

HIST 233

Renaissance, Reformations, and Explorations

Grinnell College, Spring 2018

MWF @ 11-11:50 Mears Cottage 115

Syllabus subject to change

Professor Catherine Chou (choucath@grinnell.edu)

Office Hours: MW @ 4:00-6:00 p.m., or by appointment, 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 was less incontrovertible fact than a story developed by early moderns themselves, as they tried to make sense of their place in a world that – from their perspective – was rapidly expanding. 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/Enlightenment, and the 'Age of Discovery'), each pairing a classical narrative of progress and a definitive break 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 Weisner-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

We will not discuss the Weisner-Hanks textbook much in class; it 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; you must bring the entire week's 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. This is the best way to get a sense of the rhythms, concerns, and perspectives that shaped the early modern period. At various points, we will practice learning to read – to our eyes! – funny and irregular spelling, densely printed type, unfamiliar formatting, etc. **This may seem difficult at first, but the important thing is that you try!**

Assignments and Grading Breakdown

Attendance and Participation (including occasional class assignments): 30%

Reading Responses: 16%

Midterm: 20%

Conference Presentation: 10%

Conference Paper: 24%

Attendance and Participation: 30%

Your success in (and enjoyment of!) 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 – Coming to class without the correct readings = 1/3 absence**
2. A hard copy of your reading response (see below) or a short reaction, consisting of:
 - a. One or two passages from the text that you consider especially significant, **copied out and cited**
 - b. A short explanation (about 250-300 words total) of why you think these passages are especially crucial to the meaning or argument of the text as a whole, and the insights that they provide into the central themes and main questions of our course
 - c. At least one analytical question of your own about the reading
 - d. **I will periodically collect and check your 'short reactions' and class notes, counting them towards your participation grade. The most important thing you can do to succeed in this class is to *read carefully and thoughtfully***

Additional ground rules for class:

1. **Initial meeting with Instructor – Please sign up here for a (mandatory) meeting with me, in the first two weeks of the semester. This is so I can get to better know you and your goals for the class!**
2. **No laptops** (except for designated days) – this is a discussion-based course, and as such, it is important that you stay focused on listening to and interacting with your classmates. Respect them and respect yourself by making the most of your class time. **This also means no phone or social media use during class; all your digital devices should be put away before class.**

3. Attendance – You are allowed one excused absence, for any reason, without penalty, as long as you notify me ahead of time. Subsequent absences must be approved by Student Services, Athletics Department, Chaplain, etc., or they will count against your participation grade. **Each tardy arrival to class of five minutes or more will also count as half an absence. More than five absences will result in failure of the course.**

Reading Responses – 16%

To help keep you on track (and make class discussion lively), **you will be asked to write a 500-word analysis of five of the assigned texts or sources, three primary sources and two secondary ones (or vice versa).**

Responses to a particular reading are due the day we discuss it in class, in *hard copy*. You must also upload a copy to P-web. One response must be submitted by the end of week two, and you can only write a maximum of one response per week. Each response is worth 4% of your overall grade. The lowest grade will be dropped.

These responses are your chance to show me your thought processes concerning the source at hand. One strategy for making your responses coherent and organized is to start with a central question and then develop (and support) an argument in response. Cite specific quotes or details from the source, as well as from the lectures and additional readings. Avoid the temptation to go online for answers or to become fixated on finding one ‘right’ interpretation. These sources can be fruitfully read in a number of ways and I am far more interested in what you think than in what outside critics say.

For primary source reading responses:

Possible questions to address

1. What do you consider to be the central arguments of this piece and why? What is the author or artist’s intention for producing it? (Include evidentiary support!)
2. What is the audience for this source? How might the source have reached them? (How can the material production of this source point to its distribution and impact?)
3. How can this source help historians understand the broader political, religious, and/or cultural context of the day?
4. How can you put these sources in meaningful conversation with each other and the secondary readings and lectures?

