

# WESTERN CIVILIZATION TO 1300



Tuesday & Thursday 10:45 – 12:05  
HPR N 238

Instructor: Nicole Giannella

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Office Hours: TR 12:15-1:15 or by appt.

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In addition to political history, special attention is given to the development of systems of justice, forms of citizenship and non-citizenship, advances in technologies of knowledge, and the history of art and architecture. At the same time, the course serves as a basic introduction to the ancient historian's craft: important topics include the use of source materials, interpretation and historical argumentation, and the problems inherent in trying to recover information about, and the viewpoints of, segments of society not directly represented as writers or subjects in the surviving literary historical tradition.

**Required Texts:**

Clifford R. Backman, *Cultures of the West: A History, Volume 1: To 1750*, **2<sup>nd</sup> edition**, Oxford University Press

Clifford R. Backman and Christine Axen, eds., *Sources for Cultures of the West, Volume 1: To 1750*, **2<sup>nd</sup> edition**, Oxford University Press

Other readings will be posted on Canvas.

**Evaluation:**

Participation: 10%

Writing Assignment 1: 20%

Writing Assignment 2: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

**Details & Guidelines:**

The formal requirements for this course include 1) participation 2) two writing assignments based on the readings; 3) a midterm exam; and 4) a final exam.

All slides from class will be posted on Canvas; these will help you review for exams.

Readings: Your textbook will provide an historical narrative. We will spend time in class discussing the texts in the sourcebook. Reading is assigned for the week and should be completed before the start of class on Tuesday.

Participation: In class, we will delve more deeply into particular historical questions and topics as well as engaging with key material from or about each civilization. I do not take formal attendance, but information presented in lecture is directly tested and not completely covered by the course textbooks. From time to time, I will put questions on the board and ask you to write your answer on a sheet of paper which I will collect.

You are welcome to use laptops to take notes, but checking email, Facebook, etc., will have negative consequences for your learning outcomes!

If you have an emergency or are ill, please let me know. Excessive absences will seriously affect your grade.

Writing Assignments: 4 double spaced pages in 12 point Times New Roman with one inch margins due at the start of class on Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. These assignments will be based on the primary source material we read for class. A list of topics will be provided.

Midterm Exam: In class on Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. The exam will consist of passage and image identifications, short answer questions, and a single essay. A study guide will be provided.

Final Exam: Our exam is scheduled for Monday December 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:30. The final exam is

cumulative. It will have the same format as the midterm exam for the first two sections but will require two essays. A study guide will be provided.

Contact: If you email me, I will respond within 24 hours (usually sooner).

**Schedule (subject to change):**

**Part I: Early Civilizations**

Week 1: 8/22 Introduction to the course. What is a civilization?

8/24 The First Civilizations

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 1 “Water and Soil, Stone and Metal: The First Civilizations”

*Sources* p. vii-viii “How to Read a Primary Source”

*Sources* 1.1 Shamash Hymn; 1.2 “Poem of the Righteous Sufferer”

Week 2: 8/29 Monumentality and Knowledge in Egypt

8/31 Law Givers and Gods in the Ancient Near East

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 2 “Law Givers, Emperors, and Gods: The Ancient Near East”

*Sources* 2.1 “Tale of Sinuhe”; 2.2 *Epic of Gilgamesh*; 2.3 from the Laws of Hammurabi; 2.4 “Loyalist Teaching”; 2.5 from the *Book of the Dead*

Week 3: 9/5 The Torah and the Development of Justice

9/7 Family and Society in the Levant

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 3 “The People of the Covenant”

*Sources* 3.1 The Biblical Tale of Noah and the Great Flood; 3.2 Book of Exodus: Moses and Pharaoh; 3.3 Book of Jeremiah, Prophecy to Israel; 3.4 First Book of Kings, King Solomon and the Temple

**Part II: The Ancient Greeks**

Week 4: 9/12 The Heroic Age and Solon

9/14 Greek Citizenship and Identity

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 4 “Greeks and Persians”

*Sources* 4.1 Hesiod, *Works and Days*; 4.2 Homer, *Iliad*; 4.3 Herodotus, *Histories* on the Egyptians; 5.4 Aristotle, *Poetics*, “On the Elements of Tragedy”

Sophocles, *Antigone* (on Canvas)

