



HIST0200 - EMERGENCE OF MODERN EUROPE

History and Traditions Sector

Major Concentration: European

Major/Minor requirements fulfilled: Europe, Pre-1800

FALL 2025: TR-8:30-9:59am

PROVISIONAL

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 10-12. Thursday, 1-2, and by appointment

This course examines the period in European history from the Black Death until the French Revolution (roughly 1348 to 1789). During this period of Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment, early modern Europe experienced a series of crises in authority that ushered in the modern world. The course will explore how new discoveries (both geographical and intellectual) challenged existing worldviews; movements of religious reform challenged the authority of the Church and the unity of Europe; and new political doctrines, accompanied by a series of striking rebellions, challenged the foundations of traditional rule.

Our aim will be to excavate the changing social, political, intellectual, and cultural experiences of men and women during this time of renaissance, reformation, enlightenment, and revolution. We will follow the encounter between Europeans and the peoples of the Americas, Africa, and Asia, as well as the “discovery” of new ways to read old books, the “discovery” of new technologies in communications and combat, and the “discovery” of new sciences, arts, and philosophies as they impacted the way Europeans related to the wider world and their place within it.

HIST0200 is constructed around close reading of primary sources as a means of exposing students to historical pasts and geographic regions both distinct from their own and that form the background to the sites of heritage in the modern world. No prior historical training is assumed, but is always welcome.

HIST0200 covers “The Emergence of Modern Europe” during a crucial time in European and world history, full of discovery, encounter, Renaissance and Reformation, exchanges between Europeans and the Americas, on the one hand, and new arrangements between Europeans, Africans, and Asians, including enslavement, conquest, religious missionary work, and commodities in motion.

Major themes will include:

- New Monarchies and new political discourses
- Renaissance and Humanism
- Christendom Divided
- Imperial expansion and Colonialism
- War and diplomacy
- Social bodies: from estates to classes
- Transformations of Popular Culture
- European economies and demography
- Enlightenments
- Revolution: Rights, Nations and Nationalism

The reading and analysis of primary sources from each era will be critical in understanding Europe's key features and development. Students will also read and discuss selected secondary sources (scholars' works). All readings will be posted on Canvas

REQUIREMENTS

- There will be three exams, covering topics discussed in class lectures, weekly readings, and primary sources.
- Required attendance to classes and read the assigned readings in advance of your arrival in class

ASSESSMENT FINAL GRADE

- First Exam: 25%
- Second Exam: 25%
- Third Exam: 25%
- Attendance/participation: 25%

Improvement over time will be taken into consideration in determining final course grades.

COURSE GOALS

History and Traditions

This sector focuses on studies of continuity and change in human thought, belief and action. Understanding both ancient and modern civilizations provides students with an essential perspective on contemporary life. Courses in this sector examine the histories of diverse civilizations, their cultures and forms of expression, their formal and informal belief systems and ideologies, and the record of their human actors. Students should learn to interpret primary sources, identify and discuss their core intellectual issues, understand the social contexts in which these sources were created, pose questions about their validity and ability to represent broader perspectives and utilize them when writing persuasive essays.

In this course, we will present a survey of the formation of European society and culture. In doing so, we will focus especially on a few main themes and issues:

- Politics with and without a “state.” What are the rules and how do they change? What makes a good ruler? What constitutes political power? Political legitimacy?
- Social organization. What changes over time—or remained the same—about family life, cities, rural life, the nobility?
- Religion. What roles did Christianity as a belief system and the Christian Church as an organization play in this society over time? What were some of the consequences for religious minorities? For the rest?

- Boundaries. How do we define the boundaries and borders of societies and cultures? What does a term like "European" mean at any given point in time?

CRITICAL SKILLS

In this course you will also develop and sharpen critical and analytic skills:

- Evidence and evaluation: assess and evaluate evidence as presented in written records
- Critical analysis: analyze the argumentation and use of evidence in the writings of modern historical scholars
- Argumentation: marshaling evidence to develop and present a convincing written argument

We will address these topics in a variety of ways:

