

HI 102: Western Civilization, part II

Spring 2018

TTh 12:30-1:45. PHO 211

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This is an introductory course in modern European history and the second half of a series. Chronologically, the course covers the years from 1500 to the present. There are no pre-requisites: you do not need to have taken HI 101 (in fact, the overwhelming majority of you have not taken it), and we do not assume any prior knowledge of European history on your part.

My lectures will try to keep pace with our textbook – basically, a chapter per class meeting -- but will occasionally branch off into other topics. I urge you to remember a guiding principle: the study of history is not about memorizing names and dates but is concerned with understanding the causes of historical change and the consequences that result from it. Knowing why things happened, and the significance of those things, is our main goal, and is really the only justification for studying history at all. (Here's a concrete example: What is more important – to memorize the dates of every major battle of World War II, or to be able to explain [to your children someday, perhaps] why the people of Germany turned to Nazism? Hitler, after all, was elected to office.) Fortunately, examining why things happened and how life changed because of their happening, makes history a much more interesting thing to study.

Still, this can be a frustrating course since we fly through the years so rapidly. Five hundred years in fifteen weeks is a lot of ground to cover for an entire continent. All I can say is that Western Civ. courses are supposed to be frustrating in this way. These courses were invented in this country in the aftermath of World War I, in response to demands for rapid surveys of history that would explain how the Western world ever got into such a mess in the first place. All we can do is to introduce you to the basic ideas, themes, movements, and trends of this period, and hope that you'll find the material sufficiently interesting to continue on by enrolling in some of our more specialized courses. (For a list of those courses, visit the department's website at www.bu.edu/history.)

I lecture informally and invite you to interrupt me whenever you have a question to ask or a comment to share. (Also, since I lecture without notes, I especially urge you to correct me when I make a mistake!) My goal is to make the general ideas within each chapter as clear as I can. Experience has taught me that this course goes more successfully if I give you the basic ideas and then let you teach yourselves some of the details, than if I simply throw tons of data at you and then expect you to see the pattern in it all.

There are two books required, and available at the BU bookstore:

1. Clifford Backman, Cultures of the West, 2nd edn. (Oxford).
2. Clifford Backman and Christine Axen, Sources for Cultures of the West, 2nd edn. (Oxford).

Please note two things:

1. I make no money by assigning my own books. I donate my royalties to the BU general scholarship fund.
2. I assign the large single-volume edition because this saves money (around \$40) for those students who take both HI 101 and HI 102.

Your grade will be determined by the following formula:

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \text{In-class quiz \#1 (22 Feb) + Take-home essay \#1 (27 Feb)} & = & 33\% \\ \text{In-class quiz \#2 (29 Mar) + Take-home essay \#2 (3 Apr)} & = & 33\% \\ \text{In-class quiz \#3 (1 May) + Take-home essay \#3 (8 May)} & = & 33\% \end{array}$$

Office hours: 11:00-12:30 MWF
226 Bay State Road, Room 206

Email: cbackman@bu.edu This is the best way to reach me. Please be aware, however, that I never check email on weekends.

Some administrative dates to remember:

31 Jan	Last day to add classes.
22 Feb	Last day to drop classes without a “W” grade.
30 Mar	Last day to drop classes with a “W” grade.
11 Apr	Last day to withdraw from the University for Spring 2018

We have a grader for this class, one of our current PhD students:

Chenguang Zhu czhu91@bu.edu

He will contact you separately with information about his office hours.

My Schedule for Spring 2018

	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays
8:00-9:15					
9:30-10:45	10:15 CC 112		10:15 CC112		10:15 CC 112
11:00-12:15	Office hour	HI 204	Office hour	HI 204	Office hour
12:30-1:45		HI 102	Dept. meeting	HI 102	Grad students
2:00-3:15					Grad students
3:30-4:45					

The Nasty Legalistic Stuff

CAS requires us to inform you that the Student Academic Conduct Code is in force. You can find it at:

<http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/>

Regular attendance in class is expected as a matter of professionalism and basic courtesy. I recognize that circumstances sometimes arise that make it impossible for you to attend class. Consequently, you are allowed to miss three (3) class-meetings; any more than that, however, will result in a penalty of one half-grade for each day (beyond the third) missed, for your overall course-grade.