For secondary source reading responses:

Possible questions to address

1. What is the historical problem or question that the author is investigating?
2. Why does he or she consider the existing scholarship (i.e. the historiography) to be inadequate? How does he or she propose to add to or overturn the historiography in the field?
3. What is the author’s main argument?
4. What sources does the author rely on and why? What are some of the benefits/pitfalls of utilizing these sources? How might the author’s argument change if he or she were to rely on a different source base?
5. How does this reading help to answer one of the ‘Main Questions’ listed above?

Midterm Essay – 20%, Due Monday, March 12th

The midterm consists of a two-part paper, totaling 2000-2500 words. In the first part, you will examine the causes and historical significance of the Reformation utilizing only the primary and secondary sources from weeks 4-5 and the first day of week 6. In the second part, you will analyze why it is that the articles and monographs from the rest of week 6 and week 7 answer these questions in different ways, paying particular attention to the kinds of evidence they privilege and the assumptions that underlie their arguments. Finally, in a coda, you will offer your own analysis of which set of arguments you find most truthful and convincing and why. If you were a Reformation scholar, what directions would you want to take the field in and why?

Conference Presentation (10%, May 7th-11th) & Paper (24%, Friday, May 18th)

The final project will be split into two portions, an academic conference presentation and a paper. You will join one or two other of your classmates to form a 'panel' on a topic and question of your choosing, related to the ones that we have already discussed in class. You will each find a primary source addressing your chosen topic. Your job is to write a 2000-word paper in which you analyze the source in its historical context, focusing on the author/artist's argument and purpose for producing the source the intended audience and potential impact; the rhetorical, linguistic, visual, etc. techniques employed, and how this source can help us better understand the nature and significance of the Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution, or European ventures in the New World. To accomplish this, you will draw on the secondary sources from our course as well as additional scholarly material. The last week of classes, in lieu of covering additional material, we will hold our own academic conference, where you and your panel members will make a 10-minute presentation each on your research, drawn from the longer paper. This is a chance for you to share your discoveries with your classmates and to connect the conversations in our classroom with those taking place in wider scholarly communities.

Late Assignment Policy

Every student is entitled to a 48-hour grace period on the midterm or final paper. You must notify me if you plan to take the extension. Once you have used your grace period, 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 can be found at: <https://www.grinnell.edu/about/offices-services/accessibility-disability/disability-services>

Readings and Topics

Week One

Monday, January 22nd – Introduction

Wednesday, January 24th – 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
2. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, 'Oration on the Dignity of Man', 1486, in above, p. 233-256

Friday, January 26th – Renaissance Men

1. Juan Luis Vives, 'A Fable about Man', 1518, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p. 387-396
2. Jacob Burckhardt, 'The Italian State and the Individual' and 'The Perfecting of the Individual', in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*

Week Two

Monday, January 29th – Humanism and the New Learning

1. Giovanni Boccaccio, selections, *The Decameron*, 1353, trans. Wayne A Rebhorn (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2013)

Wednesday, January 31st – Renaissance Women?

1. Marguerite de Navarre, selections, *The Heptameron*, 1549
2. Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, 1405, Part 1, Chapters 1-11 (New York: Penguin, 1999)

Friday, February 2nd – Renaissance Women?

3. Joan Kelly-Gadol, 'Did Women have a Renaissance?' in *Women, History, and Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 19-50
4. Merry Weisner-Hanks, 'Do Women need the Renaissance?' in *Gender and Change: Agency, Chronology, and Periodization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), p. 109-32

Week Three

Monday, February 5th – 'The Lives of Artists' presentations

1. Giorgio Vasari, selections, *The Lives of the Artists*, 1550

Wednesday, February 7th – 'The Lives of Artists' presentations, continued

1. William J. Bouwsma, 'The Worst of Times', in *The Waning of the Renaissance, 1550-1640* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 112-28

Friday, February 9th – European Christendom before the Reformation

1. Liturgical calendar activity

Week Four

Monday, February 12th – The Cataclysmic Reformation – Lutheranism

1. Martin Luther, 'The Freedom of a Christian', 1520 and 'Preface to the New Testament', 1522, in *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writing*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor Books, 1962)

