

## HISTORY 101: “Rise of European Civilization”

Fall 2008  
TR 8:00-9:15 AM  
Maybank Hall (MYBK) 317  
Prof. van Meer  
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Office hours: Walk-ins on Monday 1-3 pm, or by appointment

### Welcome to the Rise of European Civilization!

Please contact me with any concern you may have as early as possible. **Do not wait until the day before an exam, or before an assignment is due.** I will be happy to meet with you to talk about any class-related issue. And in most circumstances, I will reply to your e-mail message in 24 hours or less.

### Course Description

The term “Western civilization” is often used as a matter of fact. But what, if anything, defines the “West”? Has there ever been one social and political system, one technological outlook, one economic practice, one set of religious and cultural beliefs that defines all people living in the “West”? Is the “West” really a select group of people, or a fixed geographic location? Why or why not? In this course, we will address these fundamental questions about ourselves and the world as we explore the historical formation of Western civilization. We will start our investigation in ancient times with the birth of agriculture in Mesopotamia and Egypt, and end in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the imperial dominance of “Europe” over much of the world.

### Course Goals

By the end of the course, you are expected:

- 1) to demonstrate a solid understanding of the key political, social, technological, cultural and economic systems that have made up “the West.”
- 2) to be able to carefully examine “The Rise of Europe” as a contingent historical process. This means that you can explain how the “West” was constantly shaped and contested, from the earliest times until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, by various people, using different artifacts and ideas, at locations within the European continent and without.
- 3) to be able to debate the concept of “historical progress.” People have always tried to “better” their lives and their societies, but what were the opportunities and obstacles they faced in doing so? For example, is all change progressive? Are judicial systems always just? Why or why not?
- 4) to improve your skills in reading, argumentation, essay writing and historical analysis.

### Required Course Readings

- Mark A. Kishlansky, ed., *Sources of the West: Readings in Western Civilization*, Vol 1 From the Beginning to 1715, Pearson/Longman, 2008. ISBN-10: 0-205-56839-4 [“Sourcebook”]
- Brian Levack, Edward Muir, Michael Maas, Meredith Veldman, *The West: Encounters and Transformations*, Vol 1 to 1715, Concise Edition, Pearson/Longman, 2007. ISBN-0-321-27632-9 [“Textbook”]

The College of Charleston's bookstore has the above two books available in one special shrink-wrapped VALUEPACK with ISBN 10: 0321477081

- *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (available via WebCT)
- Any additional handouts, e-links, or readings assigned during the course.

### **Grading Scale**

A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+= 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+= 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+= 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, F = 59 and below.

Note that an "A" stands for "excellent and superior" work, a "B" denotes "good" quality work, while a "C" is "acceptable" to meet the requirements of the course. "D" is "barely acceptable," but not failing. "F" is a failing grade.

### **Course Assignments and Composition of Final Grade**

Class Participation and Homework (CPH)	20%
Gilgamesh paper	15%
Personal project paper	15%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam (cumulative)	30%

### **Attendance Policy:**

Attendance will be taken at every class. To do well in this course, it is imperative that you attend all or practically all class sessions. We study many different societies over a vast time period, even missing one class means that you have missed a lot of knowledge. To encourage you to come to each class, you will be penalized for bad attendance: I multiply your CPH grade with the percentage level of your attendance. For example, if you were to never come to class your CPH would be multiplied by 0%, and be reduced to zero. If you came only half the time, your CPH would be halved. If you come to every class, your CPH remains at 100%. If you feel you have a legitimate reason to miss class, because of an emergency or illness you need to obtain a memo from the Absence Memo Office at 67 George Street (843)-953-3390. Only with an official absence memo will I consider excusing your absence.

### **Class Participation and Homework:**

You are required to carefully read the assigned textbook chapters and primary documents *before* we discuss them in class (see class schedule below). My evaluation of your class participation is based on how well you participate in class discussions, write-ups, pop quizzes, etc. The precise requirements for each homework will be given beforehand.

To earn a good grade for your Class Participation and Homework you will have to consistently provide good work. For example, if you always attend class, but you fail to read the materials, and have poor homework and class write-ups, you would typically receive an F for CPH. Students who receive Bs or As for CPH have always attended class, have carefully read and thought about the materials, have provided good or excellent homework and class write-ups, and have communicated great comments, questions, and careful analyses of class materials during the discussions.

### **Gilgamesh Paper and Personal Project Paper:**

The precise requirements for these 3-4 page papers will be given beforehand in class.

**The Midterm and Final Exam will consist of ID questions and Essay questions.** You will be given a basic study guide to help you prepare for each exam. As a general rule, you *will need to be able to synthesize all class materials* (the relevant chapters of the textbook and other course readings, the lectures and the class exercises and discussions) for any given exam.

**Please note that NO late papers or homework will be accepted and NO make-up exams** will be given. Any late homework or missed exam will automatically receive an F. A late paper will lose points by the hour, during a 24 hour grace period. After 24 hours, a late paper will receive an F. Only in highly exceptional, documented, acute and genuine emergencies, may I consider deviating from this exam policy. *Sleeping through an exam, having a cold, a roommate failing to hand in your paper, having car, computer, or printer problems do **not** count as an extraordinary circumstance.*

### **Honor Code**

The Honor Code of the College of Charleston, as described in the *Student Handbook*, will be strictly enforced for all homework, paper, and exam assignments in this course. Accordingly, any cases involving plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the assignment, possibly an F in the course, and will be reported to the College administration for disciplinary action.