I am happy to help if you are having any trouble with the course; but please be fair: let me know as soon as the difficulty starts. Don't wait until you discover that you haven't received the grade you wanted.

Speaking of grades, here is the College's official guideline to faculty:

Avoid grade inflation. Grades should reflect the distribution of effort and success in the class. In undergraduate courses, a useful (unofficial) guideline is that an "A" should mean that the student mastered the material and produced excellent work, "B" that the student understood the material but did not master it or whose work was good but not superior, "C" that there were significant gaps in understanding/accomplishment or that the work was lackluster ("satisfactory" is the term used in the Undergraduate Bulletin), "D" ("low pass") that there was limited understanding/accomplishment or effort, and "F" that there was little understanding/accomplishment or effort. If your distribution of grades is skewed toward the high end, it might imply that either an "A" does not require a high level of achievement in the course or you are demanding too little of your students. "High end" is a median grade of "B" or higher for a 100 to 200 level undergraduate course. A median grade of "B" is common for upper-level undergraduate courses. (In graduate courses "C+" is a failing grade, hence the average grade is higher than in undergraduate courses.)

If a student for good reason could not complete the last stages of your course (e.g., missed the final exam because of illness), you and the student can enter into a contract in which you specify the work that needs to be completed and the date by which it must be handed in to you. That date must be no later than one calendar year from the end of the semester in which the course was offered. An incomplete grade form, available through your departmental administrator, must be submitted with your grade sheet for the course for each "I" grade that you issue.

Classroom expectations are also based on professionalism and basic courtesy. If you are late to class, or if you need to leave the classroom for any personal reason, please do so with as little disruption to your neighbors as possible. No need to ask permission. I am happy to permit the use of laptop computers so long as you use them for class purposes; other students find it distracting if you are watching videos or updating your Facebook page. If I receive any complaints, I will contact you privately and ask you either to change your behavior or to cease bringing the computer to class.

Lecture Schedule and Reading Assignments

18 Jan	Introduction.		
23 Jan	Renaissances and Reformations.	}	ch.
25 Jan	Worlds Old and New.	}	12-13
30 Jan	The Wars of All Against All.	}	ch.
1 Feb	The Case for Tyranny.	}	14-15
6 Feb	The Enlightened.	}	ch.
8 Feb	The French Revolution and Napoleon.	}	16-17
13 Feb	Industrialization.....	}	ch.
15 Feband Its Discontents.	}	18
20 Feb	<i>MONDAY SCHEDULE.</i>	}	No reading assignment
22 Feb	In-class Quiz #1.	}	this week.
27 Feb	The Birth of Modern Politics.	Essay #1 due. }	ch.
1 Mar	Nationalism and Identity.	}	19-20
6 Mar	<i>SPRING BREAK.</i>		
8 Mar	<i>SPRING BREAK.</i>		
13 Mar	"The Modern Woman."	}	ch.
15 Mar	The Challenge of Secularism.	}	21-22
20 Mar	The Great Land Grab.	}	ch.
22 Mar	The World at War (Part I).	}	23-24
27 Mar	<i>No class today (Doctor's appointment).</i>	}	No reading assignment
29 Mar	In-class Quiz #2.	}	this week
3 Apr	Radical Realignments.	Essay #2 due. }	ch.
5 Apr	The World at War (Part II).	}	25-26
10 Apr	Theater of the Absurd.	}	ch.
12 Apr	Theater of the Absurd, II.	}	27
17 Apr	Something to Believe In.	}	ch.
19 Apr	Something to Believe In, II.	}	28
24 Apr	Global Warmings.	}	ch.
26 Apr	Global Warmings, II.	}	29
1 May	In-class Quiz #3.		
8 May	Essay #3 due by 12:00 noon.		