Wednesday, February 14th – The Cataclysmic Reformation – Lutheranism, Continued

1. Martin Luther, 'Sermon on Indulgences and Grace', 1518, in *The Annotated Luther, Volume 1: The Roots of Reform*, ed. Timothy Wengert (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), p. 57-66
2. Johan Tetzel, 'Rebuttal against Luther's Sermon on Indulgences and Grace', 1518
3. Johannes Cochlaeus, 'Luther as a Seven-Headed Monster', 1529
4. Anonymous, 'The Seven-Headed Papacy', 1530

Friday, February 16th – The Cataclysmic Reformation – Lutheranism, Continued

1. G.R. Elton, Chapters 1 and 2, on Luther and Charles V, in *Reformation Europe, 1517-1559* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999)
2. Thomas Murner, 'The Great Lutheran Fool', 1520s
3. Lucas Cranach, 'Luther Preaching as the Pope Goes to Hell', 1540s
4. Lucas Cranach's altarpiece for the City Church in Wittenburg, in Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008)

Week Five

Monday, February 19th – The Cataclysmic Reformation – England

1. Anonymous, 'A Glasse of the Truthe', 1532
2. Thomas Cramner, 'A Sermon on the Salvation of Mankind', 1547

Wednesday, February 21st – The Cataclysmic Reformation – England, Continued

1. Luke Shepherd, 'John Bon and Master Parson', 1548
2. John Bale, 'The Woman Clothed with the Sun and the Whore of Babylon', in *The Images of Both Churches*, 1545
3. John Foxe, frontispiece, 'Acts and Monuments', 1563

Friday, February 23rd – The Cataclysmic Reformation – England, Continued

1. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), Chapters 11-13, 'The Attack on Traditional Religion, I-III'
2. William Perkins, 'A Survey or Table Declaring the Order of the Causes of Salvation and Damnation According to God's Word', 1616

Week Six

Monday, February 26th – Hegel and Marx: Two Classic Views on the Significance of the Reformation

1. Georg Hegel, 'The Reformation' and 'The Influence of the Reformation on Political Development', from *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover, 1956)
2. Karl Marx, 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*', excerpted in *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton, 1978)

Wednesday, February 28th – The Unintended Reformation?

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

Friday, March 2nd – The Failed Reformation? The Non-Existent Reformation?

1. Gerald Strauss, 'Success and Failure in the German Reformation', reprinted in *The German Reformation: The Essential Readings*, ed. C. Scott Dixon (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999)
2. Geoffrey Parker, 'Success and Failure During the First Century of the Reformation', in *Past & Present*, vol. 136 (1992), p. 43-82

Week Seven

Monday, March 5th – The Failed Reformation? The Non-Existent Reformation? Continued

1. Christopher Haigh, 'Success and Failure in the English Reformation', in *Past & Present*, vol. 173, no. 1 (2001), p. 28-49
2. Hans Hillerbrand, 'Was There a Reformation in the Sixteenth Century?' in *Church History*, Vol. 7, no. 3 (September 2003), p. 525-552

Wednesday, March 7th – Midterm review

Thursday, March 8th – Optional midterm review; exam posted by end of day

Friday, March 9th – No class, time to work on midterm

Week Eight

Monday, February 12th – No new reading, midterm due by 11:59 p.m.

Form groups for conference papers; class visit by librarian on finding primary sources for final project

Wednesday, March 14th – Aristotelianism and the Early Modern Scientific Worldview

1. Aristotle, *Physics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), Book II, p. 329-34 and Book III, p. 342-5
2. David Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Chapter 2 'The Greeks and the Cosmos'

Friday, March 16th – Copernicus, Galileo, and a Paradigm Shift?

1. Copernicus, *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Sphere*, 1543, ed. Jerzy Dobrzycki (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), Book 1 and frontispiece
2. Peter Dear, *Revolutionizing the Sciences: European Knowledge and its Ambitions, 1500-1700* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), Introduction, Chapter 1 'What was Worth Knowing in 1500', and Chapter 2 'Humanism and Ancient Wisdom', p. 1-46

Weeks Nine and Ten – Spring Break!

Week Eleven

Monday, April 2nd – Copernicus, Galileo, and a Paradigm Shift?

