

# FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN WESTERN CIVILIZATION

**Instructor: Dr. Julia Gossard**  
**HIST 1110-01**

**Class Time(s): MWF 9:00-10:00**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

What does it mean to be “Western”? What does it mean to be “modern”? These two questions will guide this survey course as we examine the development of modernity in “the West.” Starting with the Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century and ending with the rise of globalization in the 1990s, this class probes what makes a specific time, region, or idea both modern and Western in meaning. Keeping an eye on the role of the “West” in the wider world, we will pay particular attention to the impact that Europe had on the wider modern world and the impact that the larger world had on Europe. We will examine the major political, social, economic, religious, and cultural movements that help to defined the "modern" era in Western history. To better understand these movements, we will read a variety of primary sources. In addition to traditional primary sources like letters, treatises, or declarations, we will also examine images, material objects, maps, digital diaries, oral history, and music. Topics covered include: The Enlightenment; The Age of Revolution; The Industrial Revolution; Nationalism; Liberalism; Rise of Mass Politics; Imperialism; World War I; World War II; the Cold War; Decolonization; and Globalization.

## **COURSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

### **Historical Knowledge**

- Identify key events in the history of modern Europe
- Describe the political, economic, social, and cultural elements of modernity in Europe
- Understand the ways in which race, gender, class, ethnicity, and religion influence historical structures and narratives

### **Historical Thinking**

- Understand both historical change as well as historical continuity
- Analyze competing, complex interpretations of historical events
- Extrapolate causation and understand multiple causation

### **Historical Skills**

- Articulate well-written responses to historical prompts using appropriate evidence
- Assess the credibility and usefulness of primary and secondary sources
- Understand the wide range of primary sources
- Understand how primary sources reflect larger trends in politics, economics, society, and culture
- Build digital literacy through an interactive food timeline
- Complete independent research



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| <b>ASSIGNMENTS &amp; ASSESSMENT</b> |
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Class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. We will read and analyze both primary and secondary sources each week. Considerable time is spent developing students' writing and analytical skills. Additional instructions on assignments will be distributed to students in class and via Canvas. The following is an overview.

- **10% Participation & Preparation-** Students are expected to attend *all* class meetings, well-prepared for the day's discussion as active participants. Aim for *at least one* contribution to our discussions daily. Attendance will be taken. The attendance policy is as follows:
  - Excessive unexcused absences (more than 2) will negatively impact your grade. More than 6 absences will result in a final grade of an F. Excused absences are only granted in the case of documented medical illness or emergency.
  - Since assignments will be submitted electronically via Canvas, all assignments are due at the start of class, even in the event of a student's absence.
  - If a student misses an exam, they must provide documentation of their absence and contact Dr. Gossard as soon as possible.
- **25% Reflection Papers (5)-** Students will submit a short (min-one page, max-two pages, double-spaced) writing exercise that analyzes at least one of that week's required primary source documents. You should not merely summarize what the author said, but include a thoughtful analysis of the text, relating it back to our secondary source readings and class discussions. Though there are many opportunities to write these assignments, students are only required to complete five (5) of these assignments. Students may write one additional paper to replace their lowest single paper grade. These are marked with an asterisk in the syllabus.
- **25% Food Timeline Group Project (Digital Assignment)** – In small groups, students will create a digital, interactive, and collaborative timeline of food throughout the Western world from roughly 1750 to 1990. Groups are responsible for **5 entries** (each at 5%) to the digital assignment over the course of the semester. These entries will be ~150 - 200 words in length and must include a visual(s). Entries on the timeline can be food items (like turnips, steak, spam, etc.), recipes, utensils, rations, agricultural innovations, or products. By examining what people ate at different points in time, we can tell both what food was “in style” and also a lot about the economic conditions, social mores, political conflicts, religious issues, and nutrition. As the course progresses, we will examine the food timeline in class together to consider continuities in food as well as historical change, asking why certain foods stayed the same and why some changed. The timeline can be accessed at this link: [Food in the West, 1750-1990](#)
- **20% Mid-Term Exam**
- **20% Final Exam**

**Grading Scale:**

93-100 (A), 90-93 (A-), 87-89 (B+), 83-86 (B), 80-82 (B-), 77-79 (C+), 73-76 (C), 70-72 (C-), 67-69 (D+), 63-66 (D), 60-62 (D-), 59 or below (F)

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| <b>CLASS, READING, &amp; ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:</b> |
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- Reading is due the day under which it is listed.
- Assignments must be submitted to Canvas by the START of the class.

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| <b>REQUIRED MATERIALS:</b> |
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- **Textbook to buy or rent:** *The West: Encounters and Transformations* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) by Levack, Muir, and Veldman
- All other reading assignments (primary sources and other secondary sources) will be posted on Canvas.
- **Some primary source “reading” assignments are not necessarily reading, but instead will require you to analyze an image or listen to people’s oral history and testimony.**
  - If you are hearing impaired, please contact me for an alternative assignment during those weeks.

