



## Syllabus

### HIS 100 Early Western Civilization: Ancient Greece to the Renaissance

#### General Information

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**Date** March 14th, 2023

**Author** Robert Brown

**Department** Social Science

**Course Prefix** HIS

**Course Number** 100

**Course Title** Early Western Civilization: Ancient Greece to the Renaissance

#### Course Information

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**Catalog Description** This course explores the social, political, intellectual and cultural origins of the Western tradition in Europe, the Aegean, the Mediterranean, and the Near East; from Classical Greece and Imperial Rome through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the Age of Global Exploration. We will trace the evolution of distinctively Western institutions and values over the course of two millennia (5th century B.C.E - 17th century C.E.), and will examine the frequent interactions between the West and the wider world in the ancient, medieval and early-modern eras.

**Credit Hours** 3

**Lecture Contact Hours** 3

**Lab Contact Hours** 0

**Other Contact Hours** 0

**Grading Scheme** Letter

#### Prerequisites

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None

#### Co-requisites

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None

## First Year Experience/Capstone Designation

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This course **DOES NOT** satisfy the outcomes applicable for status as a FYE or Capstone.

## SUNY General Education

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This course is designated as satisfying a requirement in the following SUNY Gen Ed category

World History and Global Awareness

## FLCC Values

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### Institutional Learning Outcomes Addressed by the Course

Inquiry and Interconnectedness

## Course Learning Outcomes

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### Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will identify the major events, themes and issues of Western history, from the 5th century B.C.E. through the 17th century C.E.
2. Students will describe the interactions and interrelationships between the cultures of the West and those of other regions of the world in the premodern era.
3. Students will describe the distinctive features and unique structures and systems of Western civilization during the ancient, medieval and early modern periods, and their impact on well-being and sustainability during these eras.

## Outline of Topics Covered

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### Pre-Classical Era, 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> millennia B.C.E.

- Theocracy and Autocracy in Ancient Egypt and the Near East.

### Classical Greece and the Aegean, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E.

- The Greco-Persian and Peloponnesian Wars
- Inside the Greek Mind: The Classical Greek Outlook
- The Humanist and Rational Revolution
- Athenian Politics/Law: Democracy and Demagoguery
- Greek Society: Citizens, Slaves and Women
- Greek Philosophy: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle

- Natural Philosophy and Science
- Greek Athletics
- Greek Culture: Art, Literature, Poetry, Theater & Architecture

### **Hellenistic World, 1st-4th centuries B.C.E.**

- Philip II and the Rise of Macedonia
- Alexander the Great: Psychology, Career and Impact
- West Meets East: Multiculturalism and the Hellenistic Fusion
- Hellenistic Philosophy and Religion
- Social, Economic and Cultural Change in a Cosmopolitan Age
- The "First Scientific Revolution" and Technological Innovation

### **Republican and Imperial Rome, 5th century B.C.E. – 3rd century C.E.**

- The Republic
  - Cross-Cultural Influences on Latium: *Magna Graecia* and the Etruscans
  - Law, Politics and the Senate in the Roman Republic
  - Roman Slavery and the Spartacist Uprising
  - Plebians, Patricians and "Bread and Circuses": Social and Economic Change during the Roman Republic
  - *Pater Potestas*: Women in Ancient Rome
  - Rome, Carthage and the Punic Wars
  - Fall of the Republic
- Imperial Rome
  - The Augustan Age and the Psychology of Empire
  - Forging Rome's "Empire Without Borders"
  - *Mare Nostrum*: Rome's Mediterranean-wide Melting Pot
  - Intellectual, Literary, Cultural and Scientific Achievements of the *Pax Romana*
  - Rome's Engineering Miracle
  - Class-Consciousness, Amphitheater Culture, and the Politics of Social Control
  - *Civis romanus sum*: Roman Civil and Natural Law

## **Late Imperial Era & the Collapse of Roman Civilization, 3rd- 5th centuries C.E.**

- Fall of Rome: Internal Factors
  - *Dominus*: Political Collapse and the Late Imperial State
  - Economic and Military Decline
  - Medical Factors: Plagues and Pandemics
  - Late Roman Society
  - The Tetrarchy and Administrative Reform
  - *Age of Anxiety*: Intellectual, Psychological and Philosophical Malaise
- Fall of Rome: External Factors (Global Population Movements, Germano-Persian Invasions)
  - Rome's Enduring Legacy

## **Origins and Early History of Christianity, 1st– 4th centuries C.E.**

- Historical Sources for the Christian Tradition
- Origins:
  - Judaic Roots
  - Role of Jesus of Nazareth
- Early Christian Belief and the Pagan/Hellenistic Synthesis
- Populism, Class and Mass Appeal
- Women and Early Christianity
- Christianity and the Roman State
- Persecution and Survival
- Constantine, Theodosius & the Council of Nicaea

