

Western Civilizations 101
Ancient Near-East to the Protestant Reformation

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Wednesday: 3:30-4:30 pm, Friday 9-10:30 am.

Introduction:

Western Civilization is not just the history of dead people. It's the history of how half of our world got to be the way it is. This class will attempt to trace a direct line from the people and events of the past to our own culture and society. Along the way we will investigate different cultures, governments, and religions through their own words, and we will do so using the critical lens of historical analysis.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- explain the significance of people, events, places, and dates in relation to the origins of modern society
- understand the similarities and differences in ancient, medieval, and early modern western culture.

Required Texts:

All of the readings for this class can be found on Blackboard under Course Documents. I recommend downloading or printing them all at the beginning of the semester, in case of Blackboard down-times. Blackboard being down the day before a reading is due is no excuse for not having read it.

The vast majority of the readings are excerpts from larger texts. In other words, they are short, so please read them in their entirety. You will be quizzed on these readings almost every Thursday, so it's in your best interests to keep up with the readings.

All readings are due on the day they are listed.

Attendance Policy:

I don't have an attendance policy. Whether or not you come to class is your own decision, but if you only come to class to take the tests, your grade is automatically reduced by 25% because you won't have taken any of the quizzes.

Religious Observance

The University allows for a limited number of excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by the faith of the student. Students must notify instructors of absences in advance of the date of the religious observance. When appropriate notice is provided by a student, the student must be granted at least two excused absences under this policy and must be allowed to make up or waive work and tests missed due to these particular absences. With regard to any test or other assignment that a student would miss due to notice of a required religious observance, faculty members may require the student to complete the test or assignment in advance of the originally scheduled date of the test or assignment

Graded Assignments:

Reading Quizzes (25%):

Each Thursday there will be a 10-15 minute in-class reading quiz that will require you to give a 1-2 paragraph response to a question about the readings. You will have two questions from which to choose, but you need only respond to one question. Makeup quizzes will only be given in the event of significant extenuating circumstances (military duty, death in the family, sports schedule, you were in the hospital, etc. "I overslept" is not an extenuating circumstance.)

Exams (25% each):

There will be three in-class unit tests, each consisting of a short-answer section and a longer essay section. The short answer questions will be drawn from the reading quizzes. Each unit test will cover only the material in that unit. In other words, the final is NOT CUMULATIVE, though there will be a question that requires you to think globally about the entirety of the course.

Grading Breakdown:

Unit Tests: 25% each (75% total)

Reading Quizzes: 25%

Academic Integrity Policy:

I do not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. Any instances of either will be dealt with according to the Academic Integrity Policy. If you don't know what the policy says, it's right here: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete>. Go read it.

Other Important Stuff:

Please turn off your cell-phones before the lecture starts. You can bring your laptop to class for note-taking purposes.

Do not text during my class. It is rude and disrespectful to me, and it can be disruptive to your fellow students. If I catch you texting during my class, I will stop class and ask you to leave, since you obviously have something more important to be doing than listening to my lecture.

August 24: Class Introduction	
August 26: Mesopotamia	Readings: 1) <i>The Enuma Elish</i> 2) <i>Gilgamesh</i>
August 31: Babylonians and Hammurabi	Readings: 1) <i>Hammurabi's Code</i>
September 2: Judaism	Reading Quiz Readings: 1) <i>Genesis</i> 2) <i>Exodus</i>
September 7: No Class!	
September 9: Archaic Greece	Reading Quiz Readings: 1) <i>The Iliad</i>
September 14: Classical Greece	Readings: 1) Plato's <i>The Apology</i> 2) Plato's <i>The Republic</i>
September 16: Archaic Rome	Reading Quiz Readings: 1) Polybius's <i>On the Roman Constitution</i>
September 21: The Roman Empire	Readings: 1) Cicero's <i>Letter To Brutus After the Death of Caesar</i>
September 23: UNIT TEST #1 (Mesopotamia – Rome)	
September 28: Early Christianity	Readings: 1) <i>Matthew</i> 2) Paul's <i>Letter to the Romans</i> 3) <i>Vita</i> of St. Perpetua
September 30: The Byzantine Empire	Reading Quiz Readings: 1) <i>Institutes of Justinian</i> 2) Procopius <i>On the Hagia Sophia</i>
October 5: The “Barbarian” Kingdoms of Europe	Readings: 1) <i>The Burgundian Code</i> 2) <i>The History of the Franks</i>
October 7: The Rise of Islam	Reading Quiz Readings: 1) the <i>Qu'ran</i> 2) <i>The Life of Mohammed</i>
October 12: NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)	
October 14: Medieval Christianity	Readings: 1) <i>The Benedictine Rule</i> 2) <i>The City of God</i>

October 19: Charlemagne and Alfred the Great	Readings: 1) Einhard's <i>Life of Charlemagne</i> 2) Asser's <i>Life of Alfred the Great</i>
October 21: The Feudal State	Reading Quiz Readings: 1) <i>Truce of God</i> 2) <i>On Feudal Obligations</i> 3) <i>Peace League of Bourges</i>
October 26: Consolidation of Papal Power	Readings: 1) <i>Dictatus Papae</i> 2) the Works of Innocent III
October 28: The Medieval Other and the Crusades	Reading Quiz Readings: 1) Urban II's <i>Call to Crusade</i> 2) <i>Emicho and the Slaughter of the Rhineland Jews</i>
November 2: Prince John and the Magna Carta	Readings: 1) <i>Magna Carta</i>
November 4: UNIT TEST #2 (Fall of Rome – English Statehood)	
November 9: The Depressing 14 th Century	Readings: 1) Boccaccio's <i>Decameron</i> 2) <i>Trial of Joan of Arc</i>
November 11: The Decline of the Papacy	Reading Quiz Readings: 1) <i>Sacrosancta</i> 2) Poem Criticizing the Avignon Papacy
November 16: The Renaissance – Ideas	Readings: 1) Machiavelli's <i>The Prince</i> 2) Pico della Mirandola's <i>Oration on the Dignity of Man</i>
November 18: The Renaissance – Art & Architecture	Reading Quiz Readings: 1) Cellini's <i>The Artist</i>
November 23: The Protestant Reformation – Luther and Calvin	Readings: 1) Luther's <i>95 Theses</i> 2) Calvin's <i>Catechism</i>
November 25: NO CLASS. HAPPY THANKSGIVING!	
November 30: The Protestant Reformation in England and the Catholic Reformation	Readings: 1) <i>The Act of Supremacy</i> 2) Council of Trent
December 2: Interpretation and Review	Reading Quiz
FINAL UNIT TEST 11 AM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14th.	