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| <b>Unit I: The Enlightenment</b> |
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**Monday 8/24: Enlightenment Thought**

- Required Primary Source: Rousseau, “Social Contract Theory” (selections)\*

**Wednesday 8/26: What is the Enlightenment?**

- Required Primary Source: Kant, “What is the Enlightenment?”\*

**Friday 8/28: Enlightened Despotism**

- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 19, “The Enlightenment” pp. 595-615

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| <b>Unit II: Europe &amp; The World in the Age of Revolution</b> |
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**Monday, 8/31: The Economics of Revolution**

- Required Primary Source: Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (selections)\*

**Wednesday 9/2: The Coming of the French Revolution**

- Required Primary Source: Abbé de Sièyes, “The Third Estate”\*

**Friday 9/4: Rights of Man**

- Required Primary Source: Declaration of Rights of Man and the Constitution of 1791\*
- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 20, “The First French Revolution,” pp. 617-629

**Eugène Delacroix, “La Liberté guidant le peuple,” 1830**

**Monday 9/7: Labor Day – No Class****Wednesday 9/9: Haiti - Inspired for Revolution**

- Required Primary Source: Excerpts from Toussaint L'Ouverture's Autobiography\*

**Friday 9/11: Napoleon's Empire**

- Required Primary Source: "The French Encounter the Egyptians"\*
- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 20, "The Napoleonic Era," pp. 635-650

**Unit III: The Industrial Revolution & The Search for Order****Monday 9/14: The Industrial Revolution**

- Required Primary Source: Consumer Culture – Material Culture Objects Packet\*
- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 21, "The Industrial Revolution," pp. 651-674

**Wednesday 9/16: Industry, Trade, and Empire**

- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 21, "Trade and Empire," pp. 676-680

**Friday 9/18: The Search for Order in Europe: Liberalism and Conservatism**

- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 22, "New Ideologies in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century," pp. 681-691

**Monday 9/21: Liberalism and Nationalism in Practice, 1815-1848**

- Required Primary Source: Prostitution and Liberalism in Germany\*
- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 22, "Ideological Encounters," pp. 692-704

**Wednesday 9/23: The Rise of the Nation**

- Required Primary Source: A Letter from Otto von Bismarck\*

**Friday 9/25: Building Nation-States: Italy, Germany, and the US**

- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 22, "National Unification in Europe," pp. 704 -711

**Unit IV: Imperialism and Colonialism****Monday 9/28: What is Imperialism?**

- Required Primary Source: "The Inauguration of the Suez Canal" (Image)\*
- Required Reading: "Imperialism" (book chapter on Canvas)

**"Imperial Octopus,"**  
1888



**Wednesday 9/30: Asian Imperialism & the Opium War**

- Required Primary Source: Commissioner Lin, Letter to Queen Victoria, 1839\*
- Required Reading: “The Opium War” (book chapter on Canvas)

**Friday 10/1: The Scramble for Africa and the Congo**

- Required Primary Source: George Washington Williams, “Atrocities in the Congo”\*
- Required Reading: “The Free Congo State” (book chapter on Canvas)

**Monday 10/5: Imperialism and European Culture**

- Required Primary Source: Images of Imperial Influence In Europe (packet)\*

**Wednesday 10/7: Mid-Term Exam Review****Friday 10/9: Mid-Term Exam on Units I-IV****UNIT V: Mass Politics, Changing Experiences, and the Birth of Modernism****Monday 10/12: National Identity: France, Russia, and Ireland**

- Required Primary Source: The Dreyfus Affair (excerpts)\*
- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 23, “Nation-Making,” pp. 724-730

**Wednesday 10/14: Politics of the Working Class**

- Required Primary Source: Mikhail Bakunin, “Principles and Organization of the International Brotherhood”\*

**Friday 10/16: Jews and Mass Politics**

- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 23, “Anti-Semitism and Zionism in Mass Politics,” pp. 734-737

**Monday 10/19: Women’s Changing Experiences**

- Required Primary Source: Doris Viersbeck, “Life Downstairs: A Servant’s Life”\*

**Wednesday 10/21: Women’s Suffrage**

- Required Primary Source: Debate: Mrs. Humphry Ward (Anti-Suffrage) v The French Union for Women’s Suffrage\*
- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 23, “The Women’s Revolt,” pp. 737-743

