

**HI 101: Western Civilization, I
Fall Semester, 2014
TR 2:00-3:30. SCI 117**

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Office Hours: M 4:00-6:00, W 1:00-2:00
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This is an introductory course in Western history, beginning at the beginning (in Mesopotamia, around 3000 BCE) and ending with the so-called “Early Modern” crisis around 1600 CE. That’s almost five thousand years of history in fifteen weeks, so be warned: we move at a fast pace.

“Western Civ” courses were invented in this country after World War I in response to requests for rapid surveys that would explain how the world got into such a god-awful mess. They are designed to move quickly, like a speeding tourist bus that points out major landmarks and sites of interest as it rushes on. There is a genuine value to this kind of drive-by survey; nevertheless, Western Civ courses can be frustrating. Nearly every topic we shall discuss, and every text we shall read, deserves its own course. (Fortunately, the History Department offers many upper-level courses that provide just this type of close analysis; I invite you to check out our catalog.)

I lecture informally and invite you to interrupt me whenever you have a question to ask or a contrary opinion to share. Also, since I lecture without notes, I hope you’ll stop and correct me if I make a mistake. I want to emphasize that the study of history is not about memorizing names and dates, but is about trying to understand the causes and consequences of change. If history is to be useful, it has to resist becoming a kind of sophisticated game of Trivial Pursuit. Focus on the main themes and dominant ideas, rather than the minutiae, and you should do fine. Here is a concrete example that might help: What, ultimately, is more important -- to know the dates of every major event in Adolf Hitler’s wretched life, or to be able to explain (perhaps to your children, someday) why the people of Germany turned to him in the first place? These two tasks are not mutually exclusive, but clearly the latter is the more significant. And that is why my lectures will focus primarily on highlighting the most significant ideas in each textbook chapter.

There are two books required for the course, and it’s available at the BU bookstore:

Clifford Backman, The Cultures of the West (Oxford Univ.).
----- . Sources for the Cultures of the West, vol. 1 (Oxford Univ.).

Two points about the textbooks:

1. I have assigned the full edition of the book rather than the split two-volume edition, because this saves about \$30.00 for those of you who will take HI 102 next semester.
2. I make no money from assigning my own books. Every year I donate whatever royalties I earn from it, to the BU general scholarship fund.

Course-grades will be determined three non-cumulative quizzes and three take-home essays:

Quiz #1/Take-home Essay #1	2 Oct. // 7 Oct.
Quiz #2/Take-home Essay #2	6 Nov. // 11 Nov.
Quiz #3/Take-home Essay #3	9 Dec. // 15 Dec.

Email is the best way to reach me. I check my email twice a day, except for weekends.

It is important that you attend class regularly. But I will not be taking attendance, so if you miss a class or two, I probably won't notice. Repeated absences will be noticed, however, and you can expect to hear from me.

If you are late to class, or if you need to leave the classroom for any personal reason, please just come and go as quietly as you can. My only request is that you be respectful and attentive when you are present: no whispered conversations, no reading of newspapers, no cellphone-calls, etc. You are welcome to use laptops, as long as you use them for class purposes. If I receive any complaints from your classmates that your computer activity is a distraction to them, I will speak with you privately

The Academic Conduct Code is in force, and you will be expected to adhere to it. Copies of the Code are available online at

www.bu.edu/cas/undergraduate/conductcode

Some Important Dates:

Last day to add this course:	Monday, 15 Sept.
Last day to drop this course (without a "W" on your transcript):	Monday, 6 Oct.
Last day to drop this course (with a "W" on your transcript):	Friday, 7 Nov.

A note on Incompletes. CAS policy requires you to fill out a "Request for an Incomplete" form – they are available online at the CAS webpage – and hand it in to me before the last class of the semester, which for us is **Tuesday, 9 December**. Without such a form in hand, I am not allowed to grant an Incomplete to any student except in the case of medical- or family emergency.

My Fall 2014 Schedule

	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays
8:00					
9:00					
10:00			Grad Students		
11:00		HI 214	Grad Students	HI 214	
12:00		HI 214 (12:30)	Dept. Meeting	HI 214 (12:30)	
1:00			Office Hour		
2:00		HI 101		HI 101	
3:00		HI 101 (3:30)		HI 101 (3:30)	
4:00	Office Hour				
5:00	Office Hour				
6:00	MET HI 101				
7:00	MET HI 101				

Lecture Schedule and Reading Assignments

We will read one chapter of the textbook and the sourcebook each week.

2 Sept.	Intro.	}	ch. 1
4 Sept.	Why Geography Matters.	}	
9 Sept.	Invasions from the North.	}	ch. 2
11 Sept.	Invasions from the East.	}	
16 Sept.	The Bible and Jewish History.	}	ch. 3
18 Sept.	Priests, Prophets, Exiles, and Rabbis.	}	
23 Sept.	Mycenaean and Archaic Greece.	}	ch. 4
25 Sept.	The Classical Age, the Historians, and the Philosophers.	}	
30 Sept.	The Hellenistic Age.	}	ch. 5
2 Oct.	<u>In-class Quiz #1.</u> [Chapters 1-5.]	}	
7 Oct.	Rome: From Origins to the Republic.	}	ch. 6
9 Oct.	The Roman Empire.	}	
14 Oct.	NO CLASS. MONDAY SCHEDULE.	}	ch. 7
16 Oct.	The Rise of Christianity.	}	
21 Oct.	The Dark Age and the Age of Barbarism.	}	ch. 8
23 Oct.	The Rise of Islam.	}	
28 Oct.	Europe Recovers and Reforms.	}	ch. 9
30 Oct.	Arabs, Persians, and Turks.	}	
4 Nov.	From Order to Collapse.	}	ch. 10
6 Nov.	<u>In-class Quiz #2.</u> [Chapters 6-10.]	}	
11 Nov.	The Renaissances.	}	ch. 11
13 Nov.	The Reformations.	}	
18 Nov.	Age of Explorations.	}	ch. 12
20 Nov.	The Wars of Religion.	}	
25 Nov.	<i>No class today. Extra office hour instead.</i>	}	ch. 13
27 Nov.	HOLIDAY.	}	
2 Dec.	The Scientific Revolution.	}	ch. 14
4 Dec.	The Argument for Tyranny.	}	
9 Dec.	<u>In-class Quiz #3.</u> [Chapters 11-14.]	}	