

NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
The City University of New York
School of Arts & Sciences
Department of Social Science Course Outline

Course code: HIS 1101

Course title: The Origins of Western Civilization

Class hours/credits: 3 class hours, 3 credits

Prerequisite: Eligibility for ENG 1101

Pathways: World Cultures and Global Issues

Catalog Description:

A survey of Western civilization from the dawn of human civilization to the eve of the Renaissance, emphasizing the following events: the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome; the rise of Judaism, Christianity and Islam; Western Europe in the Middle Ages; feudalism, the medieval worldview, the Crusades and the crises of the late middle ages.

Suggested Texts*:

- The West in the World, by Dennis Sherman and Joyce Salisbury, Volume I. (5th ed., McGraw Hill, 2010).
- Western Civilization: Sources Images and Interpretations Volume 1 To 1700, by Dennis Sherman. (8th ed., McGraw Hill).

**Instructor Choice*

Course Specific Learning Objectives and Assessment Methods

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:	ASSESSMENT METHOD:
Students will be able to identify significant events that contributed to the development of western civilization from the ancient era to the eve of the modern era.	Class discussions, Exams And Essays
Students will be able to discuss competing interpretations of major historical events in the history of western civilization from the ancient era to the eve of the modern era.	Class discussions, Essays and Exams
Students will be able to discuss sources of historical change, and explain cause and effect relationships as they pertain to historical transformations.	Final exams, essays and class discussions
Students will be able to use vocabulary common to history and to be able to explain historical developments in western civilization.	Class discussions, Essay and exams

Pathways World Cultures and Global Issues Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world cultures or global issues, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, economics, ethnic studies, foreign languages (building upon previous language acquisition), geography, history, political science, sociology, and world literature.
2. Analyze culture, globalization, or global cultural diversity, and describe an event or process from more than one point of view.
3. Analyze the historical development of one or more non-U.S. societies.
3. Analyze the significance of one or more major movements that have shaped the world's societies.
3. Analyze and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, language, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation play in world cultures or societies.

General Education Objectives and Assessment Methods

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:	ASSESSMENT METHOD:
KNOWLEDGE: Engage in historical inquiry, research, and analysis.	Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate a variety of historical sources for their credibility, position, and perspective, as well as contextualize materials from the past with appropriate precision and detail. Students will demonstrate this competency complete written exams, quizzes, assignments, in-class discussion and presentations.
Skills: Understand the complex nature of the historical record and generate significant, open-ended questions about the past and devise research strategies to answer them.	Students will demonstrate the ability to 1) Distinguish between primary and secondary source materials and decide when to use each, 2) Choose among multiple tools, methods, and perspectives to investigate and interpret materials from the past, and 3) Recognize the value of conflicting narratives and evidence, 4) Generate significant, open-ended questions about the past and devise research strategies to answer them, 5) Seek a variety of sources that provide evidence to support an argument about the past, 6) Develop a methodological practice of gathering, sifting, analyzing, ordering, synthesizing, and interpreting evidence, and 7) Identify and summarize other scholars' historical arguments. Students will demonstrate this competency complete written exams, quizzes, assignments, in-class discussion and presentations.

<p><u>Integration:</u> Craft historical narrative and argument.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate the ability to 1) Generate a historical argument that is reasoned and based on historical evidence selected, arranged, and analyzed, 2) Write effective narrative that describes and analyzes the past for its use in the present, 3) Understand that the ethics and practice of history mean recognizing and building on other scholars' work, peer review, and citation, and 4) Defend a position publicly and revise this position when new evidence requires it. Students will demonstrate this competency complete written exams, quizzes, assignments, in-class discussion and presentations.</p>
<p><u>Values, Ethics, and Relationships:</u> Practice historical thinking as central to engaged citizenship.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate the ability to 1) Engage a diversity of viewpoints in a civil and constructive fashion, 2) Work cooperatively with others to develop positions that reflect deliberation and differing perspectives, and 3) Apply historical knowledge and analysis to contribute to contemporary social dialogue. Students will be assessed through written exams, quizzes, assignments, in-class discussion and group presentations.</p>

** may vary slightly per instructor*

Assignments:*

1. Three quizzes worth a total of 5% each: Quizzes will be comprised of multiple choice and true/false questions.
2. Three in-class exams worth 20% each. The exams will be comprised of short answer and essay questions.
3. Five low-stakes writing assignments in which students will write a 1-page response to an argument made in an essay from the Sources Images and Interpretations reader (5% of the course grade).
4. A 5-10 page paper which will count for 20% of the course grade. Students will conclude the course with a 5-10 page paper on a topic of their choice after consulting with the professor. The paper must be based on a topic covered this semester, and must utilize at least two primary source documents and two secondary source essays.