Unless I explicitly ask you to work in groups, *all of your work in this course needs to be done on an individual basis.* It is your ideas as a thinker, your voice as a writer, your understanding as a historian that I want to see shine through on each homework, each paper, and each exam that you hand in to me for evaluation and grading. A violation of this requirement is a breach of the honor code.

### **Class Room Rules**

This class consists of lecture and discussion. You are encouraged to make relevant comments and ask relevant questions from the professor also during lectures. When we discuss the lecture and reading materials, it is important that we all hear one another, and think and respond to what was said. *There can be no use of cell phones, pagers, or any other electronic devices.* Also, please *arrive in class on time*; latecomers disrupt the learning of others. Lastly, make sure to *bring your textbook* to class each time we meet. *On Thursdays you will also need to bring your sourcebook to class.*

Any student who disrupts the learning process, for example by using an electronic device, by arriving late, by interrupting the professor or another student, or by not bringing their book to class *will at a minimum be docked an absence for that class session.* Students who, on more than one occasion, disrupt the class may be removed from the course altogether.

### **Special Accommodations**

If you are a student in this class with a documented disability and you have been approved to receive accommodations through the Center for Disability Services/SNAP, please come and discuss this with me during office hours during the first two weeks of class.

### **Course Schedule (Subject to Minor Changes)**

#### **THE BIRTH OF CIVILIZATION**

##### **Week 1**

T Aug 26      Introductions  
R Aug 28      From the Neolithic to the Birth of Civilization  
Readings: Textbook pp. 3-28, Sourcebook chapter 5

**Class Discussion:** Prepare for an analysis of the Hammurabi Code on Thursday. From your sourcebook, chapter 5, questions 2 and 3. From your textbook pp. 20-21, question 2.

**Homework:** Due on Friday, in my office, by 5 pm your answers to the four questions on Textbook page 12 (handwritten or printed out versions only).

### EARLY CIVILIZATIONS

#### Week 2

T Sept 2 Environment and Civilization in Mesopotamia and Egypt

R Sept 4 The International Bronze Age

Readings: Textbook pp. 31-45, Sourcebook chapter 6

**Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

### CLASSICAL CIVILIZATIONS

#### Week 3

T Sept 9 Iron Empires and the Birth of Monotheism

R Sept 11 The Rise of Greek Civilizations

Readings: Textbook pp. 45-72, Sourcebook chapters 7, 14 and 15.

**Homework and Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

#### Week 4

T Sept. 16 Hellenistic Greece

R Sept. 18 The Rise of the Roman Republic

Readings: Textbook pp. 75-95, Sourcebook chapters 17 and 18

**Class discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

***Gilgamesh Paper DUE on Friday Sept 19, by 5 pm in my office (printed version only)***

#### Week 5

T Sept. 23 The Rise of the Roman Empire: Environment and Technology

R Sept. 25 Imperial Rome: Religion and Politics

Readings: Textbook pp. 97-114, Sourcebook chapters 22 and 23

**Class discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

#### Week 6

T Sept 30 ***MIDTERM***

R Oct. 2 Christian Rome, Roman Christianity and the Fall of Rome

Readings: Textbook pp. 117-136, Sourcebook chapter 28

**Class discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

### POST-CLASSICAL CIVILIZATIONS

#### Week 7

T Oct 7 The Rise of Islam

R Oct 9 Byzantium and the Latin West

Readings: Textbook pp. 139-158 and 161-180, Sourcebook chapters 35 and 36.

**Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

#### Week 8

T Oct 14 **BREAK**

R Oct 16 The Crusades

Readings: Textbook pp. 183-202, Sourcebook chapters 37, 41 and 44.  
**Homework and Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

### **Week 9**

T Oct. 21 Black Death

R Oct 23 Technology and the Environment

Readings: Textbook pp. 205-216, Sourcebook chapters 46, 48, and 50.

**Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

## **EARLY MODERN EUROPE**

### **Week 10**

T Oct. 28 Renaissance

R Oct 30 Humanism

Readings: Textbook 225-243, Sourcebook chapters 53, 54, and 56.

**Homework and Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

### **Week 11**

T Nov 4 Reformations of Religion

R Nov 6 Reformations of Religion

Readings: Textbook 269-288, Sourcebook chapters 63, 64, and 66

**Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

### **Week 12**

T Nov 11 Exploration and Imperialism

R Nov 13 Exploration and Imperialism

Readings: Textbook 247-266, Sourcebook chapters 57, 60, and 62

**Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

**Personal Project Paper Due on Friday, by 5 PM, in my office**

### **Week 13**

T Nov 18 Confessional Divisions

R Nov 20 Disciplining the People

Readings: Textbook 291-309, Sourcebook chapters 67, 68, and 72

**Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

### **Week 14**

T Nov 25 Central and Eastern Europe

R Nov 27 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Readings: Textbook pp. 313-331

**Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

### **Week 15**

T Dec 2 Absolutism and Resistance

R Dec 4 The Scientific Revolution

Readings: Textbook pp. 313-353, Sourcebook chapters 79 and 82

**Class Discussion on Thursday** (check webCT)

**FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 16 from 8:00-11:00 AM**