History 3102: Early Modern Europe to 1750

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Course Description

This course surveys the history of Europe from approximately 1350-1750. During this period, intense conflicts - political, religious, social, and intellectual - tore through European society, in the process changing it from something "medieval" to something almost "modern." One of the aims of this course will be to examine what precisely we mean when we talk about "modern" history, to what extent Europe was not modern in the fourteenth century, and to what extent it becomes modern by the middle of the eighteenth. Although this course is relatively comprehensive, it is impossible to devote an equal amount of attention to every development in European history during this period in fifteen weeks. In addition to studying the question of modernity and change during this period, we will focus on two main themes: the nature of leadership, and the mentalities of "ordinary" people.

Course Goals

My goal for this class is not that you simply learn dates and facts about early modern Europe, although I hope that you come out of the course knowing more about early modern Europe than when you came in. Rather, studying history develops three skills important for almost any career you choose on leaving college: the ability to read critically - to extract the most important information from a document with a minimum of effort; to think analytically - to evaluate the information you find and make an informed judgment about how you can use it for your particular purposes; and to communicate clearly - to convey your ideas in clear speech or written English. These three skills are closely linked and must all be considered an important part of studying history. My goal is that you will develop these three skills in this course through regular writing, participation in course discussion, and active attention to lectures.

Course Books

The following books are required for the course and are available in the UMM Bookstore:

John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe - Volume 1: From the Renaissance to the Age of Napoleon*
Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (translated by David Wootton)
Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*
Steven Ozment, *The Burgermeister's Daughter: Scandal in a Sixteenth-Century German Town*
William Beik, *Louis XIV and Absolutism: A Brief Study with Documents*
Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*
In addition, a brief xerox packet of required course readings will be available in the bookstore.

**Course Requirements**

*Map Assignment: 5%*

*Journal: 15%*

Each week, you will write at least 750 words (approximately 3 pages, double-spaced - but please find out how to use the word count command in your word processing program to gauge the length) in response to the course reading assignments, for a total of at least 8,250 words (or approximately 33 pages) over the course of the semester (I've given you 4 weeks off). See further guidelines below.

*Research Paper: 25%*

The major project for this course will be the completion of a 10-12 pp. research paper on a topic of your choice relating to Europe between 1350 and 1750. This paper will be completed in stages throughout the semester. For more detailed information, click here.

*Midterm Exam: 15%*  
*Final Exam: 15%*

The exams will include identification questions and essays. You will receive more detailed information about the exams as the semester progresses.

*Participation: 25%*

Class participation means that you come to class having completed all reading and writing assignments, you are ready to discuss them, and you are willing to listen to others present their perspectives. I encourage you to disagree with each other and with me, but expect you to do so in a way that shows respect for others. During the discussion portions of this class, much of the responsibility for what goes on in the classroom lies with you. I will take attendance and repeated absences from class will lower your participation grade. Conversely, attendance alone will not earn you an A in participation. In the event of an emergency or unavoidable absence, please speak to me as soon as possible about making up missed work.

**Miscellaneous Policies (including late assignments)**

All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the class they are due. Late assignments will be marked down one half letter grade for each day (including weekends) that they are late (i.e., from A to A-, A- to B+, etc.). Incompletes will not be granted in this course unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances, and they must be arranged with me before finals week.
It is University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. This publication/material is available in alternative formats to persons with disabilities upon request. Please contact the instructor or the Disability Services office, 589-6178, Room 362 Briggs Library to discuss accommodation needs.

The University policies on sexual harassment and academic misconduct apply to this course.

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

W 1/17  
Introduction: What is Early Modern? What is Modern?

