



# PRAIRIE COLLEGE

**Online Education Course Syllabus for  
HF 231 HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION I  
The Ancient and Medieval World: Brutes, Beauties and Bombast  
Edition 1, Published 2017  
3 Credits**

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## **Course Description:**

This course covers, in survey fashion, key events and themes which make up the early history of what is known as western civilization. The chronological range of material covered extends from the period of the earliest known ancient civilizations of the Near East through to the late medieval period (15<sup>th</sup> century) in Europe. While related historical events in other parts of the globe will be used as reference points, the primary geographical stage will be the regions of the Mediterranean basin and the wider European subcontinent. The course focuses on key events, people and ideas which played a formative role in developing this collective entity referred to as Western Civilization.

*Prerequisite: HF 111 Thinking and Writing.*

## **Rationale:**

### ***Some initial reflections by the professor***

An accurate and constructive understanding of our present is informed by knowledge of our past. Although not all of us can trace our heritage to western civilization, it is the western tradition, arising out of the ancient Near East and medieval Europe, which provided the formative cultural and institutional framework for the modern Western World. As such, understanding this historical stream of our past is important for an accurate understanding of our own identity and place in our present context.

## **Goals and Learning Outcomes:**

### ***Prof's priorities***

Upon completing this course it is the hope of the instructor that students will have:

- 1) an accurate and usable knowledge of the events, people and places which have acted as landmarks in charting the course of western civilization;
- 2) an introductory understanding of and appreciation for the discipline of history through practicing the tasks in which historians engage—these include contextual interpretation and assessment of primary documents, disciplined research, and the development of a clear and sustained historical story telling and argumentation;
- 3) insight as to how history, along with the other subjects in the humanities, informs and instructs their theology, and vice versa;
- 4) joy in practicing history as a discipline that helps one live truthfully in this world.

### **Appointment Procedures:**

Students can contact the instructor with any questions via email ([james.enns@prairie.edu](mailto:james.enns@prairie.edu)). Emails will generally be replied to within twenty-four hours (i.e., except on weekends and holidays). If needed, an appointment with the instructor can be made either in person or via Skype. Please email the instructor to make an appointment.

### **Textbook:**

Esler, Anthony. *The Western World: a narrative history. Prehistory to the present*, 2nd ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997).

### **Course Grade:**

Quizzes:	9%
Midterm exam:	18%
Class participation forum posts:	8%
Primary source interpretation:	15%
Research project:	23%
Final exam:	27%

### **Course Requirements:**

1. *Quizzes – key people, events, concepts and institutions:* These will be based on assigned readings from the textbooks. All quizzes will be open book, multiple choice, and have a time limit of ten minutes. They will focus on the key terms listed for each chapter. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped when calculating this portion of your overall grade.
2. *Midterm and final exams:* These examinations will use a combination of completion items (multiple choice/matching) and essay-type questions. It is the standard practice of this instructor, before each examination, to give students a preview of the essay questions from which you will choose. Quizzes are intended to help students identify important items which may appear in the same or another form on an exam.

The exams must be completed in the presence of a proctor (exam supervisor) who is a responsible adult with a position such as a pastor, chaplain, church leader, administrator, school teacher, or college professor. The proctor cannot be another student, the spouse of a student or related to you. Send the name, position, and email address of your proposed proctor to the Distance Education Office **one week** before you wish to write the exam. After your proctor is approved, he or she will be sent instructions and the exam password.

3. *Class participation forum posts:* There are four forums organized by topic units as follows: Forum 1 - Ancient Near Eastern Cultures; Forum 2 - Classical Antiquity,

Greece and Rome; Forum 3 - Early Middle Ages; Forum 4 - High Middle Ages. Students will be required to submit one question each forum for the course instructor to answer. This is an opportunity for students to ask questions about material presented in either the textbook readings or lectures that they would like the instructor to explain further.

4. *Primary source interpretation:* Students will be asked to choose one of two historical documents as the subject for this assignment. Both of these documents are excerpts from larger works and can be found as PDF files in the early part of the course:

- Selected passages from “The Life of Cato the Elder” by Plutarch (2nd century AD)
- Selected passages from “Secret History” by Procopius (6th century AD).

As you read the document, answer the following questions as a way of identifying what you need to know in order to understand both its content and its context. Once you have identified these gaps in your knowledge then begin consulting available historical commentaries and online resources, which will help you effectively fill these gaps:

- a) What unfamiliar words do you need to look up? These would pertain to people, places and things that the writer does not explain because his audience is already familiar with them.
- b) What is actually happening in the document? Is an event being retold, a series of concepts explained or a cultural practice being described?
- c) What are the background circumstances which gave rise to this document? What does the reader need to know about the times addressed by this document which are important to interpreting its significance?

Using the notes you compile in response to these questions, write an essay which includes the following: 1) a summary of the document’s contents; 2) an analysis of the historical context in which the document was produced or about the subject it describes—this would include the priorities and purposes of the author; 3) a discussion of the document’s value as a historical record; and 4) a brief assessment of the document’s reliability.