- Lectures present a synthesis of information and analysis about the topic at hand.
- Readings for the course: There are three types of readings for this course, each involving a different way of reading.
 - Primary source documents are the “bread and butter” of the historian’s craft, are the most foundational assigned texts, and are the readings that we will be exploring directly during class discussion. Each of our class meetings will dedicate time to analyzing these texts as vehicles to learn about the worlds that produced them.
Read these texts: by asking first when they were made, where, and by whom, and then by exploring underlying motivations and mentalities they reflect.
 - Scholarship refers to scholarly interpretations of historical questions by professional historians. Scholarship is produced through the interpretation of primary sources. They are seldom statements of facts of “how things really were.” Rather, they are attempts at producing a persuasive interpretation of motivations and mentalities. It is up to you, the reader, to decide if you actually find that interpretation persuasive. In order to do that, read these texts: by (1) determining what the interpretation/argument of the essay is, (2) identifying the evidence the interpretation is based upon, (3) assessing if the evidence supports the author’s argument, and, most importantly, (4) how does the author’s interpretation significantly affect what we know about the past?
 - Context readings is designed to orient you in the large amount of information covered in this course. No class on such a wide period of time and spanning so many places can cover everything in detail (nor should it!). These readings will not be discussed directly in class. They are provided for you as aids to your study, both at times when you feel a little disoriented, at times when you are curious for more, or when you are preparing assignments or for the exam.
Read the context material for a bird’s eye view of the larger themes and issues for each class meeting. You do not need to memorize its details. Rather, absorb its broader messages for the “big picture.” You can also feel free to delve into aspects of the periods and places that you wish we had more time to cover in our course but, unfortunately, do not.

The goals of History0200 are not simply to present you with a body of information about the history of Europe, though that information is important to the course and to general education. It also serves as an introduction to the study of history, as a means to develop critical and analytic skills in both reading and writing, and a forum for examining particular topics and texts in a broad temporal period.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Wellness, Counseling, and Psychological Services:

<https://wellness.upenn.edu/>

Wellness at Penn is dedicated to caring for students during their academic journey while creating a campus-wide community of care. Our team is committed to offering a wide range of opportunities to access support, clinical resources, and practical tools to meaningfully engage with one's health and wellbeing.

Academic Accommodations (Weingarten Center):

<https://wlrc.vpul.upenn.edu/academic-accommodations/>

The Weingarten Center supports students with learning resources, tutoring, and disability services. Academic accommodations are determined on an individualized basis through an interactive process that involves student self-disclosure, documentation of disability, and an initial meeting with a Disability Specialist.

Academic Integrity:

From the Penn Code of Academic Integrity:

“Since the University is an academic community, its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. Essential to the success of this educational mission is a commitment to the principles of academic integrity. Every member of the University community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times...Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited.

If a student is unsure whether his action(s) constitute a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, then it is that student's responsibility to consult with the instructor to clarify any ambiguities.”For a complete definition and explanation of academic integrity at Penn, visit:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES



August 26 **Introduction to the Course**

August 28 **Speaking of Europe – The Myth of Europe as the Center of the World**

Primary source documents:

- Bodin, *Climate and Civilization. Six Books of the Republic*, bk. 5, chap. 1 (late 16th century)
- Botero, *Supremacy of Europe* (early 17th century)
- *Europe in the Encyclopédie* (late 18th century)

Scholarship

- Kivelson, *The Cartographic Emergence of Europe*

Sept 2-4 Europe at the Twilight of the Middle Ages

Primary source documents:

- Clement VI, Sicut Judeis (1348), in Horrox, *Black Death*, 221-222.
- Decrees on Sale of Unfree Christians, c. 922-1171
- Boccaccio - "The onset of the Black Death"
- Chronicles of the expulsion of the Jews from France, and Spain + Decree of expulsion Jews from Spain, 1492
- Surrender Treaty of the Kingdom of Granada (1492)

Scholarship

- Monica Green, "The Four Black Deaths" *The American Historical Review* 125, 5: 1601-31.
- Jones – "The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe"

Context

- Blockmans – *Introduction to Medieval Europe*, chap. 14

Sep 9-11 Humanism and Renaissance

Primary source documents:

- Petrarch: Letter to Lapo de Castiglionchio (ca. 1351)
- Lorenzo Valla – *On the Donation of Constantine*
- Filippo de Strata, *Polemic Against Printing* (ca. 1470)
- Machiavelli, Letter to Vettori (1513)

Scholarship:

- King – "Return to the Ancient World?"

Context:

- James Raven, "Printing and Printedness," in Hamish Scott (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750* (2015; online edn, Oxford Academic)

Sept 16 Power in 1500-1550s

Primary source documents:

- Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *De Europa* (1458): "Dedication Letter", "Chapter 7: The Fall of Constantinople," 49-50, 93-100.
- De Giano - "On the Cruelty of the Turks" (1473)

Scholarship:

- "A Global Renaissance" in Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 33-61.

Context:

- Gábor Ágoston, "The Ottoman Empire and Europe" in Hamish Scott (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750* (2015; online edn, Oxford Academic)

Sept 18-23 Iberia and the Discovery of the New World

Primary source documents:

- Columbus, Letters + Circulation of Columbus' 1493 Letter
- Las Casas, A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies (1542) – Selections, and Selections from “Thirty Very Juridical Propositions”
- Montaigne, Of Cannibals

Scholarship:

- Patricia Seed, “The Requirement: A Protocol for Conquest,” *Ceremonies of possession in Europe's conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 69-99.

