

Course Syllabus  
HIST 2311: Western Civilization to 1660

Instructor: Hunter Hobbs

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Office Hours: after school daily (3:40-4:15); or by appointment.

### **Course Description**

To begin at the beginning is to begin with what is right in front of us. Most immediate of all is the educational project itself, a project which is fundamentally civilizational in character. It aims at far more than simply communicating a *way* of life from one generation to the next. Every species of animals has a way of life; only human beings speak of civilizations. The educational project, and the civilizational goal that it reflects, aims to bring about something that approximates the best way of life—or the correct way of life—for human beings.

“Western Civilization” is a modern concept. It is a product of the Enlightenment. It reflected, somewhat problematically, the emerging consciousness of a shared cultural heritage—a consciousness that reached full maturity in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. But it was also a term of differentiation which implied the existence of civilizational alternatives. In particular it implied an Eastern alternative. And it cannot be doubted that the growing cultural awareness of an Oriental alternative helped give life to the idea of “the West” as something more than a vague geographic descriptor. For things are known in two ways, by what they are and also by what they are not.

But what is the West? And what is it not?—What did “the West” mean to those Enlightenment men who conceived it, and from whom we have inherited it?—And to what degree is that meaning grounded in the realities of history and human nature?

The twin roots of Western Civilization are Judeo-Christian monotheism and Greek philosophy. To study Western Civilization means, then, to study the interplay of these ideas as they have emerged into the full light of modern history, and to study the interaction of peoples who held these ideas close. It is to observe how those ideas have developed; how they have cooperated and competed over time; how they have been transfigured by historical contingencies. The same Enlightenment which gave birth to the idea of the West was itself a product of the western tradition—a tradition which in time produced our notion of modern science and laid a foundation in political philosophy for the emergence of constitutional democracies. And though it is surely problematic from the point of view of modern sociology to give definite form to a concept like “the West”, it must also be admitted that the skeptical posture of modern sociology is itself a product of a specifically western intellectual tradition. We can say that although the Enlightenment may have produced the West as a concept, certainly it was the western tradition which produced the Enlightenment. Thus it is only in the light of the western tradition that the concept of the West can be doubted in any plausible way.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to . . .

- analyze cause and effect in the development of Western Civilization, from the emergence of ancient societies to the year 1660.
- analyze the relationship between economics, politics, demography, and social structure in world history to 1660.
- synthesize assigned readings and lectures into a coherent, fact-based narrative that demonstrates critical thinking skills.
- analyze historical documents in light of their context and particular point of view.
- evaluate the unspoken premises that are necessarily involved in the creation of any interpretive framework for history, including our own.

## **Grading Policy**

Calculating 6-Weeks Grades

- For dual credit courses, major grades count for 70% of the total grade in each 6-week grading period; daily grades count for 30% of the total grade.

Major Grades (70%)

- In most cases, there will be at least one examination during each 6 week grading period.
- There will be no less than two major grades in any 6 weeks grading period. The major grades may be examinations or a project-based grade such as the reading journal.

Daily Grades (30%)

- The most challenging of the daily grades will definitely be reading quizzes, which you can expect on a regular basis throughout the semester.
- There will be other daily grades given from time to time, including journal entries, timeline exercises, reading guides, map exercises, etc.

Final Exam

- The Final Exam will be provisionally scheduled for 8-9 Dec 2021—a Wednesday-Thursday. Grades are due to Angelo State the next Monday.

Other Grading Policies

- There will be no extra credit assignments, although extra effort can always be applied to your reading journal.
- Daily grade assignments that are turned in after an officially assigned due date will be accepted for credit with a minimum 30 point deduction. After 3 school days have passed, the grade will become a zero.
- This course is a rigorous, college-level course. Second-chance opportunities are not provided on tests or major assignments. Alternative procedures and methods are planned to promote student reflection on their readiness prior to a test or major assignment. For example, students may be provided multiple daily assignments, homework assignments, or quizzes leading up to a test so that students become aware of potential difficulties and have a chance to practice independent demonstration.

## The Reading List

### Primary Text

- Spielvogel, Jackson J. *Western Civilization to 1715, vol. I*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. 2003.

Major Supplementary readings may include selections from . . .

- Aristotle. *The Politics*. Book I
- Auerbach, Eric. from *Mimesis*. “Odysseus’ Scar”.
- Augustine. from *City of God*. Book III.
- Benedict of Nursia. from *The Rule of St Benedict*.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. from *The Decameron*.
- Cantor, Norman F. from *Civilization of the Middle Ages*. Chapter 12.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. from *The Canterbury Tales*. “Miller’s Tale”
- de Coulanges, Numa Denis Fustel. from *The Ancient City*. Chapter 1.
- Descartes, Rene. from *Meditations on First Philosophy*.
- Herodotus. from *The Histories*. The story of Gyges.
- Hobbes, Thomas. from *Leviathan*. Chapters 13-15.
- Johnson, Paul. from *A History of Christianity*. “The Third Force.”
- Johnson, Paul. from *A History of the Jews*. “Israelites”.
- Las Casas, Bartolome de. from *Destruction of the Indies*.
- Livy, from *Early History of Rome*.
- Machiavelli. from *The Prince*. Chapter 15
- Plato. *The Euthyphro*.
- Xenophon. from *The Education of Cyrus*.

