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## HISTORY 1400: MODERN WESTERN TRADITIONS

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This course provides students with an opportunity to examine some of the cultural, social, political, and economic developments of the last five hundred years of European history. Through a combination of lectures and discussions, it presents an overview of some of the major changes of the period while focusing in greater depth on analysis of some specific themes, events, and issues that continue to have a profound impact on our own modern society. The lectures on Tuesday and Thursday morning focus on historical narratives and debates designed to provide context for the readings that will be discussed in smaller groups each Friday.

Most of you will, of course, never be professional historians, or even history majors. This course, however, aims to explore the ways that the study of history is useful to all of us living now, in our own historical moment. We will also use history as a tool to develop the essential life skills of critical reading, thoughtful analysis, argumentation, and effective communication (both written and oral). A fundamental part of this approach is the questioning and investigating of ideas that appear to be “natural,” along with enhancing our awareness of multiple perspectives.

This course is centered on the practice, and not just the study, of history. The readings we will analyze in discussion section are all primary sources, dating from each period of focus. These sources vary widely, including fiction and different kinds of non-fiction as well as images and even statistical tables. These are the sources we, as historians, will study to make arguments about the past, rather than concentrating exclusively on conclusions reached by other scholars. History is as much or more about asking questions, and determining which questions to ask, as it is about answering them. This idea is central to this course.

Regular attendance at lectures is essential to provide a grounding for analysis of the assignments. There is no textbook for this class, so that reading time can be focused on the primary sources. This makes lectures fundamental to an understanding of the content of the class. Lectures will frequently include PowerPoint presentations to illustrate some of the issues we will be discussing and to help students organize the material for their notes. The presentations do not, however, offer an adequate substitute to either regular attendance or good note taking. Discussion sections will be led by the four section leaders. As class participation constitutes 25% of your grade, and is based on your active presence in discussion section, you need to be at section in order to fulfill that requirement even minimally. Discussions are the opportunity for you all to work through the readings together, so to be successful, it is essential that you each come to section having read the texts assigned and prepared to discuss them. Remember that this does not mean that you have “answers;” only that you have given real thought to the readings and the questions they raise. Here in the syllabus, I have included questions to think about for each reading assignment. They provide a guideline for discussion, and you should be prepared to offer an opinion about them, but you should feel more than free to bring up other issues and take the discussions in different directions. Some readings are described as “required” and some as “recommended” (if no distinction is made, a reading is required). Take these descriptions as guidelines to how discussion will be focused, but be aware that you may need the “recommended” materials in order to prepare for the exams; all questions and essays for the exams will be drawn from master lists that will be distributed in advance. Sections will also include writing exercises and quizzes.

In addition to lectures and discussion sections, there are four 2 pp. papers based on the texts assigned for the course; only the three highest grades will count for each student, but all four

papers MUST be completed in order to receive credit for ANY of them. Papers are due at the BEGINNING of discussion section (papers more than fifty minutes late will not be graded). In each paper, you must investigate analytically a specific topic raised by that week's readings; these paper topics will be distributed one week in advance. In fairness to the other students in a class this size, extensions will not be granted and late papers will be marked down; each paper MUST be turned in within one week of its due date, or no credit will be given for ANY papers. There is also a midterm examination. The final exam, which will be cumulative, will be held at the time designated for this course. The final grade will consist of class participation (25%), midterm exam (20%), papers (7% each for a total of 21%), and final exam (34%). You may earn extra credit toward your class participation by attending one (or more) of the public lectures by visiting scholars here at the university that I will announce over the course of the semester, and then writing a 1-2 pp. paper about the talk, to be submitted to your instructor at the next discussion section. As required by university guidelines, you are reminded that academic misconduct will not be tolerated, and your enrollment in this class is an agreement to abide by the rules of appropriate scholarly and social behavior. If you have any questions about plagiarism or related issues, please feel free to talk to any of the course staff or to take advantage of the resources available at UConn.

The following required texts are all available for purchase at the Co-Op:

Bartolome de las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies*.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Classic Slave Narratives*.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*.

Primo Levi, *Survival at Auschwitz*

**Custom Edition** of Merry Wiesner, et al., *Discovering the Western Past: A Look at the Evidence. Vol. II since 1500. Special 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* (this edition is only available with the texts for this course at the UConn Co-Op)

## Schedule of Lecture and Discussion Topics

Week 1—The "New World" and the Old

T 1/20 – lecture: Introduction – 1492 etc.

Th 1/22 – lecture: The Impact of "Discovery"

F 1/23 – discussion readings: Earl Babbie, "Plagiarism,"

[www.csubak.edu/ssric/Modules/Other/plagiarism.htm](http://www.csubak.edu/ssric/Modules/Other/plagiarism.htm) (print and bring); and

Las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies* (ALL)

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. How does religion affect Las Casas's opinions, and what does he think God can do?
2. How does Las Casas view the native peoples of the "New World"? What other perspectives can you see in the text? Where do you think these viewpoints come from?

