HISTORY OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION I

SYLLABUS

This course has two main purposes. One is to give you a broad perspective on the history of European Civilization from antiquity to the age of the religious wars by reading selected primary sources in English translation. The other is to teach you how to draw sound arguments about the history of European Civilization from those readings.

In order to achieve the first of these purposes, you need to understand the readings. We will discuss them in detail in class. If there is something you do not understand (whatever the reason may be), there are three things you need to do. The first is to ask. The second is to ask. And the third is to ASK.

In order to achieve the second of these purposes, you need to keep the following three questions in mind: 1. What does the document actually say? 2. What can you learn from this document about the past even if it does not actually say so? 3. What can you not expect this document to tell you?

There are many things you can do to answer these questions. The most important are: read the text closely; look up the meaning of terms with which you are not familiar; try to imagine what was uppermost on the writer's mind—and what was not on the writer's mind; try to imagine what was on the mind of the people for whom this text was written—and what was not on their mind; pay attention to differences and similarities from one text to another; read a historical account of the period in question; trace connections between the writer's thinking and the circumstances of that writer's time and place; take detailed notes on what you read, so that you can document what you believe you have understood and refer back to your notes when you no longer remember what you understood when you were reading it; speak your mind freely in class, and respect others for speaking their mind freely, too.

For a more detailed statement of the purposes of this course and the assumptions on which it is based, along with guidance to class discussion, paper writing, and the nature of historical study, read my Guide for Students of "History of European Civilization." I have put it up on the web at http://home.uchicago.edu/~icon/teach/guideciv.pdf. I will also hand out hard copies in class.
**REQUIREMENTS**

There are three main requirements:

1) **Class participation (20%)**: prepare for class by studying the assigned readings; attend all classes; turn off your cellphones; and participate in discussions.

   Attendance is required. If there is some reason why you cannot attend class, let me know what it is and you'll be excused. I do not offer make-up classes for students who do not attend a class, for whatever reason.

   I have given a title to each set of readings in order to indicate the main topic of discussion. I have also suggested study questions. Prepare yourself to answer these questions in class discussion.

   Whenever it seems appropriate, I will give an informal lecture. By "informal" I mean that my lecture will not be prefabricated, but that I will be doing the talking and that you are free to ask questions at any point. I will use these lectures to address specific issues that have arisen in our class at this particular point. These issues vary from time to time and class to class, and they depend a great deal on the progress we have previously been able to make. I may, for example, explain the historical context for the readings assigned that day; or the relationship between these readings and the readings we did before; or give you an overview of the history we have covered so far; or talk about the underlying themes of the course; or show you by example how you can get more information about the past out of a specific document than may seem possible at first sight; or tell you about the life of a particular figure; and so on.

   Depending on the point we have reached, I may begin the class with such an informal lecture. I may also begin by giving you a few minutes to think about some question concerning the readings, and then start discussing your answers. You may ask whatever questions you like, and I will focus your attention on salient passages. I may ask you direct questions about specific passages in the readings. If I do not understand what you are saying, I will ask you to clarify it, or I will repeat what you said in my own words and give you a chance to correct what I said. I will also ask for your opinions on what other members of the class have said.

   The most serious threat to the success of a course as squarely based on reading and discussing primary sources as this one is that students do not read the assignments. That divides the class into students who know what they are talking about and free riders. Free riders benefit from the work of the other class members without having done any work themselves.

   In order to minimize that threat I expect you to do the readings as required. If you haven't been able to do the readings, just tell me that you haven't done the readings before class begins. That way I'll know who has done the readings and who hasn't, and I won't embarrass you by calling on you. But please be honest and don't try to pull the wool over my eyes. If you try to cheat, and I find out by accident that you haven't done the readings, I will ask you to leave the room for the remainder of that class.
2) **Paper assignments (50%)**: Two papers of four to seven pages each, double-spaced, in a standard twelve-point font. Send me your paper via email. The first paper is due by 4 PM on Wednesday of fourth week. The second paper is due by 4 PM on Wednesday of eighth week.

3) **A take-home final examination (30%)**: For your final examination I will ask you to write a paper of four to seven pages, double-spaced, in a standard twelve-point font, on the following question: "What have you learned from reading the primary sources on the syllabus, discussing them in class, and writing papers about them that you did not know before?" The question is deliberately open-ended. It is designed to elicit your own considered account of what you have gained from this course as a whole, including not only the assigned readings, but also class discussions. Send me your take-home final paper via email. The final is due by 4 PM on Wednesday of finals week.

**GRADING**

The grade you get for this course will reflect the quality of your work. It will neither reflect the effort you put into your work nor what you intended to accomplish, but what you have actually accomplished. Outstanding results, even if achieved with little effort, will get outstanding grades. Poor results, even if made with great effort, will get poor grades.

