HIST E-1156: Early Modern Europe, 1450-1789
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Course Description

This course introduces undergraduates to the history of early modern Europe. It provides a survey from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the French Revolution in 1789. Early modern Europe experienced artistic flourishing and transformative new scientific, religious, and philosophical ideas. But it was also a period of extreme bloodshed and violence with a thirty-year war, numerous uprisings, and conflicts between princes, popes, and principalities fighting for control. These developments spread far beyond Europe itself through colonization and global travel and our course will consider how European expansion affected those in Europe as well as abroad. Our major topics will include: the Renaissance and Reformation, empires and overseas imperialism, religious conflict and wars, printing, the scientific revolution, state formation, the Republic of Letters, and the Enlightenment. The geographical focus will move beyond Western Europe to incorporate Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe as well as Asia, the Americas, and Africa. We will read the work of the major figures of the period, including Machiavelli, Erasmus, Comenius, Rousseau, Bacon, and Kant, in addition to those of important thinkers who are less well-known today.
**Course Requirements**

*Short Weekly Response Papers (40%):* Each student will prepare short answers to two of the questions posted weekly to the course website normally Sunday. Each answer must be 250 words. Copies of the response paper must be submitted to your TF each Thursday by 6:00 PM (EST). Response papers will be graded on a Check Plus/Check/Check Minus scale.

*Midterm Exam (30%):* This one-hour exam in the middle of the semester will examine your understanding of the course so far. It will consist of IDs and one essay. Please consult with your TF about the exam if you are a Distance Learner. It is your responsibility for making proper exam proctoring arrangements that meet the requirements of the Extension School.

*In-Class Final Exam (30%):* This exam will consist of IDs, short-answer questions, and an essay that will ask you to engage in broad analysis of the materials in the course. Please consult with your TF about the exam if you are a Distance Learner. It is your responsibility for making proper exam proctoring arrangements that meet the requirements of the Extension School.

*Participation and Attendance at Section Discussions:* There will be an optional section led remotely by the Extension School TF, Jesse Howell. Jesse will send out more information about section at the beginning of the semester. Please direct questions about course requirements, readings, and topics to Jesse.

**Plagiarism and Collaboration**

It is expected that all homework assignments, papers, and any other work submitted for academic credit will be the student’s own. Students should always take great care to distinguish their own ideas and knowledge from information derived from sources. The term “sources” includes not only primary and secondary material published in print or online, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people. Quotations must be placed properly within quotation marks and must be cited fully. In addition, all paraphrased material must be acknowledged completely. Whenever ideas or facts are derived from a student’s reading and research or from a student’s own writings, the sources must be indicated. (In this spirit, let me acknowledge that this policy is drawn from Harvard’s collaboration policy guidelines.)

The responsibility for learning the proper forms of citation lies with the individual student. Students are expected to be familiar with the Harvard Guide to Using Sources. Students who are in any doubt about the preparation of academic work should consult their instructor and Resident Dean before the work is prepared or submitted. Students who, for whatever reason, submit work either not their own or without clear attribution to its sources will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including requirement to withdraw from the College. Students who have been found responsible for any violation of these standards will not be permitted to submit a Q evaluation of the course in which the infraction occurred. Please note that double submission (i.e. submitting the same work to more than one course) is not allowed without prior written permission of the instructor. Please contact the instructor or your resident dean if you have any questions about these policies. It is far better to ask if you are uncertain about the policy.
**Required Reading**

The vast majority of the required readings will be made available on the course website on Canvas. While you are free to consult other overviews of early modern Europe, the textbook for this course is John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe: From the Renaissance to the Age of Napoleon*, Vol. 1, 3rd Edition. Sections of the Merriman textbook will be assigned as suggested background readings throughout the course. The other required text that you should purchase at the Coop or online is Erasmus-Luther, *Discourse on Free Will* (Ernst Winter, trans.). Please remember that the lectures will complement the assigned course readings, not repeat or replace them, in terms of what will be on the midterm and final exam.

