

HIST1300 Western Traditions before 1500 Spring 2019

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class we survey some of the major developments of western civilization from Antiquity to A.D. 1500/1500 C.E. Our broad objectives are to understand the people of these particular places and times on their own terms, and to consider our indebtedness to their achievements – in short, to enhance our understanding that we, in the early 21st century, occupy the most recent place on a great historical continuum. We will focus on political, cultural, economic and social institutions, and we will discuss the types of evidence that have survived from the ancient and medieval periods, and the challenges of interpreting those documents. Students will have a chance to analyze primary texts both in lecture and in discussion sections each week. In lecture we will sometimes focus on specific individuals who seem to encapsulate the tenor and change of their times, and also consider some of the most famous myths and legends of the western tradition, stories that were elaborated by popular imagination and inventiveness, and that can be rich stores of historical information, if handled carefully. Ultimately, the student is encouraged to become a "historically-minded" person, one who is aware of the complexity of studying the past, who can critique the interpretations of historians, and who wishes to understand rather than pass judgment upon the events and people of history.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Lynn Hunt et al., *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures* (vol. 1: to 1750) (6th ed.)

Katharine Lualdi, ed., *Sources of 'The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures'* (vol. 1: to 1750) (6th ed.)

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (tr. Martin Hammond) Penguin Classics

Edwin DeWindt, *A Slice of Life: Selected Documents of Medieval English Peasant Experience*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Two hourly exams, each worth 20% of the final grade

Discussion (participation), 30%

Final Exam, 30%

All exams are essay and short answer format. A set of essay questions will be handed out one week before each exam. A copy of the course syllabus will be posted on HuskyCT, and a set of lecture outlines will follow shortly. You should come to class having done the reading and be prepared, especially in the discussion section, to answer and raise questions on the material.

Note: for all discussion sections please be sure and bring to class the Lualdi primary source collection and, for lecture, please bring the *Meditations* or the DeWindt collection of documents on the days when those texts are assigned.

Use of laptop computers: we will discuss this the first day of class.

Policy on plagiarism: The *Oxford English Dictionary* (available at <http://www.oed.com/>) defines plagiarism as follows: "to take and use as one's own (the thoughts, writings, or inventions of another person); to copy (literary work or ideas) improperly or without acknowledgement; to pass off as one's own the thoughts or work of another." Academic misconduct is discussed in the Student Code on the Community Standards website, community.uconn.edu, Appendix A.

The Homer Babbidge Library has a plagiarism "fact sheet" at

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/instruction/tutorials/plagiarism.htm>. Anyone who commits academic misconduct will, at the very least, receive an F for that portion of coursework and have to redo

the work for no credit; failure to redo that work will result in an F for the course.
Students with disabilities: If you have a disability for which you wish to request academic accommodations, please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD), located in Wilbur Cross, Room 204 (860-486-2020 or at csd@uconn.edu). More information is available on the CSD website (www.csd.uconn.edu). Please also speak with me early in the semester.

READINGS for lecture and discussion (come to class having read for that day)

January

- 22 Introduction to the course
- 24 Agricultural Revolution & early civilizations: Mesopotamia. Hunt et al., xxxi-xxxii, 1-11
- 25 Discussion: Lualdi, Introduction, pp. xv-xxvii
- 29 Early civilizations: Egypt. Hunt, 12-20
- 31 The Eastern Mediterranean: Minoans and Mycenaeans. Hunt, 21-31

February

- 1 Discussion: Lualdi, Chapter 1
- 5 The Levant and Early Greece. Hunt, 32-61
- 7 The Greek "Golden Age." Hunt, 62-85
- 8 Discussion: Lualdi, Chapter 2
- 12 The Peloponnesian War to the Hellenistic Age. Hunt, 85-116
- 14 From the rise of Rome to the "Time of Troubles." Hunt, 117-142
- 15 Discussion: Lualdi, Chapter 3
- 19 The 'Roman Revolution:' the Augustan settlement; early Christianity. Hunt, 143-165
- 21 *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius
- 22 Discussion: Lualdi, Chapter 6
- 26 *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, cont'd.
- 28 The "Terrible" Third Century. Hunt, 165-177

March

- 1 Discussion: FIRST EXAM
- 5 The Conversion of Constantine: Rome's First Christian Emperor. Hunt, 177-186
- 7 Migrations, invasions, and the post-Roman world. Hunt, 186-201
- 8 Discussion: Lualdi, Chapter 7
- 12 Heirs to Antiquity: Islam and Byzantium. Hunt, 202-214, 228-237
- 14 Heirs to Antiquity: Germanic successor states. Hunt, 214-227
- 15 Discussion: Lualdi, Chapter 8
- 26 Charlemagne, Carolingian, and post-Carolingian Europe. Hunt, 237-257
- 28 Commercial Recovery. Hunt, 258-264
- 29 Discussion: Lualdi, Chapter 9 & Chapter 10, document #1

April

- 2 Reform: "freeing the church from the world." Hunt, 264-273
- 4 The Crusades and the expansion of Europe. Hunt, 273-284
- 5 Discussion: SECOND EXAM

- 9 The Universities. Hunt, 285-291
- 11 DeWindt, *A Slice of Life*, pp. 1-44 (introduction and document 1)
- 12 Discussion: DeWindt
- 16 DeWindt, cont'd, pp. 45-88 (note glossary, pp. 89-95)
- 18 State and society in the 12th and 13th centuries. Hunt, 292-311
- 19 Discussion: Lualdi, Chapter 11
- 23 The medieval “synthesis” (?). Hunt, 312-335
- 25 The late medieval “Time of Troubles.” Hunt, 336-347
- 26 Discussion: Lualdi, Chapter 12 & Chapter 13, document #1
- 30 Periodization: when does the medieval end and the modern begin? Hunt, 347-367

May

- 2 Catch-up & review for Final Exam
- 3 Discussion: review for Final Exam

A Usable Past: “[H]istory is not the private preserve of professional historians, just as divinity, law, and medicine do not “belong” to clergymen, lawyers, and physicians. Like other professional groups, historians are properly the servants of a public that needs historical perspective to understand itself and its values, and perhaps also to acknowledge its limitations and its guilt. Historians have an obligation, I believe, to meet public needs of this kind.”

-William J. Bouwsma

A Usable Past: Essays in European Cultural History
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 1.