

HIST 233: Renaissance, Reformations, (Revolutions), and Explorations

Grinnell College, Spring 2020

TTH @ 8:30-9:50 a.m., HSSC N2118

Syllabus subject to change

Assistant Professor Catherine Chou (choucath@grinnell.edu)

Office Hours: T @ 2:00-4:00 p.m. and W @ 10-12 noon, or by appointment M-Th, Mears Cottage 211

Course Description

Why is it worth studying the history of early modern Europe in our globalized and multicultural present? It used to be that a course covering this geographic and chronological era would take for granted that several well-defined events had ushered in a rational, secular modernity, first for 'the West' and then for 'the rest' – the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the beginnings of overseas empire.

As historians began experimenting with new methodologies, however, and calling into question entrenched narratives, the stakes for examining the history of early modern Europe shifted as well. Recasting events of world significance as contingent and contested processes both diminished their distinctiveness and recuperated the agency of a greater variety of participants. These historiographical shifts also had the effect of revealing that Europe's status as the origin point of modernity is less incontrovertible fact than a story developed by both early modern men and women, and contemporary scholars, looking to make sense of a rapidly expanding European world. To study early modern Europe in the twenty-first century is to understand why history built around the idea of inevitable progress, led by the West, was so appealing and durable, and why it has proven difficult and perhaps undesirable to construct a single cohesive narrative in its place.

This course will be split into four major units (Renaissance, Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the 'Age of Discovery'), each pairing a narrative of progress and definitive breaking from the past with narratives of gradual, contested, and multifaceted change. Along the way, students will learn how historians build on and challenge preexisting scholarship, about the impact of centering one set of sources over another, the ways in which archival discoveries and digital humanities tools can expand the available source base, and how they can enter into an ongoing set of debates by proposing new avenues and questions for research.

Required Books and Readings

Textbook (Available at Pioneer Bookstore)

1. Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe, 1450-1789* (Cambridge University Press, Second Edition)

Course packet readings available online via P-web; **print the week's readings and bring to class**

A note on the readings

The Wiesner-Hanks textbook is intended as a supplement to our lectures and discussions, as well as an additional resource as you complete your writing assignments. **All of the other primary and secondary sources are uploaded to P-web in the form of a course reader; please bring the readings to class in hard copy (this counts towards your participation grade).** Whenever possible, I have tried to find substantive

primary sources for us to read, sometimes in the original language and format. We will practice learning to read – to our eyes! – funny and irregular spelling, densely printed type, unfamiliar formatting, etc.

Assignments and Grading Breakdown

Participation (**including occasional class assignments**): 15%

2 x 1000-word response papers (**including drafting**): 30%

Outline one due 02/07; paper one due 02/16

Outline two due 02/21; paper two due 03/01

Midterm exam: 20% due 03/13

Final exam: 25% due 05/08

Final project (**including scaffolding assignments**): 20%

Scaffolding #1 due 04/12

Scaffolding #2 due 04/26

Final project due 05/14

Scale for individual assignments:

A: 97% B: 85% C: 75%

A-: 91% B-: 81% D: 62%

B+: 88% C+: 78% F: 50%

Scale for final grades:

A: 95%+ B: 84-86% C: 70%-76%

A-: 90-94% B-: 80-83% D: 60-69%

B+: 87-90% C+: 77-80% F: Below 60%

Attendance and Participation: 15%

Your success in this course will depend on your willingness to engage thoughtfully with the material and each other, in your conversation and your note-taking. We will learn a great deal from one another if we come to class prepared, with open minds, ready to contribute and to take intellectual risks. Together, we will practice developing incisive questions, identifying significant passages, tracing common themes, providing evidentiary support for scholarly arguments, and responding productively to disagreements and critiques.

For every class please come prepared with:

1. Hard copies of the readings
2. Your daily analysis (based on questions/tips from the class Google Doc: https://docs.google.com/document/d/10LpNOwvipno_0R5A-PcWBtrD_DC_1RZlluTJ6x2f1lk/edit)
3. At two points during the semester (last day before spring break; day after the final is due), please submit your collective daily analyses (either in the form of a running notebook, photographs of your notes, or as a single Word document or PDF). Your daily analyses will form a significant portion of your participation grade.

Additional ground rules for class:

1. Initial meeting with Instructor – Please sign up here (<https://doodle.com/poll/9b2uvi8m5knstat8>) for a meeting with me during weeks 2-3. This is so I can get to better know you and your goals for the class!