I will judge the quality of your work in class discussions, written assignments, and the final examination according to its clarity, precision, and detail. The more detailed, convincing, well informed, and well documented your understanding of the assigned writings and the historical circumstances by which they are shaped, the better. The quality of your work includes your ability to communicate clearly and effectively, both when you are speaking in class and in your writing. My judgment is of course fallible. If you disagree with it, let me know the reasons why you disagree, and I will consider them.

I give a grade of A only for work distinctly above the average for students at the University of Chicago. Grades of A- and B+ mean that you are doing very good or solid work at roughly the same level as most other students in this course. A grade of B means that you are doing fine, but could be doing better. A grade of B- means that you should be doing better. A grade of C+, C, or C- means that your work has significant shortcomings of some sort. A grade of D means that your work is so far below the average that you are at risk of failing the course.

I will keep a record of your attendance and give you points for participation in class discussions after each class. I will convert the totals to a 100-point scale at the end of the quarter. The class average will convert to 85 points and a letter grade of B; one standard deviation will convert to 10 points and span a full grade (95 points for a straight A, 92 points for an A-, 88 points for a B+, 85 points for a straight B 85, and so on). If you attend all classes, your grade for oral participation is likely to be a B. If you attend all classes and contribute to class discussions, your grade will go higher depending on the quality of your contributions. If you miss classes and do not speak in class, your grade for oral participation may fall well below B.

Students who take more time to turn in their papers give themselves an unfair advantage over students who turn their papers in on time. In order to compensate for that advantage I will lower the grade for papers that are turned in late by one step for each 24-hour increment: an A paper will
get an A- if I receive it within 24 hours after the time the paper is due, a B+ if I receive it within 48 hours, a B within 72 hours, and so on. Missed papers will be given zero points.

I will consider requests for an extension until the last class in the week before the paper is due.

Email your final take-home examination to me no later than 4 PM on Wednesday of finals week. The grade for late submissions will be lowered by a full grade for every 24-hour increment past the due date. Because grades for the final need to be submitted on very short notice, I will not consider requests for an extension. Because most students never pick up the graded copies of their finals, I will make no comments on the finals unless you specifically ask me to do so.

I will calculate your grade for the course by combining the three partial grades for class participation, the papers, and the final exam. The easiest way for you to raise your grade for the course overall is to make good contributions to class discussion. If you receive a failing grade for any one of the three partial grades, you will receive a failing grade for the whole course.

I reserve the right to adjust the overall grade upwards or downwards in order to take account of special circumstances.

I do not give a grade of INC for this course. You will get your grade at the end of the quarter, and the grade will reflect what you have done by that time.

READINGS

Most of the readings will be taken from the following books, listed in the order in which we will use them:


I have asked the Seminary Co-op Bookstore to make these books available for purchase. I have also asked Regenstein Library to keep them on reserve.

I will add a few other readings from sources that are available online.

You are free to use other editions than the ones I have assigned. If you do, you assume the responsibility for making sure that the differences between the assigned edition and the one you are using will not interfere with your ability to complete the assignments I have given you.

For each of the classes on the syllabus below, I have pointed you to the corresponding pages in William H. McNeill, *History of Western Civilization: A Handbook*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). You are not required to read these pages. I merely recommend them to you as a good starting point to learn more about the context in which your reading assignments were written.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

(1A): **Introduction to the Course**

(1B): **The Chosen People**

Take a close look at the table *Canons of the Hebrew Bible* on p. 2187 of our edition, and read the following selections:

*Genesis*, chaps. 1–4:16 (i.e., chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3, and chapter 4 up to verse 16). From the creation of the world to the mark of Cain

- *Genesis* 6–9:17. The flood and the new covenant
- *Genesis* 11:1–9. The tower of Babel
- Genesis 12:1–9, 15:1–21, 17:1–27, 22:1–18. God's promise to Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac
- Exodus, chaps. 1–4:17. The enslavement of Israel and the commission of Moses
- Exodus 6:2–8. God's promise to Moses
- Exodus 19–21:27. The revelation of the Law at Mount Sinai
- Exodus 32–33. The apostasy of Israel, the revenge of the Levites, and the wrath of God
- Exodus 34. The covenant with Israel renewed
- Deuteronomy 4:1–40. Moses' commission to Israel
- Psalms 1, 2, 3, 72, 79, 88, 102, 110, 150. The individual and God. N.B. Make sure you read the right psalms! I've used the Protestant numbering of Psalms, the same as in The New Oxford Annotated Bible, with the Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical Books that I have recommended above; Catholic Bibles number Psalms differently.
- Song of Songs, chaps. 1–5:1. Love
- Isaiah, chaps. 1–4, 6. Prophecy

Study questions: Is the Bible one book or many? What kind of book(s) is it? What is God's plan for the world? What happens to his plan? What is the proper relationship between God and human beings? Why does God make a special covenant with Israel? What is Abraham's reward for his faith? Why does Moses ask the Levites to kill their brothers, friends, and neighbors? What is the role that Moses assigns to the chosen people in Deuteronomy 4:1–40?