F 1/19  
Medieval Background  
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 1 (3-46)

M 1/22  
The Renaissance  
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 2 (47-86)  
**Map Assignment Due**

W 1/24  
Renaissance Leadership I  
Reading: *The Prince*, Introduction - Ch. 11 (xi-38) [you do not have to read the section titled "Further Reading" but please do read "Letter to Vettori"]

F 1/26  
Renaissance Leadership II  
Reading: *The Prince*, Chs. 12-26 (38-80)  
**Turn in Journal**

M 1/29  
Library Workshop: Introduction to Library & Internet Research [required!]  
**Please go directly to Rm. 360 in Briggs Library**

W 1/31  
The Renaissance Courtier  
Reading: Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (excerpts) [xerox packet]

F 2/2  
Women and Men in the Renaissance  
Reading: Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (excerpt) [xerox packet]

**Turn in Journal**

M 2/5
Reformations
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 3 (87-137)

W 2/7
Popular Mentalities in the Catholic Reformation I
Reading: Ginzburg, Prefaces, Ch. 1-14 (xi-31)

F 2/9
Popular Mentalities in the Catholic Reformation II
Reading: Ginzburg, Ch. 15-42 (32-86)

**Turn in Journal**

M 2/12
Popular Mentalities in the Catholic Reformation III
Reading: Ginzburg, Ch. 43-62 (86-128)

W 2/14
Religious Wars
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 4 (138-80)

F 2/16
Popular Mentalities in Sixteenth-Century Germany I
Reading: Ozment, Ch. 1 (1-34)

**Turn in Journal**

M 2/19
Popular Mentalities in Sixteenth-Century Germany II
Reading: Ozment, Ch. 2 (35-102)

**Topic Statement and Preliminary Bibliography for Research Paper Due**

W 2/21
Popular Mentalities in Sixteenth-Century Germany III
Reading: Ozment, Ch. 3-4 (103-42)

F 2/23
Popular Mentalities in Sixteenth-Century Germany IV
Reading: Ozment, Ch. 5-7 (143-95)
**Turn in Journal**

M 2/26
Statemaking in England and Spain
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 5 (181-231)

W 2/28
English Drama in an Era of Statemaking
Reading: Shakespeare, *Othello*, excerpts [xerox packet]

F 3/2
Statemaking in England and the Dutch Republic
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 6 (232-73)
*[Journals may be collected today]*

M 3/5
The Age of Absolutism
Reading, Merriman, Ch. 7 (274-326)

W 3/7
Leadership in the Age of Absolutism I
Reading: Beik, Part One-Part Two: 1 (1-49)

F 3/9
**MIDTERM EXAM**
*[Journals will not be collected today]*

M 3/12
Leadership in the Age of Absolutism II
Reading: Beik, Part Two: 2 (50-81)

W 3/14
Leadership in the Age of Absolutism III
Reading: Beik, Part Two: 3-4 (82-120)

F 3/16
**No Class - Professor out of town**

**Annotated Bibliography for Research Paper Due** (please put it in my mailbox in 109 Camden by 4:00 p.m. today)
*[Journals will not be collected today]*
M 3/19  
Leadership in the Age of Absolutism IV  
Reading: Beik, Part Two: 5 (121-55)

W 3/21  
Leadership in the Age of Absolutism V  
Reading: Beik, Part Two: 6-7 (156-98)

F 3/23  
Leadership in the Age of Absolutism VI  
Reading: Beik, Part Two: 8 (199-222)

[ Journals may be collected today ]

M 3/26  
No class - Spring Break!

W 3/28  
No class - Spring Break!

F 3/30  
No class - Spring Break!

M 4/2  
The Scientific "Revolution"  
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 8 (327-54)  
Thesis Statement and Outline of Research Paper Due

W 4/4  
Literature in an Era of Science I  
Reading: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, 1-22 [xerox packet]

F 4/6  
Literature in an Era of Science II  
Reading: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, 23-45 [xerox packet]  
[ Journals may be collected today ]

M 4/9  
Economy and Society in the Eighteenth Century  
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 9 (354-98)

W 4/11  
The Enlightenment  
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 10 (399-441)
F 4/13
Politics and Conflict in the Eighteenth Century
Reading: Merriman, Ch. 11 (442-94)
[Journals may be collected today]

M 4/16
Popular Mentalities in Eighteenth-Century France I
Reading: Darnton, Introduction-Ch. 1 (3-74)

W 4/18
Popular Mentalities in Eighteenth-Century France II
Reading: Darnton, Ch. 2-3 (75-144)

