HST 1100: Western Civilizations to 1500  
T-Th 10:00-11:20

The primary goals of this course are:

- to introduce you to some of the main actors and events that shaped “Western Civilization.” Quizzes and exams will help you become familiar with these names and events.
- to teach you how historians analyze surviving evidence. To this end, we will read primary sources – sources from the period under study – and secondary sources – historians’ analyses of the primary sources. We will also consider how historical interpretations change as new information emerges and as cultural changes place greater or lesser emphasis on different parts of history and offer new interpretations of events.
- to provide you with an opportunity to work out some of your own thoughts and interpretations about human history. This will be accomplished through class discussions, tests, and papers. Visiting the professor, graduate assistant, and supplemental instructor during office hours and review sessions will also give you the opportunity to develop your ideas.

By the end of the course, students must clearly demonstrate the ability to understand and apply basic historical concepts, methodologies, and approaches. This goal will be accomplished and measured by using essay tests, papers, and various forms of structured discussion. This syllabus asks the students to prepare answers for in-class discussion and to complete a short paper based on primary sources.

The Wright State Core: This course meets a requirement for a history course in Element Three of the Wright State Core. By the end of this class you should be able to

a. Critically describe some of the political, social or economic systems; historical, cultural or spiritual traditions; and/or technological innovations around the world
b. Demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of people or traditions in our world in ways that promote effective engagement, both locally and globally

c. Use political, social, economic, historical, cultural, spiritual or technological knowledge to evaluate contemporary issues

For purposes of transfer and articulation among schools within the University System of Ohio, this course is also designed to help you

- Apply critical thinking to analyze primary and secondary sources (i.e. historical analysis of text).
- Explain the cause, effect and relevance of specific historical events and/or periods within the broader historical context.
- Understand and articulate diverse historical interpretations.
- Articulate historical arguments in a variety of forms of communication.
Format

Each week you will be expected to read a selection from the textbook and attend my lectures. Both of these assignments have two functions: first, to give you the vocabulary of names, dates, places, etc. in order to talk about past societies; and second, to acquaint you with the principal interpretations and theories used to assemble these facts into a coherent story. Your mastery of this material will be tested on biweekly quizzes. There will be five multiple choice quizzes, four of which will count towards your final grade and I will drop the lowest scoring quiz. Make-up quizzes will be offered only in extraordinary circumstances (e.g. a protracted, documented illness or a major family emergency). Other absences will count as the lowest scoring quiz.

The more creative aspect of your work will consist of reconstructing past societies based on their primary sources. You will read three primary sources: a Mesopotamian myth, a Greek comedy by Aristophanes, and a medieval tale about Renard the Fox. Based on these sources, you will write three short papers. At the end of the quarter you will write a longer paper, comparing at least two primary sources to examine how classical and medieval societies dealt with an important issue, such as education, war and the rules of war, aesthetics, constitutional law and political activity, etc. On WebCT you will find suggestions for essay topics and a style sheet that discusses how to structure your essay, use footnotes, and review your partner’s draft of the final paper. Proposed topics are meant to get you started, and you are always encouraged to find your own connections and patterns in the sources.

Prior to handing in the final draft of the longer paper, you will exchange rough drafts with a partner in the class. The purpose of exchanging drafts is to test whether your argument is strong enough to convince another person. The critique/review allows you to test your ideas on a classmate before you try to convince me. As the reviewer, your goal is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your partner’s paper, and give him or her enough time and guidance to fix the problems before I see the final draft.

Exams

There will be a mid-term examination in class in the 8th week and a final examination during the week of final exams. Each exam will consist of multiple choice questions and an essay.

Required books


6 quizzes (lowest one dropped)..................50%
Short paper .............................................20%
Mid-term ..................................................15%
Final .....................................................15%
Week 1: Historical Methods and Sources: Pre-History
The Making of the West, p. xxvii-xxviii (“How to read Primary sources”); P-3 to P-15 (Prologue); AND pp. 3-7.
Weekly IDs and Questions

Week 2: Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Judaism
The Making of the West, pp.7-42.
Weekly IDs and Questions
Quiz 1

Week 3: Classical Greece
The Making of the West, 42-100, 104-110.
Weekly IDs and Questions
Read Aristophanes, The Clouds.

Week 4: The Rise of the Roman Empire
Weekly IDs and Questions
Quiz 2

Week 5: The Decline of the Roman Empire; Christianity and the German Tribes
The Making of the West, 181-192, 195-221.
Weekly IDs and Questions

Week 6: Late Antiquity and the Decline of the Mediterranean
The Making of the West, 221-258
Weekly IDs and Questions
Quiz 3

Week 7: The Tripartite World
The Making of the West, 261-282.
Weekly IDs and Questions

Week 8: The Rise of Feudal Society
The Making of the West, 282-292, 346-349.
Weekly IDs and Questions
Begin to read Renard the Fox.
Mid-term exam

Week 9: The Medieval Church and Its Reformations
The Making of the West, 302-313, 332-336.
Weekly IDs and Questions

Week 10: Economic Expansion
Weekly IDs and Questions
Quiz 4
Week 11: Universities and the Inquisition
Weekly IDs and Questions

Week 12: Feudal Monarchies
Weekly IDs and Questions
Quiz 5

Week 13: Crises of the Late Middle Ages
Weekly IDs and Questions

Week 14: The Renaissance?
*The Making of the West*, 401-416.
Weekly IDs and Questions
Quiz 6
Final papers due

Final Exam

Course information:
  **Title:** HST 1100: Western Civilizations to 1500  
  **Credit:** Three semester hours  
  **Course Description:** Examination of the character of the pre-modern world from prehistory through the 15th century with special attention to those aspects of ancient and medieval life that had the greatest effect on the development of Western society, politics, and culture.  
  **Prerequisites:** None  
  **Offering Unit:** Department of History, College of Liberal Arts