

**HISTORY 1500: FOUNDATIONS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION**  
**MW 10:00-10:50**

**INSTRUCTOR: A. Mark Smith**  
**216 Read Hall**  
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**THIS SYLLABUS IS POSTED IN THE  
CANVAS SITE FOR THE COURSE**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In this course we will examine the evolution of Western civilization from its Neolithic wellsprings to its culmination in world domination during the seventeenth century.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Overall, there are four main components to your final cumulative grade. **(1) Discussion section participation:** participation in discussion sections will account for roughly 30% of your final, cumulative grade. Failure to attend these sections will of course constitute failure to participate. We will explain in detail what we mean by “participation” at the first section-meeting. **(2) Papers:** there will be two short papers (4 to 5 pp. each) due for this course, both based on “thought-questions” that will require you to draw on your readings as well as on lecture. These two papers combined will account for roughly 30% of your final grade. **(3) Midterm Exam:** in week 8 you will be given a take-home midterm exam to complete over a few days; details will be given closer to the time. This exam will account for roughly 15% of your final grade. **(4) Final Examination:** the final examination will be on Monday, Dec. 10, 7:30-9:30 in the classroom. This exam will account for roughly 25% of your final, cumulative grade and will consist of an “objective” portion comprising multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blanks questions and a “subjective” portion comprising identifications and essays. Well before the exam I will pass out a set of study-questions for the essays. The actual essay-questions included in the exams will be drawn from this set.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** The university's official statement on academic dishonesty has been formulated as follows: “Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and

presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor” (NOTE THAT I HAVE AVOIDED PLAGIARISM HERE BY PUTTING THE CHOSEN SNIPPET IN QUOTATION MARKS). The two most common forms of academic dishonesty are cheating on exams and plagiarism. Many, if not most students caught out in academic dishonesty and ground through the mills of administrative justice are dismayed to learn that the penalty imposed by the university for a first offense could be suspension for one semester followed by academic probation for the duration of matriculation. A second offense may result in expulsion. Anyone caught cheating in this class can expect nothing less. Furthermore, since each of the components of this course (quizzes, midterm exam, final exam) is considered to be integral to the course as a whole, cheating on any part of a given component (e.g., cheating on one quiz) will be taken to constitute unsatisfactory performance for that component and therefore for the entire course. *In short, any instance of cheating will result in a failure for the entire course.* For further details on academic integrity, see <https://oai.missouri.edu/students/>

**Collaboration:** I strongly encourage group-study for exams so that each member can benefit from the collective knowledge/wisdom of the whole group. Typically, the group will address the study-questions I provide for the exam and will come up with more or less common answers to each of them. On the exam, however, I expect each of you to couch these common answers in your own words and according to your own analytic framework rather than simply memorize them and spew them out in that form. I will regard any indication of such memorization (e.g., repetition of phrases, precisely the same analytic order, etc.) as evidence of cheating and will fail you accordingly.

**ADA REQUIREMENTS:** If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the [MU Disability Center](#), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

**INTELLECTUAL PLURALISM:** The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the [Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#); the [MU Equity Office](#), or [equity@missouri.edu](mailto:equity@missouri.edu). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **Required Text:**

Clifford R. Backman, *Cultures of the West: A History*, second edition (henceforth referred to simply as “Backman”)

### **Ancillary Readings:**

I have put a number of ancillary required readings in the Documents section of the Canvas site; these will all be signaled in the “**Required Readings**” sections of the syllabus with an asterisk and will be in bold-face type: e.g., **\*Week 1 Readings** (*Enuma Elish* and *Code of Hammurabi*).

Week 1 (Aug. 20, 22)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. xxix-44; **\*Week 1 Readings** (*Enuma Elish* and *Code of Hammurabi*)

#### The Earliest Civilizations

1. Prehistory and the Preconditions of “Civilization”
2. Early Mesopotamia and Egypt

Week 2 (Aug. 27, 29)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. 44-96; **\*Week 2 Readings** (Akhenaten’s *Hymn*, *Genesis*, selections from *Deuteronomy*)

#### Mediterranean Empire-Building

3. The Later Near East
4. Egypt in Transition

Week 3 (Sep. 3, 5)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. 99-126; **\*Week 3 Reading** (Hesiod, *Theogony*)

#### Classical Greece I

- Labor Day: no class
5. Evolution of Classical Greece

Week 4 (Sep. 10, 12)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. 129-167; **\*Week 4 Readings** (Plato, *Timaeus* and *Republic*)

#### Classical Greece II

6. The Golden Age
7. The Macedonian Era

Week 5 (Sep. 17, 19)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. 171-221; **\*Week 5 Readings (Aristotle, *On the Heavens* and *Nicomachean Ethics*; Cicero, *On Laws*)**

The Roman Transition

- 8. The Hellenistic World
- 9. The Roman Republic and Early Empire

Week 6 (Sep. 24, 26)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. 221-259; **\*Week 6 Readings (Augustine on creation; Augustine on the two cities; prologue to Justinian's *Institutes*)**

Roman Imperialism

- 10. Imperial Rome
- 11. The Byzantine Empire

Week 7 (Oct. 1, 3)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. 259-305; **\*Week 7 Readings (Tacitus' *Germania*, Law of the Salian Franks, Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*)**

The Transition from Late Antique to Medieval

- 12. The Spread of Islam
- 13. Early Medieval Europe

Week 8 (Oct. 8, 10)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. 309-349; **\*Week 8 Readings (*Donation of Constantine*, *Dictatus Papae*, John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*)**

The Emergence of High Medieval Europe

- 14. Social and Political Developments
- 15. Religion and Society

Week 9 (Oct. 15, 17)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. 353-396; **\*Week 9 Readings (*Canons of Fourth Lateran Council*, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*)**

High Medieval Culture

- 16. The Coalescence of Christendom
- 17. Institutional Developments

Week 10 (Oct. 22, 24)

*Required Reading: \*Week 10 Readings (Marsilio of Padua, **Defensor pacis**)*

The Later Middle Ages

- 18. Growing Instability
- 19. Efforts at Restabilization

Week 11 (Oct. 29, 31)

*Required Reading: Backman, pp. 399-417; \*Week 11 Readings (Pico della Mirandola, **Oration**, Machiavelli, **The Prince**)*

The Renaissance

- 20. Ideal vs Real
- 21. Politics and Power

Week 12 (Nov. 5, 7)

*Required Reading: Backman, pp. 417-445; \*Week 12 Readings (Luther's **Open Letter**, **Christian Freedom**, **Against the Peasants**)*

The Reformation: Political and Religious Turmoil

- 22. Wellsprings: Luther and Germany
- 23. Reformation and Counter-Reformation

Week 13 (Nov. 12, 14)

*Required Reading: Backman, pp. 449-462, 493-519; \*Week 13 Readings (Bartolomé de las Casas, **Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies**)*

Early Modern Europe: Political and Economic Developments

- 24. Expansion from the Inside Out
- 25. An Imperfect "Perfect Storm"

Week 14 (Nov. 19, 21)

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Week 15 (Nov. 26, 28)

*Required Reading: Backman, pp. 462-489; \*Week 15 Readings (Francis Bacon, **New Atlantis**)*

The Scientific Revolution

- 28. O Brave New World!
- 29. The Moral Force of Reason

Week 16 (Dec. 3, 5)

*Required Reading:* Backman, pp. 527-575; **\*Week 16 Readings** (*Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Hobbes, Leviathan*)

Absolutism and Constitutional Checks

- 26. Checks, Balances, and Counter-Checks
- 27. Making the Best of the Better