

History 0200: The Emergence of Modern Europe
TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Teddy Chappell

Mondays 5:15-8:15pm

Location: TBD

Office Hours: TBD

Course Description: 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.

Another aim of this course will be to critically examine categories and periodization, such as Early Modern Europe, the Renaissance, or the Scientific Revolution. We will consider not only how more recent scholarship has challenged the accuracy and significance of these traditional interpretations (e.g. did the scientific activity of the seventeenth century really constitute a “revolution”?), but also how these narratives were shaped in the first place, often within the period we are studying.

Readings, Class, Participation, and Attendance: Yet another goal this course is to introduce students to a wide variety of historical sources and familiarize them with how to read and analyze them effectively. Most weeks will draw from our textbook, *Early Modern Europe, 1450-1789* (3rd edition) by Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (this is the only book of which students will be required to get their own copy; the rest of the readings will be available electronically on Canvas). We will also read a number of primary sources and selections from scholarly monographs in a range of disciplines. Some of these readings may be challenging, but part of our discussion each week will be about how best to confront these difficulties.

Class each week will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. Students are expected to read the material for that week and come to class ready to discuss them. To kickstart discussion, each student will post a question that they had about the readings or the topics covered before

coming to class. Posting these questions and participating in in-class discussions will make up students participation grade.

Since class is only once a week, regular attendance is important and will be tracked by the instructor (more than one unexcused absence will affect students' participation grades). If students will be absent, they should notify the instructor ahead of time. To make up for absences, students can write a thoughtful, one to two page (double-spaced) response to that week's readings. This paper needs to be turned in ahead of time unless there is an emergency, and students can only do this up to two times before an alternative arrangement needs to be made with the instructor.

Papers: Students will be assessed primarily on the basis of three five-page papers that are due over the course of the semester. For each paper, students will have a variety of prompts to respond to that will involve past readings. In consultation with the instructor at least a week ahead of the due date, students may choose their own prompts or topics, and advanced students may also combine two of the papers into a larger research paper. The goal with these papers is for students to improve their writing and historical analysis, on the basis of feedback from the instructor on previous papers, so the final two paper are worth a higher percentage overall.

Grade Breakdown:

30%, Participation (attendance, participation in discussions, and weekly canvas questions)

20% First response paper

25% Second response paper

25% Third response paper

Schedule:

January 22nd: Introductions

January 29th: **The Black Death and the End of the Middle Ages**

Readings: William Chester Jordan, *Europe in the High Middle Ages*, Prologue; Part II introduction (just a page or two); Chapters 8, 9, and 19; Epilogue

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Author's Preface and Introduction, Day I, Story 1; I,2; II, 4; III, 1; III, 8; VI, 5; VII, 5; X, 1 (and one story of your own choosing)

February 5th: **Fifteenth-Century Europe and the Print Revolution**

Readings: *Early Modern Europe*, Chapters 1 and 6

Johannes Trithemius, *In Praise of Scribes*

February 12th: **Renaissance**

Readings: *Early Modern Europe*, Chapter 4

Charles Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (2nd ed.), Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

Paula Findlen, "Possessing the Past: The Material World of the Italian Renaissance"

February 19th: Reformation

Readings: *Early Modern Europe*, Chapter 5

Martin Luther, *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments*

FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE BY END OF WEEK (FEBRUARY 23RD AT 11:59PM)

February 26th: War

Readings: Chapter 3 and Chapter 9, p. 367-374

Peter Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy*, Introduction

Mario Biagioli, "The Social Status of Italian Mathematicians, 1450-1600"

Spring Break

March 11th: Global Encounters

Readings: *Early Modern Europe*, Chapter 5

Marcy Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics"

JH Elliot, *The Old World and the New*, Chapter 1

March 18th: The Scientific Revolution

Readings: *Early Modern Europe*, Chapter 10, p. 385-399

Dan Hofstadter, *The Earth Moves: Galileo and the Roman Inquisition*

March 25th: Everyday Life, Religion, and Inquisition

Readings: *Early Modern Europe*, Chapters 2 and 11

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, Preface to the Italian Edition, Chapters 1-3, 9, 13-17, 23, 26-30, 58-62

SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE BY END OF WEEK (MARCH 29TH AT 11:59PM)

April 1st: Absolutism and New Political Orders

Readings: *Early Modern Europe*, Chapters 8 and 9 (from p. 374)

Hall Bjørnstad, *The Dream of Absolutism: Louis XIV and the Logic of Modernity*, Introduction

Selections from Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

April 8th: Puritanism and Seventeenth-Century English Revolutions

Readings: NSCC, "The English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution"

(<https://pressbooks.nsc.ca/worldhistory/chapter/the-english-civil-war-and-the-glorious-revolution/>)

Selections for John Milton, *Areopagitica*

Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism*, Introduction and Chapter 11

April 15th: The Atlantic World and Early Modern Consumption

Readings: *Early Modern Europe*, Chapters 12 and 13

Harold Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age*, Introduction

April 22nd: Enlightenment

Readings: *Early Modern Europe*, Chapter 10 (p. 399 onwards)

Immanuel Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*

Voltaire, *Candide*

April 29th: Revolution

Readings: Isser Woloch, *The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789-1820*, Preface

Selections from Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*

FINAL SHORT PAPER DUE BY MAY 10TH 11:59PM