2. Attendance – You are allowed two excused absences for any reason, without penalty, as long as you notify me ahead of time. **Subsequent absences or late arrivals must be approved by Student Services, Athletics Department, Chaplain, etc., or they will count against your total grade (2% each).**

2 x 1000-word Response Papers – 30% (see above for draft & final due dates)

For two of our three units (on the Renaissance, Reformation, and Scientific Revolution), you will write a 1000-word analytical paper building on your short reactions for each session, as well as our class discussions. You will design your own analytical question and argument and submit an outline a week in advance of the deadline, **drawing on at least one outside academic and/or additional primary source.** Then, based on feedback from me (and potentially a writing tutor), please revise and complete the paper **(15% each).**

Outlines should consist of:

- A complete introductory paragraph, including your analytical question and thesis
- A complete first body paragraph, including a topic sentence and the evidence and analysis you will use to support it (footnotes required)
- The remainder of your paragraphs (about three to four more) sketched out in bullet points. Begin with your topic sentences for each and include the quotations/evidence you will use to make your case. I should be able to follow clearly the logic of your argument.

All the writing you produce for this class should be footnoted in Chicago-style format. For more information on footnoting, see: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/03/>

Two take-home exams (20% each), due 03/13 and 05/08

There are two timed take-home essays. They will cover, respectively, the sources and debates from our unit on the Reformation and on the Scientific Revolution and European explorations. The exams are open book, so take notes in class and as you read! You may not, however, consult with one another or use online resources aside from what is posted on P-web.

Final Project – Rare Book or Manuscript Analysis and Paper (20%), due 05/14, plus scaffolding dates

Grinnell recently acquired a treasure trove of rare books and manuscripts from the Salisbury House in Des Moines. We will be one of the first classes to make use of these archival materials (exciting!) For your final project, you will select an early modern artifact from Special Collections and build a short research paper around it (~2000 words). The two scaffolding assignments will focus on developing a research question and creating an annotated bibliography to support you in the writing process.

Other Activities

1. Special Collections Visit – Week Nine
2. Field Trip to Des Moines Art Center – Week Ten or Eleven (dependent on ISC funding)

Late Assignment Policy

Every student is entitled to two 24-hour grace periods to use on the 1000-word response papers, exams, or final project. You must notify me if you plan to take an extension. Once you have used your grace periods, late assignments will be docked by 1/3 of a grade each day.

Honor Code

Please familiarize yourself with the Grinnell Student Handbook honesty policies and abide by them.

Accommodations

If you have any documented needs that require accommodation, please do not hesitate to let me know. More details: <https://www.grinnell.edu/about/offices-services/accessibility-disability/disability-services>

Readings and Topics

Week One

Tuesday, January 21st – Introduction

Thursday, January 23rd – Renaissance Men

1. Jacob Burckhardt, 'The Development of the Individual' ('Personality' and 'Glory') and 'The Revival of Antiquity' ('The Humanists'), in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (London: Phaidon Press)

Week Two

Tuesday, January 28th – Renaissance Men

1. Petrarch, 'The Ascent of Mont Ventoux', April 26, 1366, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, eds. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 36-46

Thursday, January 30th – Humanism and the New Learning

1. Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* (selections from the *Divine Comedy*), c. 1320, eds. Jean and Robert Hollander (Anchor Books, 2002)
2. Giovanni Boccaccio, selections, *The Decameron*, 1353, trans. Wayne A Rebhorn (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2013)

Week Three

Tuesday, February 4th – Renaissance Women?

1. Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, 1405, Part 1, Chapters 1-11 (New York: Penguin, 1999)

Thursday, February 6th – Renaissance Women?

1. Joan Kelly-Gadol, 'Did Women have a Renaissance?' in *Women, History, and Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 19-50 or Merry Wiesner-Hanks, 'Do Women Need the Renaissance?' in *Gender and History*, vol. 20, no. 3 (November 2008), p. 539-557

Outline for first 1000-word response paper due by Friday, February 7th at 11:59 p.m.

Week Four

Tuesday, February 11th – European Christendom before the Reformation

1. Eamon Duffy, selections, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992)
2. Lucien Febvre, selections *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985)

Thursday, February 13th – The Cataclysmic Reformation – Lutheranism

1. G.R. Elton, Chapters 1 and 2, on Luther and Charles V, in *Reformation Europe, 1517-1559* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 15-52

First 1000-word response paper due by Sunday, February 16th at 11:59 p.m.