**Schedule of Lectures**

**Week 1: Introduction**
Lecture 1 (Jan. 25th): Introduction: What, When, and Where was Early Modern Europe?
Lecture 2 (Jan. 27th): The Fall of Constantinople
Background: Merriman, Ch. 1.

**Week 2: The Renaissance**
Lecture 3 (Feb. 1st): Humanism
Lecture 4 (Feb. 3rd): The Art of Politics
Background: Merriman, Ch. 2.

**Week 3: Expanding Horizons**
Lecture 5 (Feb. 8th): European Explorations around the World (Guest Lecturer: Stuart McManus)
Lecture 6 (Feb. 10th): The Renaissance beyond the Alps

**Week 4: The Reformation**
Lecture 7 (Feb. 15th): No lecture (President’s Day)
Lecture 8 (Feb. 17th): The Theology of the Reformation
Readings: Erasmus and Martin Luther, *Discourse on Free Will* (all).
Background: Merriman, Ch. 3.

**Week 5: War and Religion**
Lecture 9 (Feb. 22nd): Confessionalization
Lecture 10 (Feb. 24th): The French Wars of Religion
Background: Merriman, Ch. 4, pp. 126-144.
Week 6: Courtly Culture
Lecture 11 (Feb. 29th): The Court
Lecture 12 (Mar. 2nd): The Role of Women
Readings: Baldesar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier (selections); Isotta Nogarola, “Dialogue on the Equal or Unequal Sin of Adam and Eve”.
Background: Merry Wiesner-Hanks, Early Modern Europe, 1450-1789, Ch. 2 (Canvas).

Week 7: Society
Lecture 13 (Mar. 7th): Midterm Exam (in class)
Lecture 14 (Mar. 9th): Family Life
Readings: Three Behaim Boys, ed. Ozment (selections); Alberti, On the Family, (selections).
Background: Eugene Rice and Anthony Grafton, The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, Ch. 2 (Canvas).

*** Spring Recess: March 14th-20th ***

Week 8: A Ravaged Europe
Lecture 15 (Mar. 21st): The Thirty Years’ War
Lecture 16 (Mar. 23rd): The English Civil War
Readings: The Thirty Years’ War, ed. Helfferich (selections); Grand Remonstrance of the English Parliament (selection); Comenius, The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart (selections).
Background: Merriman, Ch. 4, pp. 145-164 and Ch. 6, pp. 208-230.

Week 9: Travel and Discovery
Lecture 17 (Mar. 28th): Empire and Trade (Guest Lecturer: Lauri Tähtinen)
Lecture 18 (Mar. 30th): Scientific Revolutions
Background: Merriman, Chs. 5 and 8.

Week 10: “Narratives” of Decline
Lecture 19 (Apr. 4th): Poland-Lithuania
Lecture 20 (Apr. 6th): Ottoman and Dutch Empires (Guest Lecturer: Polina Ivanova)
Readings: Sir William Temple, Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands (selections); Sir Paul Rycaut, The Present State of the Ottoman Empire (selections); Rousseau, Considerations on the Government of Poland, (selections).
Background: Merriman, Ch. 6, pp. 231-241 and Ch. 11.

Week 11: The Enlightenment
Lecture 21 (Apr. 11th): The Republic of Letters
Lecture 22 (Apr. 13th): Enlightened Absolutism—the Case of Prussia and Russia
Readings: Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”; Frederick II, Political Testament, (12 pages, all); François Quesnay, On Despotism in China (selections).
Background: Merriman, Chs. 7 and 9.
**Week 12: The Fall of the Old Regime**
Lecture 23 (Apr. 18\textsuperscript{th}): The Crisis of the Ancien Régime
Lecture 24 (Apr. 20\textsuperscript{th}): The French Revolution
**Readings:** *Declarations of the Rights of Man* (1789); (selections); Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (selections), Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (selections).
**Background:** Merriman, Chs. 10 and 12.

**Week 13: Overview and Conclusions**
Lecture 25 (Apr. 25\textsuperscript{th}): What was Early Modern Europe? Concluding Thoughts and Review
Lecture 26 (Apr. 27\textsuperscript{th}): In-Class Final Exam