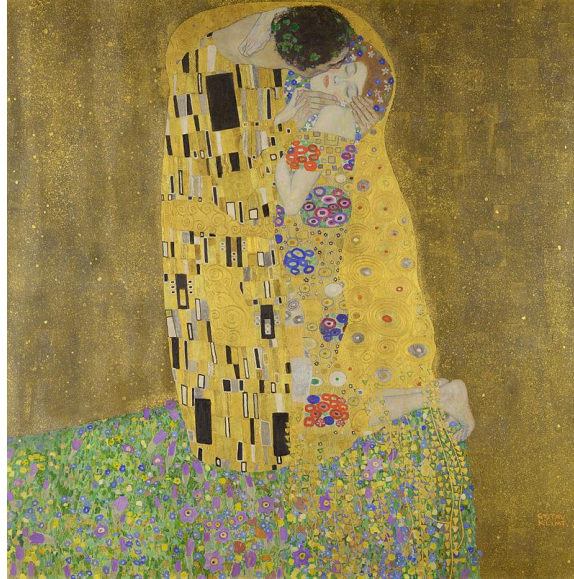
**Anti-Suffragette Poster**

**Friday 10/23: Scientific Transformations: Evolution Arrives**

- Required Primary Source: Herbert Spencer, “Illustrations of Universal Progress”\*

**Monday 10/26: *Fin-de-Siècle* and Modernism**

- Required Primary Sources: Selections of modern artwork: Klimt and Modernism\*



Gustav Klimt, “The Kiss,” 1907-08

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| <b>Unit VI: The First World War</b> |
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**Wednesday 10/28: The Murder of the Archduke**

- Required Primary Source: Borijove Jevtic, “The Murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo, 1914”\*

**Friday 10/30: Fighting a “Total War”**

- Required Primary Source: Pick 5 (five) days at random from September 22, 1914 to November 16, 1914 and look up those entry dates in Pierre Minault’s diary posted here: <https://notevenpast.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/In-the-Trenches-122314-corrected-2.pdf>
- Make sure to read the Introduction and Forward of the diary (“In the Trenches: A First World War Diary,” transl. Gail Minault; ed., Mark Sheaves)

**Monday 11/2: The Russian Revolutions**

- Required Primary Source: *Voices of Revolution* (excerpts)\*

**Wednesday 11/4: Wilson and the End of WWI**

- Required Primary Source: Wilson’s Fourteen Points\*

**Friday 11/6: The Interwar Years: Culture and Society**

- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 26, “The Reconstruction of Europe,” pp. 834-840



Pablo Picasso, “Guernica,” 1937

**Monday 11/9: The Great Depression & Fascism**

- Required Primary Source: Benito Mussolini, “The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism”\*

**Wednesday 11/11: Postwar National, Westernization, and the Islamic Challenge**

- Required Primary Source: “Shifting Borders”\*

**Unit VII: World War II**
**Friday 11/13: The Coming of The Second World War**

- Required Primary Source: Adolf Hitler, “The Obersalzberg Speech”\*

**Monday 11/16: Nazi Occupation of Europe & World at War**

- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 27, “World War II,” pp. 851-866

**Wednesday 11/18: WWII: The Holocaust & Experiences of War**

- Required Oral History Sources: Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies,\*  
<http://web.library.yale.edu/testimonies>
  - Choose 2-3 videos to watch of people’s testimony. Some of the videos are quite long, but you should plan on watching about an hour.
  - Take note of the people’s descriptions, their emotions, and their memories.
  - Sensitivity Clause: These videos contain graphic descriptions and intense emotional responses at times. Please contact the professor if you are unable to complete the assignment for an alternative reading selection.

**Friday 11/20: Allied Victory**

- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 27, “After Auschwitz,” pp. 867-880



The Liberation of Paris (Churchill and de Gaulle)

### Unit VIII: The Cold War Era

#### Monday 11/23: From Reconstruction to Confrontation: The Origins of the Cold War in Europe

- Required Primary Source: Political Cartoons – “The Iron Curtain” and “The Marshall Plan”\*
- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 28, “The Cold War”

#### Wednesday 11/25: The Beatles in Berlin: 1960s Counterculture & the Thaw of Cold War in Europe

- Required Primary Source: 1) Nikita Khrushchev, “On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences;” 2) Listen to music clips posted on Canvas of rock n’ roll from Eastern Europe\*
- Required Reading: Timothy Ryback, “Introduction,” in *Rock around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*
- If you are hearing impaired, please contact me for an alternative primary source assignment.

#### Friday 11/27 – Thanksgiving NO CLASS

#### Monday 11/30: A New World: Decolonization in Africa and Conflict in Asia

- Required Primary Sources: 1) President Sukarno of Indonesia, “Speech at the Opening of the Bandung Conference,” April 18 1955; 2) Anwar el Sadat, “Afro-Asian Solidarity and the World Mission of the Peoples of Africa and Asia,” 1957\*

#### Wednesday 12/2: Fall of the USSR

- Required Textbook Reading: Chapter 29 “The West in the Contemporary Era,” pp. 919-939

#### Friday 12/4: Globalization: The West Recast

- Required Reading: Ted Friedman, “The World of *The World of Coca-Cola*,” *Communication Research*, Vol. 19, No. 5 (October 1992)