

WCV 101 – SECTIONS 2 & 6
A HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION
Spring 2005

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Instructor	Dr. Katherine Tucker McGinnis
Class Time & Location	Section 2 – MWF 10:00-10:50 – Graham 209 Section 6 – MWF 12:00-12:50 – McIver 28
Office Hours	MWF 11-11:45, M 1-2, and by appointment
Office	McIver 223
Phone	334-5732 (no voice mail) or 334-5992 (History Dept Office)
Email	ktmcginn@uncg.edu
Communication Tool	BlackBoard: http://blackboard.uncg.edu

This syllabus is the contract under which this course is taught. By enrolling in this course, and remaining enrolled, you accept its conditions.

Course Intent This course provides both a basic body of knowledge concerning the development of civilization in Western Europe from earliest historical times to the early eighteenth century and a structural basis on which to understand events of the past. In addition, we examine “historical method,” and you will learn to write a thesis statement suitable for a history paper and to find evidence in both primary and secondary sources.

This is a survey of western civilization from the perspectives of social history. It looks at the period from the earliest civilizations, c.3000B.C. until about A.D.1750. Note that some historians use the terms "Before Common Era" (B.C.E.) and "Common Era" (C.E.) rather than "Before Christ" (B.C.) and "Anno Domini" (A.D.). I simply follow your text for convenience.

The scope of the possible information, stories, events, people that this course could include is beyond any possibility of "coverage." We will try to touch on those high points that seem to have broad or long-ranging impact and to contextualize them in order to demonstrate historical complexity and interdependence.

A social history does not ignore wars, diplomacy, events, or famous people, but it does examine a broad array of perspectives that include, among many possibilities, economic, religious, gender, sexual, and scientific. There is also a tendency to include the "common man" as well as the "great man" and women, to the extent that historical sources permit.

The historiographic process is based on both facts and interpretation. The facts come from sources that the historian must interrogate in order to understand and evaluate them and to use them as evidence. The interpretation depends on the capacity of the historian to integrate those facts in a larger context and to make an argument based on a responsible selection of the facts, as well as on the point of view of the historian. History, perhaps particularly "popular history," can be driven by extra-academic intentions that the audience must learn to recognize and to be aware of their influence on the interpretation.

Sources can be written records -- chronicles and parish records are two examples -- and material artifacts, which can include tools, buildings, coins, artwork, pottery, furniture, fabric and clothing. A book can be treated as both a written record and as a material object, studied for its physical properties.

Honor Code The UNC-G Honor Code prevails. You are expected to abide by the Honor Code for all work in this class. You must write out and sign the Pledge on all work. All alleged violations will be handed over to the academic court for adjudication. No violations or alleged violations will be handled independently.

General Ground Rules

Nothing will be accepted late, without documentation of illness or emergency. “On time” means at the beginning of class, not at the end of class.

If you bring a phone or other noise-producing equipment to class, please silence it.

No food or drink (other than water) is permitted in class. If you have special needs for food or drink during class time, please see me privately.

Come prepared to each class. I have constructed this course with entering students in mind, trying to make it easy for you to keep up in your work. Prepared means more than reading the assignment; it also means thinking about it in order that you can participate intellectually in the class. Bring your text (or the book being discussed) to class.

I recommend that you take advantage of my office hours.

Required Textbooks Lang, Mabel. *The Athenian Citizen*. Princeton, New Jersey: The American School at Athens, 2004.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Selected Canterbury Tales*. Dover Thrift Editions. New York: Dover, 1994.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1983. (or any edition)

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*, ed. and trans. David Wooten. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1995.

Chambers, Mortimer, et al. *The Western Experience*, 8th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002.

BlackBoard It is essential that I be able to contact you via email on BlackBoard, the Course Communication Tool, and that you be able to check BlackBoard for course documents and information. **You must activate your UNCG email account in order to do this. This is a course requirement.** Go to www.uncg.edu/irc/labs/acctinfo.html or <http://accounts.uncg.edu> and then to Account Activation and User Name under Account Information. I will not be able to communicate with you via other email accounts. You are responsible for checking BlackBoard and your UNCG email account on a regular basis.

Internet You do not need to use the Internet in this course. There are both benefits and risks associated with doing “research” online. To quote an historian at Emory University, “...one of the largest threats posed to history... [is] the deliberate falsification of the past...” “Many people have labeled the Web ‘democratic.’ I believe ‘chaotic’ is more appropriate.” That said, one site that provides source material, particularly for the ancient and medieval periods is <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html>. (Not all links are currently active.)

Another Internet history source that I can recommend to those of you who intend to teach is <http://www.besthistorysites.net>. It is designed for K-12 and as has been reviewed for “quality, accuracy, and usefulness”

As is always true in any area of research, an .edu site will be more reliable than a .com or .org. .