Week Five

Tuesday, February 18th – The Cataclysmic Reformation – Lutheranism

1. Johan Tetzel, 'Rebuttal against Luther's Sermon on Indulgences and Grace', 1518, p. 1-19 and 31-32
2. Lucas Cranach, 'Luther Preaching as the Pope Goes to Hell', 1540s

Thursday, February 20th – The Cataclysmic Reformation – Lutheranism

1. Martin Luther, 'Preface to the New Testament', 1522 and 'The Freedom of a Christian', 1520 (p. 42-59) in *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writing*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor Books, 1962)
2. Johannes Cochlaeus, 'Luther as a Seven-Headed Monster', 1529
3. Anonymous, 'The Seven-Headed Papacy', 1530

Outline for second 1000-word response paper due by Friday, February 21st at 11:59 p.m.

Week Six

Tuesday, February 25th – The Cataclysmic Reformation – England

1. A.G. Dickens, Preface, Chapter 5 'Erastianism and Anticlericalism', and Chapter 6 'Statutes and Bibles: The Henrician Reformation', in *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964)

Thursday, February 27th – The Cataclysmic Reformation? – England

1. John Bale, 'The Woman Clothed with the Sun and the Whore of Babylon', in *The Images of Both Churches*, 1545
2. John Foxe, frontispiece, 'Acts and Monuments', 1563
3. John Field and Thomas Wilcox, 'An Admonition to the Parliament', 1572

Second 1000-word response paper due by Saturday, March 2nd at 11:59 p.m.

Week Seven

Tuesday, March 3rd – The Failed Reformation?

1. Geoffrey Parker, 'Success and Failure in the First Century of the Reformation', in *Past and Present*, vol. 136, no. 1 (August 1992), p. 43-82

2. Brad Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Reformation Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), Introduction 'The World We Have Lost' and Chapter 1 'Excluding God'

Thursday, March 5th – The Reformation as Social Crisis + Midterm Review

1. Nicholas Terpstra, Introduction and Chapter 2, 'Purifying the Body', in *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World: An Alternative History of the Reformation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Midterm exam distributed, due Thursday, March 13th by 11:59 p.m. to P-web

Week Eight

Monday, March 10th – Aristotelianism and the Early Modern Scientific Worldview

1. Peter Dear, 'Introduction: The Measure of All Things' and Chapter 1, 'Induction in Early-Modern Europe', in *Discipline and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

Wednesday, March 12th – No new reading, discussion of final project instructions

Submit collected daily analyses by Friday, March 15th at 11:59 p.m. – (via P-web or hard copy)

Spring Break!

Week Nine

Tuesday, March 31st – Towards an Experimental Paradigm?

1. Andreas Vesalius, selections, *On The Fabric of the Human Body* (1543), trans. D.H. Garrison and M.H. Hast (Basel, Switzerland: Karger, 2016)
2. William Harvey, selections, *On the Motion of the Heart* (1628)

Wednesday, April 2nd – Special Collections visit, submit daily analysis for a check-in

1. Robert Boyle, selections, *New Experiments Physico-Mechanical* (1660)

Week Ten

Tuesday, April 7th – Towards an Experimental Paradigm?

1. Margaret Cavendish, selections, *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*, ed. Eileen O'Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Thursday, April 9th – The Social History of Early Modern Science

1. Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), Chapter 1 'The Great Civility: Trust, Truth, and Moral Order', p. 3-41
2. Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1989), Chapter 1 'Institutional Landscapes', p. 10-32

First scaffolding assignment for final project due by Sunday, April 12th at 11:59 p.m.

Week Eleven

Tuesday, April 14th – The impact of the ‘New World’ in Europe

1. Michael Ryan, ‘Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 23, no. 4 (Oct. 1981), p. 519-38

Thursday, April 16th – The ‘Age of Discovery’

1. Thomas More, selections, *Utopia*, 1516

Week Twelve

Tuesday, April 21st – The ‘Age of Discovery’

1. Michel de Montaigne, ‘On Cannibals’, 1580

Thursday, April 23rd – Early Modern Ethnography and Anthropology in the New World

1. Jose de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, ed. Jane E. Magan (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 1590

Second scaffolding assignment for final project due by Saturday, April 26th at 11:59 p.m.

Week Thirteen

Tuesday, April 28th – The impact of the ‘New World’ in Europe, revisited

1. Anthony Grafton, Introduction and Chapter 5, ‘A New World of Learning’, in *New Worlds, Ancient Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992)
2. Lee Palmer Wandel, Chapter 5 ‘The Ties that Bind’, in *The Reformation: Towards a New History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Thursday, April 30th – The ‘Discovery’ of Europe

1. David Northrup, *Africa’s Discovery of Europe*, Chapter 1, ‘First Sight – Lasting Impressions’ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Final exam distributed, due Friday, May 8th by 11:59 p.m. to P-web

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, May 5th – No class, time to work on exam and final projects

Thursday, May 7th – Final Project Round Robins

Exam Week

Final Projects due Thursday, May 14th by 11:59 p.m.