

# Western Civilization

## HST 101

### Fall, 2004

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Meeting Time: MWF 9-10:05am  
Meeting Location: Shattuck Hall 212

William H. York, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: MW 8-8:45am or by appointment

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#### *Course Description:*

In this course we will examine the political, economic, social and cultural institutions of several Western civilizations from the earliest times through roughly 1450. In particular we will focus on the ancient Greek and Roman societies, the rise of the Christian and Islamic faiths, and the institutions of medieval Europe. We will read representative texts from some of these civilizations as a means to gaining an understanding of the beliefs and practices of the cultures in which they were written.

Our academic objectives will be to learn how to analyze primary documents critically from the perspective of the culture, which produced them and to be able to communicate our thoughts articulately both in writing and in classroom discussions. By the end of this course you should have developed a good general knowledge of the events and cultures of this period of European history.

#### *Required Course materials:*

- Aristophanes, *Lysistrata and Other Plays: The Acharnians, the Clouds, Lysistrata*. Alan H. Sommerstein (trans.). Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN: 0140448144.
- Cornelius Tacitus, *Tacitus: The Annals of Imperial Rome*. Michael Grant (trans.). Viking Press, 1956. ISBN: 0140440607.
- *Eyrbyggja Saga*. Hermann Palsson (ed.) and Paul Edwards (trans.). Penguin USA, 1989. ISBN: 0140445307.
- *The Lais of Marie de France*. Glyn S. Burgess (trans.) and Keith Busby (trans.). Penguin USA, 1999. ISBN: 0140448144.

NOTE: Many of these texts are available in different editions and different translations. You may also be able to find used copies of these books at a local used bookstore. I do not mind if you use a different edition/translation and the syllabus should be clear as to which passages you need to read for the class.

NOTE 2: There is also an *optional textbook* available for the course. This text *is not required*, but some may find it helpful as a study resource or guide for additional information. The text is:

- *Optional Text:* Mark Kishlansky, Patrick Geary, Patricia O'Brien, *Civilization in the West*, 4th Edition. *Volume A*. Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, Inc., 2001. ISBN: 0321105036.

*Grading criteria:*

Regular attendance and participation in classroom discussions is expected. Readings should be completed prior to the lecture for which they are assigned. If you are unable to attend a lecture, it is your responsibility to borrow notes from one of your classmates. Prior notification of an absence will be appreciated.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are a student with a documented disability and you are registered with the Disability Resource Center, please contact me immediately to facilitate arranging academic accommodations.

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Map Quiz: 10%

Reading Response Papers (best 3 out of 4)\*: 30% (10% each)

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

\* Reading response papers will be written for each of the four primary texts assigned for the class. These papers will be due on at the start of class on the day for which discussion of the specific text is assigned. These papers will be about 1 page in length (about 250 words). In these papers you are asked to discuss what the texts reveal about the culture in which they were written. These papers are *not* intended to be literary analyses of the texts — i.e. I do not want you to give a plot review of the text, rather discuss what the text tells you about the lives, interests, beliefs, practices, etc. of the culture in which it was written. It is entirely acceptable, and even encouraged, for you to raise questions about specific events in the text and what they might reveal about the culture. Your grade will be based on your *best* 3 out of the 4 Reading Response papers.

## SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

WEEK 1: September 27, 29 & October 1

*Hebraic Society & Early Greek Civilization*

Required Reading:

- Begin Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, pp. 141-193.

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 24-35, 37-60.

WEEK 2: October 4, 6, 8

*Greek Society I: Politics & War*

Required Readings:

- Finish Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, pp. 141-193.
- Begin Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, pp. 75-130.

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 60-68, 71-84.

WEEK 3: October 11, 13, 15

*Greek Society II: Science, Philosophy & the Conquests of Alexander the Great*

Required Readings:

- Finish Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, 75-130.

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 84-106.

**First Reading Response Paper due in class on October 13th. It can cover either *Lysistrata* or *The Clouds* or both.**

WEEK 4: October 18, 20, 22

*The Rise of the Roman Republic*

Required Reading:

- Begin Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, pp. 229-397.  
NOTE: It may help to refer to the glossary (pp. 401ff) and the maps (pp. 418ff) at the back of the book.

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 108-139.

WEEK 5: October 25, 27, 29

*Roman Society and the Fall of the Roman Republic*

Required Readings:

- Continue Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, pp. 229-397.

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 141-155.

**MIDTERM EXAMINATION: In class on Friday, October 29th.**

WEEK 6: November 1, 3, 5

*Imperial Rome & the Rise of Christianity*

Required Readings:

- Finish Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, pp. 229-397.

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 155-205.

**Second Reading Response Paper due in class on October 13th. It should cover material read in *The Annals of Imperial Rome*.**

WEEK 7: November 8, 10, 12

*Byzantium & the Rise of Islam*

Required Readings:

- Begin *Eyrbyggja Saga*, pp. 23-166.  
NOTE: It may help to refer to the glossary of personal names and the map at the back of the book.

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 207-239.

WEEK 8: November 15, 17, 19

*Early Medieval Europe and the Twelfth Century Renaissance*

Required Readings:

- Finish *Eyrbyggja Saga*, pp. 23-166.

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 241-303.

**Third Reading Response Paper due in class on October 13th. It should cover *Eyrbyggja Saga*.**

WEEK 9: November 22 & 24

THANKSGIVING: No class on November 26th

*Growth of Medieval Institutions*

Required Readings:

- *The Lais of Marie de France*, “Guigemar,” pp. 43-55.
- *The Lais of Marie de France*, “Bisclavret,” pp. 68-72.
- *The Lais of Marie de France*, “Lanval,” pp. 73-81.
- *The Lais of Marie de France*, “Les deux Amanz,” pp. 82-85.

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 303-316.

WEEK 10: November 29, December 1 & 3

*The Calamitous 14th-Century: The Waning of the Middle Ages?*

Required Readings:

- *The Lais of Marie de France*, “Yonec,” pp. 86-93.
- *The Lais of Marie de France*, “Laüstic,” pp. 94-96.
- *The Lais of Marie de France*, “Milun,” pp. 97-104.
- *The Lais of Marie de France*, “Chevrefoil,” pp. 109-110.
- *The Lais of Marie de France*, “Eliduc,” pp. 111-126

Optional Reading:

- Kishlansky, et al., pp. 318-350.

**Fourth Reading Response Paper due in class on October 13th. It should draw together elements from at least 3 of the assigned readings from *The Lais of Marie de France*.**

**FINAL EXAM:** Tuesday, December 7th from 8-9:50 am.