

Department of History,
University of Manitoba
Fall 2012
Hist. 1350 W (A02)

**INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF
WESTERN CIVILIZATION, TO 1500**

Instructor: Paul Jenkins

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Office Hours: 11:00 am – 1:00 pm Tues./Thurs., or by appointment.

Time: Tues./Thurs., 8:30-9:45 am

Location: 137 Isbister Building

Course Description:

This course provides a broad introduction to a dynamic and foundational period in the history of the West, from its roots in North Africa and the Middle East to the striking rise and expansion of Europe during the Renaissance. This is a story shaped by deep and on-going interactions and cultural exchanges between the various peoples and civilizations of these regions. You will become acquainted with not only the uniqueness and importance of Western Civilization, but also the crucial role non-western influences played in determining its shape and character. This course provides a broad foundation for further study in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern history, and will introduce you to the ways in which historians think and work. Particular attention will be focused on teaching you how to read the different kinds of primary sources historians use to construct their interpretations of the past. Through the combination of lectures, readings, discussions, and written assignments you will also develop valuable critical, analytical, and writing skills.

Readings: The assigned readings are an essential part of this course. They are intended to complement the lectures and written assignments, as well as help you develop critical reading skills. On examinations you are responsible for all the material covered in the readings and lectures. The required books are available in the University Book Store.

Books:

John McKay, Bennett Hill, John Buckler, Clare Crowston, Marry Wiesner-Hanks, *Understanding Western Society: A Brief History, Volume 1: From Antiquity to Enlightenment.*

John McKay, ed., *Sources of Western Society, Volume 1: From Antiquity to Enlightenment.*

Virgil, *The Aeneid.*

Assignments and Evaluation:

Participation and Class Assignments, 10% of Final Grade

This portion of your grade is a cumulative one made by your participation in informal class discussions, as well as a number of short and similarly informal assignments designed to help you master course material, while also developing valuable analytical and writing skills. They will be periodically assigned throughout the semester and will be thoroughly explained in class.

Document (“Primary Source”) Analysis, 20% of Final Grade, due **October 4**

Choose either the *Book of Genesis* or the *Book of Exodus* found in chapter 2 of *Sources of Western Society*. These texts come from the Hebrew Bible, which is not a document that we may accept as literal truth, but what type of God do they describe, and what do they tell us about the people who created these documents? Your focus should be concentrated on the text and its interpretation. Interpreting “primary sources” is a challenging process requiring attentive reading and rereading, critical examination (i.e. pushing against the grain of the text, asking it critical questions), and supplementary research. You are, therefore, free to consult secondary sources (maximum 3) to help you with your historical interpretation – but if you do, they *must* be properly acknowledged and referenced. Based on your reading of the document devise a clearly articulated thesis statement, and present evidence in a controlled and organized way to support your argument. This essay must be a minimum length of 1500 words.

Scholarly Article (“Secondary Source”) Analysis, 15% of Final Grade, due **November 1**

Scholarly journals are a major resource used by historians. Journal articles are a type of “secondary source” that often contain the latest findings, interpretive arguments, and theses advanced by historians. Like “primary sources” there is a knack to reading them effectively. Find three recent articles (published in the last 5 years) from a scholarly journal on any **one topic** in medieval history between 600-1300 (that is, all three articles must be on the same topic). Compile these articles into a bibliography in the Chicago Style – precise format matters.

See http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html for guidance. Next, select **one** of your three articles, read it, and in one page outline the author’s argument, identify the evidence s/he uses, and examine how they are used to support the author’s argument.

You can find articles through the “Databases A-Z” link, under the “Find” tab on the University Library’s main page. The databases ITER and the International Medieval Bibliography are recommended as good places to start. You might also look through recent volumes of the *Journal of Medieval History*, *The Medieval History Journal*, *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, *Speculum*, or *Viator*, but do not feel bound by any of these recommendations. If you have any problems do not hesitate to ask for help from the library staff, a classmate, or myself.

Research Essay, 25% of Final Grade, due November 30

This assignment combines the main elements of the first two written assignments. As in the Document Analysis, chose a text from *Sources of Western Society* from before 1500. Next come up with a question relevant to the course themes that your selected document can answer. Once you have done this, find 5 scholarly books and at least 6 journal articles relevant to your question, and, again, using the Chicago Style Manual format compile them into a formal bibliography – format matters. From this bibliography choose 3 articles to help you interpret your chosen document and answer your question, and remember they must be properly referenced. Once again, you must have a clearly articulated thesis statement, and present evidence in a controlled and organized way to support your argument. This essay must be a minimum length of 1500 words.

Final Examination held during University Exam Period, TBA (30% of Final Grade)

Students are responsible for completing assignments on time. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Late papers will be penalized 2% for every weekday, and 2% total for every weekend, after the established deadline.

The Voluntary Withdrawal Date for this course is November 14, 2012. Up to 35% of your grade will be available before that date. The format of the in-term test and final examination will be clearly explained in class. Since this is a course that meets the University Senate’s “W” requirement, students must complete all essay assignments with a passing grade to pass the course.

If you wish to appeal a grade given for term work must do so within 10 working days after the term work has been made available to them. Uncollected term work will become the property of the Faculty of Arts and will be subject to confidential destruction.

Grade Scale:

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| A+ | 90-100%, Outstanding | C+ | 65-69%, Satisfactory |
| A | 80-90%, Excellent | C | 60-64%, Adequate |
| B+ | 75-79%, Very Good | D | 50-59%, Marginal |
| B | 70-74%, Good | F | 49% or below, Failing |

A note on plagiarism: The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for Disciplinary Action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five (5) years from registration in courses taught in a particular department/program in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty. The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication.

The common penalty in Arts for academic dishonesty on a test or examination is F for the paper, F (DISC) for the course, and a one-year suspension from courses acceptable for credit in the Faculty. For more serious acts of academic dishonesty on a test or examination, such as repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department or program in Arts or from all courses taught in or accepted for credit by this Faculty.

A note on technology: Technology can be a powerful tool, but it can also be distracting. I welcome the use of computers to take notes during class. However, this is not license to surf the Internet or chat with your friends on Facebook or similar social media. Also, cell phones, iPods, and other such personal devices must be turned off or silenced for the duration of the class.