Papers/Writing/ Study Skills I expect your writing, whether in assigned papers or tests, to meet conventional standards for written, not spoken, English. This includes grammar, syntax, and word choice. Please, if you are unsure about your writing for an assignment, see me and/or get help from the Writing Center in 101 McIver (334-3125). Beginning on January 19th, the Writing Center will be open M-Th 9-8, Fri 9-3, and Sun 5-8. You can come by appointment or walk in. The Center offers help in brainstorming to get started, organization, and editing.

For questions of style, you may find the following website helpful:
<http://www.bartleby.com/141/> This site gives an online edition of *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr.

There will be no rewrites accepted, although I will be happy to discuss your papers or to look at them in advance of the due date.

Academic help is also available through the Learning Assistance Center (334-3878) on the first floor of Reynolds Dorm, Room 159, M-Th 9-5, F 8-5. Walk-in individual help is available and there are also workshops.

Course Requirements

Attendance - If you have more than three unexcused absences, your grade will be reduced. For an absence to be excused, you must bring documentation of illness or death in the family. I expect you to be on time.

Groups - I will assign you to a group, based on the preferences that you state on your identification cards. I will do my best to place you in your first or second choice. With your group you will participate in and lead discussions. The groups are:

- Arts
- Family
- Religion
- Science and Technology
- Sports and Entertainment
- War and Peace
- Work and the Economy

In order for each group to work together effectively, please put together a contact sheet with email addresses and phone numbers as soon as possible.

Discussion - You will spend part of most class periods discussing the material assigned for that unit. Working in pairs, i.e., **two leaders** per discussion, you will be responsible for leading **three** sessions. **Each** discussion leader will prepare questions he or she will use for the discussion. You may, as appropriate, focus your questions on the central topic of your group -- Arts, Family, etc. This will not always be possible. The leaders will turn in their questions, a list of those present, and a brief summary of the session, successes and weaknesses, hot topics, points people found confusing, etc. You will not simply give me the "answers." You will not put up with people just opening their books and looking up answers rather than discussing your questions. Therefore, you must be sure to ask questions that are open-ended and lead to debate. You do not have to find consensus. You are responsible for a reasonable preparation (some questions that show you read and thought about the material) and a conscientious, if succinct reflection on the session. Your report should be 1-2 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point type, preferably "Times" or "Times New Roman" font. It must be turned in by the beginning of the next class. You will **not** be graded on the "success" of the discussion. Your grade will be based on the quality of the questions and your ability to describe, summarize, or assess the discussion. I will assign the days for each student to lead discussion at the time the groups are organized,

but you may exchange within your group, as long as each member leads **three** discussions. I should receive two reports per group per session.

Diagnostic Quizzes - Be prepared for brief quizzes, based on Chambers or other assigned materials. They are designed to help you keep up with the reading, to determine where any weak areas might lie, and to teach specific test-taking techniques. I will drop the lowest grade and average the others for a total quiz grade. There are no make-ups for the quizzes.

Hour Exams - There will be four Hour Exams, on **February 4th**, **February 28th**, **April 1st**, and **April 29th**. The format will include short answer, identification, and essay questions. There will be no make-ups without documentation of illness or emergency.

Final Exam - There will be a **cumulative** final exam on May 6 from 12 Noon to 3 (section 2) and on May 11 from 12 noon to 3 PM (section 6). Its format will be similar to the hour exams.

Paper - There will be a paper based on Davis' *The Return of Martin Guerre* and the viewing of the film by that name, and relevant materials in Chambers. The paper should be 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced, in 12-point type, preferably "Times" or "Times New Roman" font.

There are to be two themes, **which you must interweave** (This is not a two-part paper.):

It **must** address one of the following topics, as these sources -- film, books -- present them in early modern France:

- lives of women and domestic roles and relationships
- economic and/or religious influences on social relations
- legal processes and the relation of social and political units

Think of this as theme and content.

It **must** address the question of how history can be examined and interpreted in text and in film and the problems and propensities of each medium. It is not, however, a film review. Acting is not under discussion, although you may consider the seeming historical "rightness" of costumes, set, and physical behavior, including gesture.

Think of this as evidence and interpretation/analysis of the evidence. How do Natalie Davis and Daniel Vigne (the director) choose and treat the evidence?

The paper is due on April 11th **at the beginning of class.**

Participation I encourage you to comment and to raise questions during lectures. (For the benefit of less vociferous classmates, the usual hand-raising system will prevail).

Evaluation	Discussion		15%
	Quizzes		10%
	Hour Exams	10% each	40%
	Final Exam		20%
	Martin Guerre Paper		15%

I do not grade on a curve. I also do not wish to contribute to grade inflation. However, if you do everything on the syllabus conscientiously, I'll be hard pressed not to give a lot of very good grades.