

HIST 233

Renaissance, Reformations, (Revolutions), and Explorations

Grinnell College, Spring 2018

MW @ 8:30-9:50 a.m., HSSC S1323

Syllabus subject to change

Professor Catherine Chou (choucath@grinnell.edu)

Office Hours: MW @ 2:30-4:00 p.m., 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%

3 x 1000-word response papers (**including drafting**): 25%

Outline one due 02/08; paper one due 02/16

Outline two due 02/22; paper two due 03/02

Outline three due 04/12; paper three due 04/20

Midterm exam: 20% due 03/14

Final exam: 20% due 05/09

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

Scaffolding #1 due 04/13

Scaffolding #2 due 04/27

Final project due 05/16

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. A 'short reaction'
 - **For primary sources, write a 250- to 300-word paragraph consisting of:** 1) an analytical question about the reading; 2) a thesis/topic sentence; 3) support for your argument drawn from the sources
 - **For secondary sources, identify:** 1) The questions being addressed; 2) the author's main arguments; 3) how the author positions themselves in relationship to the extant scholarship; 4) how they substantiate their arguments (including the kinds of evidence they draw on); 5) an analytical question of your own about the text

Additional ground rules for class:

1. Initial meeting with Instructor – Please sign up here (<https://doodle.com/poll/vfgfhcsh9byi6ff9>) for a meeting with me during weeks 1-2. This is so I can get to better know you and your goals for the class!

2. No laptops/phones (except for designated days or with an accommodation letter)
3. Check the class Google Doc: I will post pointers for the reading and questions to consider on a Google Doc before each class here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XhsJVyxfB5A3nbyb4p59yI26Fs2-ur9OaZ8MiNL9bo/edit>
4. 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).**

3 x 1000-word Response Papers – 25% (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. Then, based on feedback from me (and potentially a writing tutor), please revise and complete the paper (**8% each, 1% for free**).

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 03/14 and 05/09

There are two timed take-home midterms 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 – Design a ‘short course’ on early modern European history (25%), due 05/16

In a survey course such as this, many worthwhile and understudied topics have been left out. For your final project, you will have the chance to design your own four-week ‘short course’ on an aspect of early modern European history that we did not cover in detail together. The mini-syllabus will consist of a precis of the course, your driving questions and conclusions, plus daily lesson plans that explore key historiographical debates and useful methodologies for approaching pre-modern sources.

Other Activities

1. Special Collections visit – Week Eight
2. Field Trip to Salisbury House in Des Moines – Week Nine or Ten

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

Wednesday, January 23rd – Introduction

Week Two

Monday, January 28th – 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)
2. 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

Wednesday, 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)

Week Three

Monday, 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)

Wednesday, 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
2. Merry Wiesner-Hanks, 'Do Women Need the Renaissance?' in *Gender History*, vol. 20, no. 3 (November 2008), p. 539-557

Outline for first 1000-word response paper due by Friday, February 8th at 11:59 p.m.

Week Four

Monday, 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)

Wednesday, 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 Saturday, February 16th at 11:59 p.m.

Week Five

Monday, February 18th – The Cataclysmic Reformation – Lutheranism

1. Johan Tetzels, 'Rebuttal against Luther's Sermon on Indulgences and Grace', 1518, p. 1-19 and 31-32
2. Thomas Murner, 'The Great Lutheran Fool', 1520s
3. Lucas Cranach, 'Luther Preaching as the Pope Goes to Hell', 1540s

Wednesday, 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 22nd at 11:59 p.m.

Week Six

Monday, 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)

Wednesday, 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

Monday, March 4th – 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'

Wednesday, March 6th – 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 14th by 11:59 p.m. to P-web

Week Eight

Monday, March 11th – No new reading, Special Collections Visit

Wednesday, March 13th – 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)

Spring Break!

Week Nine

Monday, April 1st – 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 4th – Towards an Experimental Paradigm?

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

Library visit to begin work on final project

Field trip to Salisbury House in Des Moines

Possible dates:

- Friday, April 5th, 1 to 5 p.m.
- Saturday April 6th, 1 to 5 p.m.
- Friday, April 12th, 1 to 5 p.m.
- Saturday, April 13th, 1 to 5 p.m.

Week Ten

Monday, April 8th – Towards an Experimental Paradigm?

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

Wednesday, April 10th – 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

Outline for third 1000-word response paper due by Friday, April 12th at 11:59 p.m.

First scaffolding assignment for final project due by Saturday, April 13th at 11:59 p.m.

Week Eleven

Monday, April 15th – 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

Wednesday, April 17th – The ‘Age of Discovery’

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

Third 1000-word response paper due Saturday, April 20th at 11:59 p.m.

Week Twelve

Monday, April 22nd – The ‘Age of Discovery’

1. Michel de Montaigne, ‘On Cannibals’, 1580
2. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Acts I and II, 1610

Wednesday, April 24th – 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

Second scaffolding assignment for final project due by Saturday, April 27th at 11:59 p.m.

Week Thirteen

Monday, April 29th – 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)

Wednesday, May 1st – 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)

Final exam distributed, due Thursday, May 9th by 11:59 p.m. to P-web

Week Fourteen

Monday, May 6th – No class, time to work on exam and final projects

Wednesday, May 8th – Final Project Round Robins

Exam Week

Final Projects due Thursday, May 16th by 11:59 p.m.