## Course Sequence

### Unit 1: Foundations in the Ancient Near East

- Session 1: Why study history?—Philosophy of History
- Session 2: What is civilization?—Six Elements of Civilization
- Session 3: Polytheism: the Egyptian & Mesopotamian pantheons
- Session 4: The Advent of Writing: from Contracts to Literature
- Session 5: Abraham; “Israelites” discussion; Monotheism; the Mosaic Code; Timeline: Hebrews to Israelites to Jews

### Unit 2: Persians, Greeks, & Romans

- Session 7: Cyrus the Great; Herodotus and the significance of the *Histories*; Story of Gyges; Troy to Thermopylae

- Session 8: The Ancient City; Greek Culture & Thought; Socrates & Plato; Discussion of *The Euthyphro*
- Session 9: Aristotle; Discussion of *The Politics* & Aristotle's regimes
- Session 10: Alexander and the Spread of Hellenism; The Ptolemies in Egypt
- Session 11: The Mythic Beginnings of Rome; Livy: story of the Sabine Women; Rome's Expansion
- Session 12: The Punic Wars; the Civil Wars; Caesar & Empire
- Session 13: Decline & Fall; Christianity; Augustine; Discussion of *City of God*
- Session 14: Barbarians at the Gates; the Goths; Orthodoxy & Heresy; Arius & Arianism

#### Unit 3: The Post-Classical Slide

- Session 15: Muhammad & the Birth of Islam; the Koran; the Pillars of Islam
- Session 16: Islamic expansion; the Question of Jihad; the Battle of Tours
- Session 17: The Frankish Dynasties; Charlemagne's Empire; the Holy Roman Empire; the Vikings & the Crusades
- Session 18: The Beginnings of Modern France and Modern England

#### Unit 4: The High Middle Ages

- Session 19: Monks and Monasticism; discussion of *Rule of St Benedict*; the Cistercians
- Session 20: Discussion of *Civilization of the Middle Ages*; Aristotle's 2<sup>nd</sup> Sailing; Thomas Aquinas & the Scholastics
- Session 21: Plague & Recovery; discussion from *Decameron*; Giotto & the pre-Renaissance

#### Unit 5: Renaissance & Reformation

- Session 22: Art of the Southern Renaissance; Humanism; Christian Humanism; Art of the Northern Renaissance
- Session 23: Gutenberg & the Press; Erasmus; discussion of "The Third Force"
- Session 24: Columbus and the Age of Discovery; Africa, India, and the New World; discussion of *Destruction of the Indies*
- Session 25: Martin Luther; Protestant Reformation; Zwingli; Calvin; Henry VIII

#### Unit 6: A Kind of Revolution

- Session 26: The Situation on the Iberian Peninsula: Spain & Portugal; the Spanish West Indies; Brazil; the Spanish Armada
- Session 27: The Situation in England: Elizabeth, Shakespeare, and the English Civil War
- Session 28: Discussion of *The Prince*; discussion of *Leviathan*
- Session 29: The Situation on the Continent: Hapsburgs and Bourbons; The 30 Years War
- Session 30: The Tribes of Europe: Prussians, Russians, Slavs, and Turks

## **Student Conduct Policies**

### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all work. Any student found guilty of any form of dishonesty in academic work is subject of disciplinary action and possible expulsion from ASU.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU's Academic Integrity policy in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own. Plagiarism is literary theft.

In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list.

Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality via Turnitin. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the ASU Writing Center.

## **Student Disability Services**

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAA), and subsequent legislation.

The Office of Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting: Dallas A. Swafford, Director of Student Disability Services (325) 942-2047 ([dallas.swafford@angelo.edu](mailto:dallas.swafford@angelo.edu)).

## **Title IX Statement**

Angelo State University is committed to the safety and security of all students. If you or someone you know experience sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic or dating violence, stalking, or discrimination, you may contact ASU's Title IX Coordinator:

Michelle Nicole Boone, J.D.

Director of Title IX Compliance

[Michelle.boone@angelo.edu](mailto:Michelle.boone@angelo.edu) 325-486-6357 :: Mayer Administration Building 204

## **Absence for Religious Holy Day**

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

## **Incomplete Grade Policy**

It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 Grading Procedures for more information.

## **Copyright Policy**

Students officially enrolled in this course should make only one printed copy of the given articles and/or chapters. You are expressly prohibited from distributing or reproducing any portion of course readings in printed or electronic form without written permission from the copyright holders or publishers.

## **General Policies Related to This Course**

All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in these documents:

- Angelo State University Student Handbook
- Angelo State University Catalog