**Suggested allocation; instructors may modify these at their discretion.*

All grades will be calculated according to the college grade scale:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Number Grade</u>
A	100-93
A-	92.9-90
B+	89.9-87
B	86.9-83
B-	82.9-80

C+	79.9-77
C	76.9-70
D	69.9-60
F	59.9-0

ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the conviction of the Department of Social Science that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also latenesses, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. Missed time impacts any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class.

Instructors may including a reasonable “Participation” grade into their final grade calculations for this course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY

City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of enrolled students with disabilities in the areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies, and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state, and/or city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility and/or would like to seek accommodation services and/or academic adjustments, please email the [Student Accessibility Center](#).

COMMITMENT TO STUDENT DIVERSITY

The Department of Social Science complies with the college wide nondiscrimination policy and seek to foster a safe and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity in its many

forms and enhances our students' ability to be informed, global citizens. Through our example, we demonstrate an appreciation of the rich diversity of world cultures and the unique forms of expression that make us human.

Course Schedule*

Week One: Prehistory and the Question of Civilization (Textbook: Chapter 1)

Students will understand and define the meaning of "civilization" by surveying what came before civilization (the Paleolithic and Neolithic era). They will understand that Western Civilization originated in the middle east, and will be able to identify geographically what parts of the world are under consideration in the course. They will also grasp the dating systems used by scholars and the meaning of basic historical terminology such as BCE, CE, and so on.

Weeks Two and Three: The Middle East: Mesopotamia, Egypt and Hebrew Civilization (Textbook: Chapter 1; Sources Images and Interpretations reader, "The Laws of Hammurabi, The Epic of Gilgamesh, and The Hebrew Bible-Genesis and Exodus")

Students will understand why the very first civilizations arose in the fertile crescent during the Bronze Age and the importance of the agricultural revolutions. They will be able to identify the innovations and achievements that made Mesopotamia and Egypt "civilizations" such as the emergence of complex governments, divisions of labor, written languages, trade and commerce, organized religion, and written laws. They will also understand the Hebrews contribution to Western Civilization: a monotheistic religion.

Weeks Four and Five: Aegean and Greek Civilization (Textbook: Chapters 2 & 3; Sources Images and Interpretations reader, "The Iliad, Poem on Women, Social Values and Ethics in the "Dark Ages" of Greece")

Students will study the rise of Bronze Age Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations in the Aegean that predated classical Greece, and their relevance to the development of classical Greece. They will identify the contributions of the Greeks in the Classical age: the centrality of individual achievement in Greek culture as expressed in Homer's epics and through the Olympic games; the rise of rational thought; developments in philosophy, cosmology and science; Greek standards of beauty in art and architecture; and the advent of the very first democracy in 5th century Athens. They will also understand the fall of classical Greece and the reasons why the Greeks were vulnerable to conquest by Philip of Macedonia.

They will also comprehend how Alexander the Great's conquests brought about the Hellenistic era and

the spread of Greek culture through the Ptolemaic and Seleucid successor states.

Weeks Six and Seven: The Roman Republic and Empire (Textbook: Chapters 4 & 5; Sources Images and Interpretations reader, "The Roman Constitution, The Education of a Roman Gentleman, Rome and the Early Christians")

Typically one week is spent on the Roman Republic and one week on the Roman empire and the birth of Christianity. Students will examine the major contributions of the Romans, beginning

with the rise of a Republican form of government and the problems that led to the collapse of the Republic. They will identify the ways in which our own political system today reflects the achievements and limitations of the Romans. Students will comprehend how the Romans built a huge multiethnic, long-lasting empire, and their contributions to Western culture especially in the areas of engineering, law, and architecture.