## **Early Medieval Era (Dark Ages), 500-1000 C.E.**

- Western Europe in the Early Middle Ages
  - Collapse of Roman civilization and the Emergence of the Roman Catholic Church
  - The Mental Universe of the "Dark Ages"
  - Germanic Traditions and Culture
  - Climatic and Environmental Change
  - Feudalism, Manorialism and the Early Medieval Economy

- Early Medieval Society
- The Byzantine Empire
  - Constantinople: "Emporium of the World"
  - Emergence of the Eastern Orthodox Church
  - Justinian I and Church-State Relations in the 6<sup>th</sup> century
  - Byzantine Intellectual and Cultural Achievements
  - Hagia Sophia, the Hippodrome and Byzantine Engineering
  - Pandemic: The "Plague of Justinian"
  - Byzantine Society
  - *Corpus Juris Civilis*: Justinian's Code and the Legacy of Byzantine Law
- The Golden Age of Islamic Civilization
  - Muhammad, the *Koran* and the Origins of Islam
  - Women in Islamic Society
  - Commercial and Cultural Interactions with Europe and Asia
  - Medieval Arab Slave Trade
  - Islamic Scholarship, Architecture and Art
  - Islamic Civilization's Scientific, Mathematical and Technological Revolution
  - Medical Advances: Avicenna, Rhazes, and Albucasis

### **High and Late Middle Ages in Western Europe: 1000 – 1500 C.E.**

- Europe's "Great Leap Forward"
  - The Agricultural Revolution
  - *Magna Carta* and the Emergence of Parliament and Common Law
  - Twelfth Century Renaissance
    - Emergence of the University
    - Romanesque and Gothic Architecture
    - Chivalry and Women in Medieval Society
    - Medieval Art and Illumination
    - Medieval Technology
- The "Age of Faith and Superstition"

- The Medieval Frame of Mind
- The "Great Chain of Being" and the Feudal Caste System
- Divine Right, Absolutism, and Hereditary Monarchy
- Catholicism/Papacy at its Apogee
- Monasticism, the Inquisition and Antisemitism
- Medieval Thought: Aquinas and Scholasticism
- Crime and Punishment in the High Middle Ages
- Christendom and Islam: Cultural Exchanges and the Crusades
- Urbanization and its Problems
- The "Calamitous Fourteenth Century"
  - Hundred Years War (1337-1453)
  - Environmental Change: The "Little Ice Age"
  - Medieval Armageddon: The Black Death Pandemic

### **Italian Renaissance & Northern Renaissance, 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries**

- Alberti, Della Mirandola and the Humanist/Secular Revolution
- The Decline of Feudalism and the Rise of Individualism and Capitalism
- Classicism and the Greco-Roman Revival
- *Ad Fontes*: Neo-Platonism, *Humanitas* and Renaissance Scholarship
- Castiglione and the "Renaissance Man"
- Women and Renaissance Society
- Civic Humanism and the Invention of History
- Why Italy?
- Machiavelli & Birth of Modern Politics
- Revolution in Art: From Giotto to Michelangelo
- Northern Renaissance: Christian Humanism to Van Eyck
- Revolution of the Mind: Descartes, More and Bacon
- Renaissance Literature: Petrarch to Shakespeare
- The 16th century "Scientific Revolution"

### **Protestant Reformation & Catholic Counter-Reformation, 1517-1648**

- Origins: The Medieval Catholic Church in Crisis and the Renaissance Papacy
- The Challenge Within: Wyclif, Erasmus, Valla
- Luther's "Priesthood of All Believers" and the Rise of Protestantism
- The English Reformation, Anglicanism and Puritanism
- Print Revolution & Rise of Literacy
- Gender and Class in Reformation Society
- The Catholic Counter-Reformation
- Church and State in the Age of Reformation
- Age of Religious War, 1517-1648
- Baroque Art and Culture
- Legacy of the Reformation Era

### **Age of Global Exploration, 15<sup>th</sup>– 17<sup>th</sup> centuries**

- Motivations: Intellectual, Religious, Economic and Political
- The Psychology of Imperialism/Colonialism
- Means: Cartographic, Nautical, and Navigational Breakthroughs and the Gunpowder Revolution
- Impact: Discovery and Exploitation
- Portuguese Empire in Africa and India
- Search for a "Westward Passage": Voyages of Christopher Columbus
- "New Spain": Cortes and the Aztecs, Pizarro and the Inca
- The Dutch and French in the "New World"
- Britannia Rules the Waves: British Global Empire
- Mercantilism, Repression and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade
- The "Columbian Exchange"
- Smallpox: Global Scourge
- Globalization and the Legacy of Imperialism

### **Foundations of the Modern State, 17<sup>th</sup> century**

- Absolutism and State-Building in Bourbon France, Habsburg Austria, Hohenzollern Prussia and Romanov Russia
- Constitutionalism and Representative Government: The English Revolution/Civil War and the Dutch Republic