Week 2—The Responsibilities of a Christian

T 1/27 – lecture: The Reformations

Th 1/29 – lecture: Work, Property, and Life

F 1/30 – discussion readings: Wiesner, supplemental chapter (first in volume, pp. A1-A24): "The Spread of the Reformation," (**required**); and chapter 4, "A Statistical View of European Rural Life, 1600-1800" (recommended).

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. What can you learn from these texts about the role of religion in sixteenth-century society? How does Luther fit in?
2. What does the Reformation tell you about communication in the 16<sup>th</sup> century? How were ideas spread? What different media were used, and why?

### Week 3—Multiple Voices: Secularization, Renaissance, and Society

T 2/3 – lecture: Artistic "rebirth"?

Th 2/5 – lecture: The New Science

F 2/6 – discussion readings: Wiesner, chapter 1, "Peasant Violence: Rebellion and Riot in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1789."

Discussion Questions to consider:

2. Why did peasants rebel? What effect did these rebellions have?
3. Would you call these rebellions revolutionary? Why or why not?

### Week 4—Revolutions in Thinking and Politics

T 2/10 – lecture: Le Roi Soleil and the English Civil War

Th 2/12 – lecture: Who is Enlightened?

F 2/13 – discussion readings: Wiesner, chapter 2, "Staging Absolutism," and chapter 3, "The Mind of an Age: Science and Religion Confront Eighteenth Century Natural Disaster."

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. What justifications for absolutism are offered in these readings? How do you think the different visual representations of Louis XIV's world support or reflect absolutist monarchy?
2. What tensions do you see between religion and science in the explanations for the Lisbon earthquake? What changes do you see over time, and what differences of opinion are happening at the same time? What does this tell you about the impact of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment?

### Week 5—Enlightened Revolutions

T 2/17 – lecture: The French Revolution

Th 2/19 – lecture: Revolutionary Ideals and the European Slave Trade

F 2/20 – discussion readings: Olaudah Equiano, *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* (in Gates, *Classic Slave Narratives*) (**selections**); Wiesner, chapter 5, "A Day in the French Revolution: July 14, 1789."

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. In what ways does Equiano's narrative connect to the ideas of the Enlightenment we have been discussing in lecture? How do his attitudes toward religion, magic, and the slave trade fit in?
2. What can you tell about how revolutions happen from these readings?

## **PAPER #1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF DISCUSSION SECTION**

### Week 6—The Rights-Bearing Citizen

T 2/24 – lecture: Nature, Industrialization, and Technology – Where are the Answers?

Th 2/26 – lecture: The Revolutionary Tradition

F 2/27 – discussion readings: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Wiesner, chapter 6, "Labor Old and New: The Impact of the Industrial Revolution."

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. How is this a Romantic text, as we have been discussing Romanticism in lecture? What characteristics does it have in common with that movement, particularly in relation to nature, society, and technology? How does it also look to the Enlightenment?
2. How do descriptions of work change over the course of industrialization? What things stay the same? What factors make workers happy with their work, and what do they complain about? What effects do you see on society as a result of these changes in working patterns?

**WARNING: THE MOVIE VERSIONS ARE ALL VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE BOOK! THEY MAY BE ENTERTAINING, BUT THEY WILL NOT WORK AS HISTORICAL SOURCES!**

Week 7—Toto, I Don't Think We're In the 18th Century Anymore

T 3/2 – lecture: Liberalism, Nationalism, and Empire

Th 3/4 – **MIDTERM EXAM**

F 3/5 – NO DISCUSSION – ENJOY SPRING BREAK!

Week 8—The New Europe

T 3/16 – lecture: Who Survives/Who Thrives – Marx and Darwin

Th 3/18 – lecture: Bourgeois Life, Shopping, Prostitution, and Empire

F 3/19 – discussion readings: Wiesner, chapter 7, “Two Programs for Social and Political Change: Liberalism and Socialism,” and chapter 9, “Expansion and Public Opinion: Advocates of the 'New Imperialism,'" and

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. What is the difference between Liberalism and Socialism? **REMEMBER: NINETEENTH-CENTURY LIBERALISM AND OUR MODERN IDEAS OF “LIBERALS” ARE NOT THE SAME THING!**
2. What different kinds of arguments are being made in favor of Empire? How do they relate to our discussion of Liberalism? How do they differ from ideas underlying the Age of Discovery?

Week 9 — The Century Turns – and So Does Liberalism

T 3/23 – lecture: Nietzsche, Freud, and the Crisis of Liberal Culture

Th 3/25 – lecture: The War They Called Great

F 3/26 – discussion readings: Wiesner, chapter 10, “Citizenship and Suffrage for Women,” and chapter 11, “World War I: Total War.”

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. **What kinds of arguments are being made for and against female suffrage? How do they relate to Liberalism, Socialism, and contemporary ideas of citizenship?**
2. **What made World War I different from other wars? How did the war affect European society, and what changes in attitude can you see in the readings? Did it affect different people in different ways.**

**PAPER # 2 DUE AT BEGINNING OF DISCUSSION SECTION**

Week 10—War and Peace, East and West

T 3/30 – lecture: The Russian Revolution and the Early Soviet State

Th 4/1 – lecture: Life after the Deluge

F 4/2 – discussion readings: Wiesner, chapter 8, “Vienna and Paris, 1850-1930: The Development of the Modern City.”

