighty Years War**  
Reading: Hale, pp. 127-152.

**Mon. 4/27 The Thirty Years War**  
Reading: Hale, pp. 153-178.

**Wed. 4/29 War and society**  
Reading: Hale, pp. 179-252; PRR, pp. 365-371.

\*\*\* Fourth paper topic announced \*\*\*

**Fri. 5/1 DISCUSSION**

**Unit 7. Conclusion: The "longue durée"**

**Mon. 5/4 Demography and history**  
Readings to be announced.

**Wed. 5/6 The pre-industrial economy of Europe**  
Readings to be announced.

\*\*\* Fourth paper due \*\*\*

**Fri. 5/8 The history of manners**  
Reading: PRR, pp. 340-347.

**Mon. 5/11 Continuity and change in history**  
Readings to be announced.

**Wed. 5/13 DISCUSSION**

\*\*\* Take-home final distributed \*\*\*

**Wed. 5/20 FINAL EXAMS DUE AT NOON IN HERTER 617!**

### **Suggested reading**

This list is only a starting point for further reading in the history of the Reformation era. If you would like additional suggestions, please see me in office hours.

#### **General works**

Cochrane, Eric. *Florence in the forgotten centuries, 1527-1800: A history of Florence and the Florentines in the age of the grand dukes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973. The first part, on the origins of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, is a marvelous introduction to Italian politics in the early part of the sixteenth century. The most fun book on this list to read.

Cochrane, Eric. *Italy, 1530-1630*. Ed. Julius Kirshner. London and New York: Longman, 1988. Excellent introduction to a neglected period in Italian history.

Elton, G. R., ed. *The new Cambridge modern history*, vols. 1-4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957-1990. A standard work; very detailed, and some volumes are out of date.

Hale, John. *The civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. Hale's "Renaissance" runs from about 1450 to 1600, and thus covers much of the same period as this course.

Koenigsberger, H. G., George L. Mosse, and G. Q. Bowler. *Europe in the sixteenth century*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Longman, 1989. Standard textbook; dry but factual.

Pennington, D. H. *Europe in the seventeenth century*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Longman, 1989. In the same series as Koenigsberger et al.

#### **Protestant and Catholic Reformations**

(See also Cochrane, *Italy, 1530-1630*, and Elton, *The new Cambridge modern history*, in the "General" section.)

Cameron, Euan. *The European Reformation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. Basic textbook, very informative. Good bibliography.

Ozment, Steven. *The age of reform, 1250-1550: An intellectual and religious history of late medieval and Reformation Europe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980. Examines the medieval background to the sixteenth-century Reformations.

Febvre, Lucien. *The problem of unbelief in the sixteenth century: The religion of Rabelais*. Trans. Beatrice Gottlieb. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982. Originally published in 1942, this is a classic study of the religious milieu of early sixteenth-century France. Requires some familiarity with François Rabelais's works.

#### **Economic history**

Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and capitalism, 15th-18th centuries*. Translated by Sian Reynolds. 3 vols. New York: Harper & Row, 1981-84. An excellent introduction to material life, economy, and society in this period, written by a master historian near the end of his career. Full of detail but often seems to lack a sharp analytical focus.

Cipolla, Carlo M. *Before the Industrial Revolution: European society and economy, 1000-1700*. 3rd ed. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1993. A standard textbook. Sometimes opinionated.

Cipolla, Carlo M., ed. *The Fontana economic history of Europe*. Vol. 2, *The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976. Basic introduction; chapters written by specialists. No overall theme.

### **Social history**

Davis, Natalie Zemon. *Society and culture in early modern France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975. Eight classic essays.

Jütte, Robert. *Poverty and deviance in early modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Good introduction to the poor, outcast, and outlawed in this period.

Strauss, Gerald. *Nuremberg in the sixteenth century: City politics and life between Middle Ages and modern times*. 2nd ed. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976. Wonderful portrait of an early modern German city.

Wiesner, Merry E. *Women and gender in early modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Very good textbook, with extensive bibliographies of material in English.

### **Intellectual history**

Debus, Allen G. *Man and nature in the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978. A lucid, brief introduction to “scientific” thought, covering roughly 1450-1640.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The printing press as an agent of change: Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979. An ambitious attempt to explain the printing press’s effects on the humanist classical revival, the Protestant Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution. Available in condensed version as *The printing revolution in early modern Europe*, 1983.

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.

Popkin, Richard H. *The history of scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979. Classic study of an important theme in early modern philosophy.

### **Exploration and expansion**

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.

Parry, J. H. *The age of reconaissance: Discovery, exploration and settlement, 1450 to 1650*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981. (Originally published 1963.) Still a standard survey.

Wolf, Eric R. *Europe and the people without history*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982. A sociologist’s analysis of European expansion.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The conquest of America*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: HarperPerennial, 1984. A literary critic’s attempt to explain how a handful of Spaniards was able to conquer the Aztec empire.

**Politics and political thought**

Briggs, Robin. *Early modern France, 1560-1715*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. Short, sometimes too concise institutional history of France.

Lynch, John. *Spain, 1516-1598: From nation state to world empire*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991. Sometimes dull but authoritative political and administrative history.

Mattingly, Garrett. *Renaissance diplomacy*. London: Cape, 1955. A classic account of the invention of modern diplomacy in fifteenth-century Italy and its transmission to northern Europe in the sixteenth century.

Skinner, Quentin. *The foundations of modern political thought*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978. Difficult but rewarding. The first volume covers the Renaissance; the second is devoted to the Reformation period.