Week 5: 9/19 The War at Home  
9/21 Philosophy, Art, and Medicine in the Greek World  
Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 5 “Classical Greece and the Hellenistic World” pp. 129-157  
*Sources* 4.4 Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, “Funeral Oration”;  
Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, “Melian Dialogue” (on Canvas)  
Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (on Canvas)  
*Sources* 5.3 Plato, *Symposium*, Speech of Alcibiades; 5.5 Diogenes Laertius, *The Life and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, “Life of Zeno of Citium”

Week 6: 9/26 Alexander the Great. **1<sup>st</sup> Writing Assignment Due at Start of Class!**  
9/28 Hellenistic Science and Technology  
Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 5 “Classical Greece and the Hellenistic World” pp. 157-170  
Selections from Romm, *Alexander the Great* reader (on Canvas)

### **Part III: Rome**

Week 7: 10/3 The Foundations of Rome  
10/5 *Class Cancelled*  
Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 6 “Empire of the Sea: Rome” pp. 171-192  
Selections from Livy, *History of Rome* and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman Antiquities* (on Canvas)

Week 8: 10/17 Empire and Civilization  
10/19 Roman Knowledge: Law and Literature  
Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 6 “Empire of the Sea: Rome” pp. 192-208  
*Sources* 6.1 Vergil, *Aeneid*; 6.2 Epictetus, *Enchiridion*; 6.3 Tacitus, *Histories*; 6.4 Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*; 6.5A Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*; 6.5B “The Third-Century Imperial-Succession Crisis”  
Augustus, *Res Gestae* (on Canvas)

Week 9: 10/24 Roman Citizens and Non-Citizens  
10/26 **Midterm Exam!**  
Readings: review for midterm

## Part IV: Christianity and Islam

Week 10: 10/31 Roman Religions

11/2 Late Antique Christianity

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 7 “The Rise of Christianity in a Roman World”

*Sources* 7.1 Josephus, *The Jewish War*; 7.2 Pliny the Younger, *Letters*; 7.3 Celsus and Origen, *Contra Celsus*; 7.4A The Nicene Creed; 7.4B Minucius Felix, *Octavius*; 7.5 *Gospel of Thomas*; 7.6 Augustine, *Seventh Discourse on the Gospel of John*  
Selections on Roman religion (on Canvas)

Week 11: 11/7 Women in Late Antiquity

11/9 Networks and Governance into the Early Middle Ages

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 8 “The Early Middle Ages”

*Sources* 8.1 Gildas, *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain*; 8.2 Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*; 8.3 Gregory the Great, “Life of St. Benedict”; 8.4 Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of English People*; 8.5 Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*; 8.6 From Trotula  
Selections on women in Late Antiquity (on Canvas)

Week 12: 11/14 Islam and Identity

11/16 Islamic Law and the Transmission of Ideas

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 9 “The Expansive Realm of Islam”

*Sources* 9.1 *Qur'an*; 9.2 Ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Mohammad*; 9.3 Al-Ghazali, *The Deliverer from Error*; 9.4 *One Thousand and One Nights*; 9.5 Maimonides, *Letter to Yemen*; 9.6 Usamah Ibn Muqidh, *Memoirs*; 9.7 Ibn Rushd, *On the Harmony of Religious Law and Philosophy*; 9.8 Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*

## Part V: Western Renewal

Week 13: 11/21 Empire, again? **2<sup>nd</sup> Writing Assignment Due at Start of Class!**

11/23 *No class, Thanksgiving*

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 10 “Reform and Renewal in the Greater West” pp. 309-336

*Sources* 10.1 Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*; 10.2 Pope Gregory VII, *Letters*; 10.5 Otto of Freising, *The Two Cities*

Week 14: 11/28 The Crusades

11/30 Lords, Serfs, and Property

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 10 “Reform and Renewal in the Greater West” pp. 337-352

*Sources* 10.3 Guilbert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei*; 10.4 Peter Abelard, *Sic et Non*; 10.6 “Song of Roland”

Week 15: 12/5 The High Middle Ages

12/7 Who’s a Part of the Story?

Readings: *Cultures*, Ch. 11 “Worlds Brought Down” pp. 353-372

*Sources* 11.1 Dante Alighieri, Three Speeches from *The Divine Comedy*; 11.2 Dante Alighieri “Paolo and Francesca in Hell” from *The Divine Comedy*

**FINAL EXAM DECEMBER 11 10:30-12:30!**