Context:

- J. H. Elliott, “Iberian Empires,” in Hamish Scott (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750* (2015; online edn, Oxford Academic)

Sept 25 Religious Challenges: Protestant Reform/Catholic Reaction

Primary source documents:

- Pope Leo X, “Arise, O Lord” (1520), in *The German Reformation and Peasants War* (Bedford, 2012): 46-49.
- Martin Luther, Letter to Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate (1520), in *A Reformation Reader* (Fortress Press, 2008): 98-105.
- The Council of Trent, “Decrees and Canons and Justification,” “Canon on the Sacraments in General.”
- St. Francis Xavier, “Letter from Japan, to the Society of Jesus in Europe” (1552)
- Theories on Resisting the King

Scholarship:

- Pettegree, *Brand Luther: 1517, printing, and the making of the Reformation*, 143-163.
- Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770*, chaps. 12 and 13

Context:

- Rublack, “Protestantism and its Adherents,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History*
- Terpstra, “Early Modern Catholicism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History*

SEPT 30 - Review First Section

OCTOBER 2 FIRST IN-CLASS EXAM

Oct 7 An Age of Religious War: Internal and International Conflicts

Primary source documents:

- Documents on Religious Wars in France
- The religious peace of Augsburg (1555)
- The Dutch Revolt
- Philip II on France and England: The fighting to impose Catholicism

Scholarship:

- Holt, “Belief and its Limits,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750*

OCTOBER 9 – NO CLASSES FALL BREAK

Oct 14 New Sciences, Old Practices

Primary Source documents:

- Galileo Galilei, Two dedicatory letters
- René Descartes “Discourse on Method” (1637)

Scholarship:

- Shapin, “The Men of Science”

Context:

- Crowther, “The Scientific Revolution” in The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750

Oct 16 Struggles for Hegemony – Thirty Years’ War to Westphalia

Primary source documents:

- The Thirty Years War Documents
- The Treaty of Westphalia

Scholarship:

- Parker, “The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century,” American Historical Review.

Context

- Thomas Munck, Seventeenth-Century Europe, chaps. 2 and 7

Oct 21 The Atlantic World of Europe, 17th Century

Primary source documents:

- John Winthrop, “Reasons to be considered for justifying the undertakers of the intended plantation in New England...” (1629) in Envisioning America (Bedford, 1995): 133-139.
- The Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641)
- Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America (Octagon, 1969): 123-127.
- Virginia Laws

Scholarship:

- John Elliott, Empires of the Atlantic World, chap. 4

Oct 23 Age of Absolutism

Primary source documents:

- Louis XIV, Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (October 22, 1685)
- Hobbes and Bossuet on the absolute power of kings

Scholarship:

- Sommerville, “Absolutism and royalism”

Context

- Schwartzwald, “Monarchy Absolute: Europe in the Age of Louis XIV”

OCTOBER 28 - Review Second section

OCTOBER 30 - SECOND IN-CLASS EXAM

Nov 4 A New European and Atlantic Order

Primary Source documents:

- Treaties of Utrecht

Scholarship

- Simms, “Europe’s Shifting Balance of Power” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750*.

Nov 6 The Enlightenment

Primary source documents:

- Voltaire, *Candide*
- Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”
- Joseph II, “Edict of Tolerance” (January 2, 1782)
- Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (ca. 1781)

Scholarship:

- Darnton, *The Forbidden Bestsellers of Prerevolutionary France* (article)
- Outran - Enlightenment thinking about gender

Context:

- Robertson “Europe’s Enlightenment,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750*

Nov 11 A New Political Economy for a New Imperialism: Imperial Reforms and the Battle for World Hegemony

Primary source documents

- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*

Scholarship

- Kathryn Sutherland, “The new economics of the Enlightenment,” in *The Enlightened World*

Context

- Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus. Technological Change and Industrial Development*, chaps 1 and 2

Nov 13–18-20 The End of the Old Regime: Revolutions

Primary source documents

- Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789)
- De Gouges, Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen (1791)
- Declaration of Independence (1776)
- Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution*

Scholarship

- Sutherland, “The new economics of the Enlightenment,” in *The Enlightened World*
- Armitage, “The American Revolution in Atlantic Perspective”
- Rapport, “The International Repercussion of the French Revolution”
- Geggus, “The Haitian Revolution in Atlantic Perspective”

Nov 25 The Pursuit of a New Europe

Scholarship

- Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolutions*, chap. 7

- Anthony Pagden, *The Pursuit of Europe*, chaps 1&2

Dec 2 Review Third Section
DECEMBER 4 THIRD IN-CLASS EXAM