

History 152
Western Civilization
Fall, 2006

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office hours T, 12:30-2:30

This course examines European modernity: the conditions of its emergence, its varied forms, the ways in which men and women have understood their experience of it. That experience has been marked by a mixture of societal progress with cataclysmic violence. The centuries that the course examines include vicious religious conflicts, revolutions, two world wars, imperialist expansion, and genocides. But in these years European societies also enjoyed new levels of prosperity and democracy. Are modernity and violence necessarily linked? The question looms behind the details of European history in these years.

Reading assignments include both primary sources, reflections by people from the period we're studying about their lives and the changes going on around them, and secondary studies by recent American historians, giving close attention to particular groups of people in specific circumstances: Martin Luther, the London of Jack the Ripper, Eastern Europe during the Holocaust.

There will be a take-home mid-term examination, take-home final examination, and a short (about seven pages) essay, each dealing with the assigned reading and each counting for about one-third of the total grade.

Books assigned: Roland Bainton, Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther
Christopher Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battallion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland
Denis Diderot, Rameau's Nephew and Other Works
Karl Marx, Selected Writings
George Orwell, The Orwell Reader: Fiction, Essays, and Reportage
Madame Roland, Memoirs
Judith Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London

Topics and assignments

August 29-31: Introduction: the problem of western civilization

September 5-7: Coping with the medieval inheritance
assigned: Bainton, Here I Stand, 21-101

September 12-14: Dismantling the medieval inheritance
assigned: Bainton, Here I Stand, 121-204, 215-246

September 19: UB CLASSES CANCELED

September 21-28: Science and the Enlightenment: values, modes of life
assigned: Diderot, Rameau's Nephew, 8-87

October 3-5: The French Revolution of 1789: causes, phases, impact
assigned: Roland, Memoirs, 125-153, 242-260, 27-41, 57-107

October 10-12: A new society: Industrial revolution and its impact
Assigned: Marx, Selected Writings, pp. 209-213, 157-186; Orwell, The Orwell Reader, 148-164

October 17-19: The nineteenth-century crisis: revolution and new state formations
Assigned: Marx, Selected Writings, 187-208, Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight, 1-39

October 24-26: Cultures of modernity
Assigned: Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight, 41-134

October 31: **Mid-term due**

October 31-November 2: The fin de siècle, empire, and the move to war
Assigned: Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight, 191-228; Orwell, The Orwell Reader, 3-26

November 7-9: Totalitarian politics and the origins of World War II
Assigned: Orwell, The Orwell Reader, 165-212, 390-396

November 14-16: War and Holocaust
Assigned: Christopher Browning, Ordinary Men, xv-xxii, 1-158

November 21-30: In the shadow of catastrophe: the post-war world
Assigned: Browning, Ordinary Men, 159-223; Orwell, The Orwell Reader, 328-335, 396-419

December 5: **Essay due**

December 5-7: Conclusions

December 12: **Final exam due**