(2A): The Gospel
Gospel of Matthew (esp. chap. 5–7, 10–13, 18–28); Letter of Paul to the Galatians

Study questions: What does Jesus have to say about God's covenant with Israel? What is the reward for faith in Jesus? What is Jesus's attitude towards his mother and his family? What is his attitude towards the state? What does St. Paul have to say about God's covenant with Israel? What is the reason for the disagreement between St. Paul and St. Peter (Cephas)? How is it resolved? Are there any serious differences between the Gospel of Matthew and Paul's Letter to the Galatians?


(2B): The Greek Polis
Aristotle, Politics, Book 1.1–2 and Book 7.1–3, RWC 1:278–288; Aristotle, Economics, Book 1, RWC 1:319–24

Study questions: What is the mistaken idea of a "statesman" that Aristotle rejects? Why does he reject it? What is the method he uses to reject it? What is the purpose of an association? What is the difference between a polis and other associations? What does Aristotle mean by "nature"? How can human beings tell the difference between "just" and "unjust"? What does Aristotle mean by "justice"? How does Aristotle's vision of the polis differ from Moses' vision of the chosen people?

McNeill, Handbook, pp. 33–103, esp. 34–75
(3A): The Roman Empire  
Study questions: What is the difference between the Roman Empire and a Greek *polis*? What is it that Aristides admires about Rome? What does Epictetus mean by "nature"? How do Epictetus's ideas about the proper way to achieve happiness and freedom differ from those of Aristotle? With whom is Aristides more likely to agree, and why: with Aristotle or with Epictetus?  

Oct. 10

(3B): The Conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity  
Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 14, 17–23, 33–52, 58–9, 84–6, 90–3, 96–102, 111–20, 132–6, 145–57 (1.1, 1.6–10, 2.1–10, 3.1–7, 4.1–2, 5.8, 5.12–14, 6.4–6, 6.13–16, 7.1–5, 7.19–21, 8.6–12), ca. 64 pages  
Study questions: What are the main stages in Augustine's life, from his birth to his conversion to Christianity? What are the reasons why he *wants* to convert? What are the reasons why he *does* convert? What made Augustine so miserable? What did he try to do in order to achieve peace of mind? Why did it not work?  

Oct. 12

(4A): Barbarian Kingship  
*Beowulf*, pp. 3–78 (the entire text of the poem). MAKE SURE YOU READ THE TRANSLATION BY HEANEY, ISBN 0393975800  
Study questions: What kind of human association do the Geats have? How do people introduce themselves to each other? What makes for a good ruler? Why does one's reputation matter? What rules do Grendel and his mother break? What kind of religion does Beowulf have?  

Oct. 17

(4B): The Carolingian Empire  
Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne*, RWC 4:38–53  
Study questions: What are the differences between the empire of Charlemagne and the ancient Roman Empire? What are the similarities? What are the differences between Charlemagne and Beowulf? What is the basis for Charlemagne's success? What are the consequences of his rule for European history?  

Oct. 19

**FIRST PAPER IS DUE**

(5A): The Papacy Takes Charge  
Study questions: Why did the Empire of Charlemagne fall apart? What are the problems that Regino of Prüm describes? What is the relationship between Charlemagne and Emperor Henry IV? Why do Popes Gregory VII and Urban II take action? What action do they propose to take? Who opposes them, and why? Why does Pope...
Gregory VII believe he has the right to depose temporal rulers? How does the crusade fit into the plans of the papacy? What happened at the Fourth Lateran Council? What kind of power did Pope Innocent III exercise at the Fourth Lateran Council?


(5B): **Monks**

Oct. 26


Study questions: What does it mean to be a monk? What does it mean to be an abbot? What is an obedientiary? What is a sacrist? What is a cellarer? What makes a good monastery? What is the relationship between the abbot, the convent, the town, the knights, the king, and the pope?