F 4/20
Popular Mentalities in Eighteenth-Century France III
Reading: Darnton, Ch. 4-5 (145-214)
Rough Draft of Research Paper Due - Turn in 3 copies (1 for instructor, 1 for each member of your Peer Review)
[Journals will not be collected today]

M 4/23
Peer Review of Rough Drafts of Research Paper
Please bring 2 copies of each completed Peer Review (1 for instructor, 1 for student)
Reading: your peers' rough drafts

W 4/25
Popular Mentalities in Eighteenth-Century France IV
Reading: Darnton, Ch. 6-Conclusion (215-64)

F 4/27
Student Presentations of Final Research Paper
[Journals may be collected today]

M 4/30
Student Presentations of Final Research Paper

W 5/2
Conclusion - Europe in 1750

F 5/4
No Class - Final Draft of Research Paper and Journal Due to Social Science Division Office (109 Camden) by 4:00 PM
Final Exam: Monday, May 7, 11:00-1:00

Journal Guidelines

Research on writing pedagogy has found that one of the best ways to improve writing skills is simply to write as often as you can. Writing is also a process that helps to improve and clarify understanding of the topic on which you write; writing does not simply transfer knowledge that is fully-formed in your brain to the page, but helps shape and refine your ideas on a subject. The journal component of this course builds upon these findings by providing the opportunity for regular sessions of informal writing. Informal in this case means that you do not have to follow a traditional essay format; it is not necessary to have an introduction, conclusion, thesis, etc.; however, please do write in complete sentences!

Each week, you will write at least 750 words in response to the assigned readings for that week. You can approach this in a number of ways: you may write all 750 words on one of the readings, or divide it up between the total number of readings in any way that you choose. Your responses may take a wide variety of forms; some suggestions are listed below.

Logistics and Format: For the first full five weeks of the course (i.e., beginning on Friday, January 26), I will collect the journals every Friday. Beginning the week of February 26, I reserve the right to collect the journals any Friday without advance warning. I will not collect journals on the following days: the Friday after the midterm and the Friday after the rough drafts of your research paper are due. Beyond that, you are allowed one freebie (one week when you can choose not to turn in your journal without penalty).

Please type your journal entries (this will also make it easier for you to keep an accurate word count) and put your name at the top, as well as a heading indicating to which reading you are responding. Please also keep all your journal entries together; you will probably find it easiest to get a 3-ring binder or folder to hold them all. I would like you to turn in the entire journal each week (or each time I collect them).

Grading: The point of the journals is for you to explore what interests you, not to meet some objective standard that can be tested, so your journals will not receive a letter grade. You will receive full credit if you write at least 750 words a week and you will be penalized if you do not meet the length requirements. Since the other point of this assignment is for you to write on a regular basis, you may not make up for being under the word limit one week by writing more the following week.

Possible ways to respond to the readings:
stream-of-consciousness - write whatever comes into your head about the reading, or your gut reaction - what you found interesting, what surprised you, etc.

for primary sources: general text analysis - who wrote it? for what purpose did they write it? what perspective in society did the author represent? in what format is the text (letter, proclamation, tax accounts, etc.) and how does this affect the information that it can tell us? what value does it have as a historical document?

for secondary sources: what is the author attempting to do in this reading? what sources is s/he using? what methods does s/he use? what seems new or original about what s/he's doing? do you find her/his arguments convincing or not, and why?

compare and contrast - comment on the differences and similarities between two or more readings, whether from the same assignment or looking back to previous assignments

pick out one or two particularly interesting passages and comment on them at greater length

questions - aspects of the readings that didn't make sense, or general questions inspired by the readings (I will respond to these, if I have the answers)

criticism - if you really really really didn't like the reading, explain why (please note: "it was boring" or "it was dry" are not legitimate criticisms here. Authors do not try to bore you; if you think a reading is boring, ask yourself: why did the author choose to write in this way that I find boring? what was her/his purpose? did s/he achieve it?) This is more an opportunity to analyze and explain why a historical analysis is unconvincing or why you disagree with a particular attitude or perspective, not to comment on the text's entertainment value.