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. What can you tell about the effects of industrialization and war on modern European cities?
2. What can you tell about the effects of Liberalism and Socialism on modern European cities?

Week 11—The Temporary Peace and Return to War

T 4/6 – lecture: The Rise of Fascism and the Road to 1939

Th 4/8 – lecture: The Second World War

F 4/9 – discussion readings: Wiesner, chapter 12, “Selling a Totalitarian System.”

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. Imagine you are a German citizen in the 1920s and 1930s. Which groups in society responded to Hitler earliest, and why? How do you think you would have reacted? What might you have done?
2. How did the NSDAP use technology, and to what effect? How do the rise of fascism and the role of technology relate to the First World War?

### **PAPER #3 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF DISCUSSION SECTION**

Week 12—A Brief Account of the Devastation of Europe

T 4/13 – lecture: Re-Waging War - Resistance, Collaboration, National Unity

Th 4/15 – lecture: The Holocaust

F 4/16 – discussion readings: Levi, *Survival at Auschwitz*.

Discussion Questions to Consider:

1. What can you tell from this book about how the Holocaust happened? How did cultures and systems of belief react, respond, and change? Think especially about the role of religion.
2. How does this book relate to other accounts about the Holocaust you may have read before (Wiesel’s *Night*, Anne Frank’s *Diary*, Primo Levi’s *Survival at Auschwitz*, perhaps)? How is it similar, or different? How do those relations affect your view of the Holocaust?

Week 13— Wars Cold and Hot, East and West

T 4/20 – lecture: New Superpowers, New Geography: Socialism and Conservatism in Action

Th 4/22 – lecture: Postwar Discontent: Decolonization and 1968

F 4/23 – discussion readings: Wiesner, chapter 13, “Berlin: The Crux of the Cold War, 1945-1990,” and chapter 14, “The Perils of Prosperity: The Unrest of Youth in the 1960s.”

Discussion Questions to Consider:

1. What political battles were being fought during the Cold War? Why was Berlin so important?
2. What similarities and differences do you see between these two crises in 1968, one in the West and one in the East?

## PAPER #4 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF DISCUSSION SECTION

Week 14— The New Europe

T 4/27 – lecture: The Revolutions of 1989

Th 4/29 – last lecture: 1492-1992: Rebuilding Sarajevo, European Union and Beyond

F 4/30 – discussion readings: Wiesner, second supplemental chapter (pp. B1-B32), “The New Europeans: Labor, Migration, and the Problems of Assimilation;” chapter 15, “Beyond the Nation-State: The European Union.”

Discussion Questions to consider:

1. How does the new Europe (and the new Europeans) relate to the Europe of the beginning of the course? Consider the roles of religion, race, and ideas about other places and European identity.
2. What do you think have been the big issues we have discussed in this course? How would you describe the past five hundred years of European history? What have we learned about “Western Traditions”?

### SOME NOTES ABOUT WRITING PAPERS AND ESSAYS:

1. You must be making a historical argument rather than just offering a description or telling a story. If no one could disagree with what you are saying, it isn't an argument. Then, set out to support that argument – to convince your reader – with the use of specific evidence from the texts themselves. “History 1400 deals with the last five hundred years of European history” is a description. “History 1400 is the best class I've ever taken” is an argument, but one that you cannot support with evidence, as it is a personal judgment. “History 1400 demonstrated the usefulness of studying the past to life in the present” is an argument which, we hope, you will be able to effectively support with evidence by the end of the semester.
2. In case you missed #1, you must make a **historical** argument (that means it must be about the **past**), and you must support it by your **analysis** of specific **evidence** – the primary sources you are reading for your class assignments.
3. Papers and essays have a traditional structure that makes sense: start with an introduction that lets your reader know what you are arguing and how it is significant. In the body of your paper, present your evidence in a compelling and logical order. Don't forget to analyze your evidence – you can't trust it to speak for itself – YOU have to explain it to your reader. Then, conclude. Conclusions can be tricky – you need to do more than restate your introduction, and conclusions are NOT about bringing things up to the present day. They are about tying everything together in a neat package so your reader will be convinced by your argument.
4. Be careful with evidence, and make sure you cite things properly. This means complete footnotes (or endnotes) not just for direct quotations, but for ideas. Your work and other people's work need to be clearly distinguished from each other. If you are not sure about the definition of plagiarism, come talk to any of the instructors. There are also resources here at the university.
5. Write as if your reader is an intelligent person who is familiar with the texts you are discussing, but doesn't know them as well as you do. This means giving enough context to make discussions of evidence make sense, but not overwhelming yourself in detail.
6. Always remember that you are making a **historical argument** - this means that it is about the past, not the present; and it is not just about your personal preferences.
7. Papers must have titles. A title must be descriptive of the paper that follows – it is a signpost to your reader.