1. Galileo, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1953)
2. Herbert Butterfield, selections, *The Origins of Modern Science, 1300-1800* (New York: Macmillan, 1958)

Wednesday, April 4th – Copernicus, Galileo, and a Paradigm Shift?

1. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), Chapters 10-13, 'Revolutions as Changes of World View', 'The Invisibility of Revolutions', 'The Resolution of Revolutions', and 'Progress Through Revolution' p. 111-72

Friday, April 6th – A Scientific Evolution?

1. Francis Yates, 'The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science', in *Art, Science, and History in the Renaissance*, ed. Charles Singleton (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), p. 255-74

By Friday, April 6th at 11:59 p.m., submit your primary source choice and group topic to P-web

Week Twelve

Monday, April 9th – Reorienting the Scientific Revolution?

1. George Saliba, 'Whose Science is Arabic Science in Renaissance Europe?' (1999)
2. A.I. Sabra, 'The Appropriation and Subsequent Naturalization of Greek Science in Medieval Islam: A Preliminary Statement', in *History of Science*, vol. 25 (1987), p. 223-43

Wednesday, April 11th – The Social History of Science

1. Peter Dear, *Discipline and Experience* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), Chapter 3 'Expertise, Novel Claims, and Experimental Events' and Chapter 5 'The Uses of Experience'

Friday, April 13th – The Social History of Science

1. Robert Boyle, selections and illustrations, *New Experiments Physico-Mechanical, touching the spring of the air*, 1660
2. 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 and Chapter 3, 'A Social History of Truth-Telling: Knowledge, Social Practice, and the Credibility of Gentlemen', p. 65-125

By Friday, April 13th at 11:59 p.m., submit your list of sources and questions, plus prelim outline and thesis

Week Thirteen

Monday, April 16th – Special Collections Visit

All week, group meetings with Prof. Chou about conference papers/presentations

Wednesday, April 18th – The 'Age of Discovery'

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

2. Michel de Montaigne, 'On Cannibals', 1580

Friday, April 20th – The 'Age of Discovery'

1. Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), Chapter 1 'A Bound World: The Scholar's Cosmos' and Chapter 5, 'A New World of Learning'

Week Fourteen

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

1. Bartolome de las Casas, selections and images, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 1552

Wednesday, April 25th – Early Modern Ethnography and Anthropology in the New World, continued

1. Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), Chapter 1 'The Problem of Recognition', Chapter 3 'The Theory of Natural Slavery', and Chapter 4 'From Nature's Slaves to Nature's Children'

By Wednesday, April 25th, you must have visited the Writing Lab with a draft of your conference paper

Friday, April 27th – Appropriating 'Innocence' in the Americas

1. Anonymous, 'A defence and true declaration of the things lately done in the lowe country', 1571
2. Anonymous, *The Spanish and Aragonese Mirror*, title page, 1599
3. Anonymous, *A Mirror of Spanish Tyranny in the Netherlands*, select images, 1620
4. Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Chapter 1, 'The Dutch Discovery of America' and Chapter 2, 'Revolutionary Geography'

By Saturday, April 28th at 11:59 p.m., submit a draft of your conference paper to Prof. Chou via P-web

Week Fifteen

Meetings with Prof. Chou for drafts of conference papers all week

Monday, April 30th – European and Native 'Citizenship' in the New World

1. Petition and case of natives from San Miguel de Mesquitic (in Mexico) against a Spaniard attempting to take their land (Archivo General de la Nacion, Indios, Mexico City (AGNI) 12.47.190v-192v)
2. Brian P. Owensby, *Empire of Law and Indian Justice in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), Chapter 4, 'Precarious Possessions, p. 90-129)

Wednesday, May 2nd – The Black Atlantic

1. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), Chapter 1 'The Black Atlantic as a Counter-Culture of Modernity' and Chapter 6 '“Not a Story to Pass On”: Living Memory and the Slave Sublime'

Friday, May 4th – Conclusions and peer discussions of papers

Week Sixteen

Conference presentations

Exam Week

Thursday, May 18th – Conference papers due by 11:59 p.m.