Students will also comprehend the many reasons why the Roman empire gradually fell, as well as the advent of Christianity and the tensions between Roman polytheists and early Christian cults.

Exam #1

***Week Eight: Optional Class Activities**

Time is allotted in the semester for various class activities: exam review, the midterm exam, the showing of documentary films, primary source discussion exercises, peer group exercises, class debates or other learning strategies.

Weeks Nine and Ten: Byzantine, European and Islamic Civilization (Textbook: Chapter 6; Sources Images and Interpretations reader, “The Institutes of Justinian: Byzantium and the Legacy of Roman Law, Avicenna, Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar”)

Students will study the events that changed Western Civilization after the decline of the Roman empire: the invasion of the Germanic tribes and the chaos that brought in Europe; the origins of the Catholic Church and the development of a distinct “Europe.” They will grasp the ways in which the Eastern part of the Roman empire became Byzantine civilization and how Christianity splintered with the rise of Orthodox Christianity. Students will examine the rise of a third monotheistic religion, the relationship between Islam, Christianity and Judaism, and how Arabs built an empire around the religion of Islam. They will grasp the reasons why Arab Muslims were able to create an empire so quickly and the clashes that occurred between West and East.

Week Eleven: Europe in the Middle Ages (Textbook: Chapters 7 & 8; Sources Images and Interpretations reader, “The Origins of Feudalism, Life of a Medieval Warrior”)

Students will study the nature and influence of the Germanic Tribes, and the conversion of the Germanic people to Christianity. They will examine how the Germanic Tribes established Kingdoms in Europe and how those kingdoms rose and fell causing instability and chronic warfare. Students will consider whether it is accurate to portray this era as a “dark age.” They will understand the central role of Christianity in European culture; the rise of monasteries and a Catholic hierarchy of popes, bishops, etc. They will identify the ways in which Charlemagne imposed some order in Europe and his modest efforts to revive civilization in the face of disorder and declining literacy. As time permits, they will also explore the rise of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

Exam #2

Week Twelve: Medieval Life (Textbook: Chapter 9; Sources Images and Interpretations reader, “The Decretum: Medieval Women-Not in God’s Image”)

Students will study the social structure and culture of medieval life. They will understand the localized, rural, violent nature of medieval life and the class structure that placed lords, vassals peasants, serfs and priests within a rigid hierarchy. They will understand what a typical medieval estate consisted of, the nature of medieval warfare and the bonds and obligations that bound Lords and vassals, or Lords and serfs. They will be able to compare and contrast the days of the ancient Greeks and Romans with life in the high middle ages. Returning to broad trends, they will understand the fall of Charlemagne's order, the fragmentation of Europe and morphing of the Latin language into different dialects in Europe.

Week Thirteen: The High Middle Ages (Textbook: Chapter 10; Sources Images and Interpretations reader, "The Rule of St. Francis, Summa Theologica")

Students will examine the various characteristics of life in the High Middle ages: developments and crises in the Catholic church; the advent of Gothic styles of art and architecture; the rise of towns; the creation of the first universities in Europe, and the deep piety and religiosity of Christians. Students will also study the weakening of the Byzantine empire, the causes and effects of the Crusades, and the widening schism between east and west as Christian crusaders sought to claim the Holy land from the

Muslims. They may also study the Inquisition in Europe and the problems of Roman Catholicism that would eventually (in HIS 1102) lead to reform.

Week Fourteen: The Late Middle Ages (Textbook: Chapters 11 & 12; Sources Images and Interpretations reader, "The Canterbury Tales, Instructions on Being a Good Wife")

Students are prepared for HIS 1102 by exploring developments in the late middle ages that prefigure the topics covered in the beginning of HIS 1102, especially the Renaissance, the exploration of the New World, and the Protestant Reformation. Much discretion is given to instructors as to how to utilize the last week of the semester to create a bridge to HIS 1102.

Week Fifteen

Final Examination

**Suggested allocation; instructors may modify at their discretion.*

Reviewed/ revised by: Stephanie Boyle, Ph.D., Spring 2016

Revised by Peter Parides in Spring 2021