(6A): **Serfs**

Oct. 31

*The Manor of Alwalton* and documents on serfdom, RWC 4:81–84. A more complete version of the *Manor of Alwalton* is available at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/alwalton.html

Study questions: What happened to the wife of Gilon Lemaire? What happened to Godwin, and why? How much land is in a hide, a virgate, and a rood? What is a demesne? What is a shilling worth? What are the differences between Thomas le Boteler, the rector of the church of Alwalton, Hugh Miller, and Henry, son of the miller? How many people live in Alwalton overall? What are the rights and properties of the abbot of Peterborough? What is the total value of labor rendered to the abbot of Peterborough annually? What is the total value of the money paid to him?


(6B): **Scholars**

Nov. 2


Study questions: Why does Abelard become a scholar? What does Abelard study? Who is fighting whom about what? What is the role of kinship and family? What is the role of honor and shame? Why does Heloise not want to marry Abelard? What is Heloise's attitude towards God? Do Heloise and Abelard value pride (like knights) or humility (like monks)? Are Abelard and Heloise a threat to established society?


(7A): **Knights**

Nov. 7


Study questions: What makes King Louis different from Beowulf? What makes him different from Charlemagne? How does he govern his kingdom? What makes him a saint? What is his attitude towards the church? Why does he go on crusade? What is his relationship to Joinville like? How do Christians interact with Saracens?

(7B): Merchants, Bankers, Artisans
Medieval Cities, RWC 4:84–95, 100–104; Alessandra Macinghi negli Strozzi, Letters to Filippo degli Strozzi, RWC 5:104–17
Study questions: What is the purpose of a medieval city? How does one become a citizen? What are citizens interested in? How does a medieval city differ from a feudal kingdom? How do citizens differ from knights? How does Alessandra Macinghi negli Strozzi differ from Heloise?

(8A): Heretics and Inquisitors
Study questions: What are the differences between Bonacursus and Peter Waldo? What troubles Pope Innocent III about the people of Metz? What troubles Walther von der Vogelweide about the papacy? How does the Church prove that someone is a heretic according to canons 3 and 21 of the fourth Lateran Council? How does the Church treat such heretics? How does the Church treat people suspected or otherwise associated with heresy? What are the differences between St. Francis and Peter Waldo? How does Thomas of Celano explain the success of St. Francis? How does Bernard Gui treat heretics?

(8B): The Italian Renaissance
Leon Battista Alberti, On the Family, RWC 5:78–104
Study questions: How does Alberti view the relationship between "nature" and "virtue"? Why does he value education, and what kind of education does he value? How does he view the relationship between God and human beings? What value does he place on family and kinship? What value does he place on work, industry, and wealth? What does he think of fortune? What does he think of marriage? How do the views of Alberti differ from those of a monk?

SECOND PAPER IS DUE

(9A): Secular Politics
Study questions: What is the subject of The Prince? What does Machiavelli mean by "virtue"? What is the difference between a good human being and a good prince? How should you decide whether or not to keep a promise? What does Machiavelli think about the nature of human beings? What is the relationship between free will and fortune? What does Machiavelli think about the church of Rome? What does Machiavelli
think about religion? What does Machiavelli think about the differences between the people and the prince?


**9B**: The Protestant Reformation

Nov. 23

Luther, *Christian Liberty* (the whole text); Luther, *Letter to Pope Leo X*, RWC 5:325–33 (in some editions of *Christian Liberty*, the *Letter to Pope Leo X* is included); *The Twelve Articles of the Peasants*, RWC 5:333–8; Luther, *Admonition to Peace*, RWC 5:339–57

Study questions: What does Luther mean by "faith"? What does he regard as the purpose of law? What does he mean by "Christian liberty"? How does it differ from plain old liberty? How does Luther view the relationship between temporal lordship and spiritual lordship? Why does he object to the papacy? What are the goals of the peasants? Why is Luther angry with them? Why is Luther angry with the princes? How does Luther view the relationship between Christianity and justice? What does Luther think about freedom of opinion? What does he think about natural law?


**10A**: The Catholic Reformation

Nov. 28

*The Council of Trent* and *The Diary of Giambattista Casale*, RWC 5:386–426

Study questions: What is the problem Pope Paul III is trying to solve? Is it any different from the problems faced by Pope Urban II or Pope Innocent III? How does the Council of Trent differ from the Fourth Lateran Council? What were the Council's chief decisions? How do they relate to Luther's *sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura*? Do they make for changes in the Catholic Church? Who was Giambattista Casale? How did the Council of Trent change his life? Who was Carlo Borromeo? Who were his enemies? Who are Jesuits, and what was their role in Milan? What happened to Casale because of the plague?


**10B**: What Now?

Nov. 30


Study questions: What is Montaigne's attitude towards the cannibals? What are his standards of judgment? What does he have to say about nature, truth, and reason? What are the main subjects of Locke's *Letter*? What does Locke mean by toleration? How does he distinguish between church and state? To whom does he refuse to grant toleration, and why does he refuse it?