Grading categories for the essay are as follows:

Summarizing the content of the document: /10 pts

- Students need to show they understand the subject matter addressed in the document,
- the scope of the content,
- the organizational structure of the document (i.e. thematic, narrative, instructive, etc.).

Context of the document and priorities of the author: /30 pts

- Issues of clarity: what do we need to know of the circumstances surrounding the document’s content in order to understand what is going

on?

- Issues of intent: what can be deduced or ascertained about the priorities and purpose of the author?

Value of the document as a historical record: /40 pts

- What insights can be gained about the subject of the document?
- What insights does the document offer into the historical period in which it was written?
- What sorts of historical questions might it be helpful in addressing?

Reliability of the document: /20 pts

- What, if any, are the noticeable biases of the author?
- Do these biases affect credibility of the document?
- What do we know about the author which supports the document's credibility or undermines it?

There is no category for grammar, spelling and syntactical issues, as it is expected that a finished draft largely will have eliminated errors of this nature. As such, students will only be deducted marks where there is consistent evidence to the contrary. Up to 20 percentage points may be deducted for substandard editing in this area.

Again, you will need to do background reading on the document in order to understand it and the culture in which it was considered a living document and not an historical artifact.

**The length of essay is 1500 - 2000 words.** When you cite outside sources use a short form for footnotes (author/title/page), and a bibliography in Turabian (Chicago) format at the end of the essay. For examples of footnotes and bibliographic formatting, see the section at the very end of this syllabus entitled 'Footnote citations, bibliography entries, and stylistic conventions for written assignments'.

The essay is due in Unit 3.

5. *Research project:* Students will be asked to select a manageable topic for a research project from the historical period covered in the course. It is important that students choose a topic in which they are genuinely interested and about which they want to increase their knowledge. There are three primary elements to this assignment: discovery, instruction, and critical judgment.
  - a) *Discovery:* students should aim to learn as much as they can about the topic under investigation in a way which tests and stretches their research skills, requires them to interpret primary sources, and familiarizes them with the leading historical scholars in this subject area. By showing what they have unearthed and where they did so, students are demonstrating their commitment to recognizing and learning from the best sources available.
  - b) *Instruction:* students should write with their peers as their primary audience not just their professor. The intention is for them to clearly teach their peers

what it is they have learned about their chosen subject/topic. This is a way of demonstrating how well they understand the material themselves.

- c) Critical judgment: students should write not as reporters but as interpreters who are trying to persuade their readers that their account is a credible one, and why their research matters. In other words, they should make a case for why what they have discovered and explained is significant.

Students must demonstrate that they have used responsibly both primary and secondary sources in the submission of a bibliography and appropriate footnote citation of bibliographic sources in their written work. Please follow the guidelines and provided at the end of the syllabus.

In order to achieve this, students must access **primary sources** which brings the research as close to one's topic as possible. In addition to these sources students also will need to access the interpretations and research of acknowledged experts on the topic by using **secondary sources**, i.e. the writings of scholars who have published their own findings on both the specific subject of the essay, and on related contextual material which provide helpful background and give greater understanding for readers.

In engaging the secondary sources students will discover that they have entered into an ongoing conversation/debate on the subject of their research, and will find that not all scholarly experts agree on matters of significance, or even over aspects of the historical data itself. Thus students may be called on to point out such contested interpretations and explain which one(s) they find most compelling.

Suitable research topics may be either event-based or issue-based. An example of an **event-based** topic is 'Hannibal's military campaigns on the Italian Peninsula', with a thesis which answers the question: 'in spite of all his military success why could the Carthaginian general not force Rome to surrender?' An example of an **issue-based** topic is 'Wives in the Roman Empire: liberated feminists or imprisoned chattel?' The thesis is already suggested in the title itself.

If the topic focuses on a specific person it is important to have a particular investigative theme in mind, and not simply a biographical summary. For example to study the life of Julius Caesar, one could select a fairly conventional topic, such as genius as a general, but then ask a less conventional question about that issue, for example how did Caesar supply his armies in the field. Or one could investigate a lesser known topic, such as the role of religion in Caesar's military planning and decision-making. In other words, investigating a lesser known, and underappreciated aspect of a historical figure makes for a much more interesting paper than simply retracing well-worn pathways.

The grading categories for this assignment are found later in the syllabus. **Word count should be between 2500-3000 words.**

Students will be required to submit their topic in Unit 4 and their finished project in Unit 8.

## Academic Policies:

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is a serious offence constituting a form of academic theft in which a person claims for the intellectual property of another. For an explanation of the forms of plagiarism and the penalties for each, please refer to the Prairie College Academic Guide on the Registrar's Office webpage (<https://prairie.edu/current-students/registrars-office/>).

*Grading timeline and scale:* My timeline for grading and assignment feedback is 7-10 days. (I will endeavour to respond to student communications within 2 days, excluding weekends, holidays, and vacation time.) The following Prairie College grading scale applies to all written assignments.

Letter Grade	Number Grade	Rating	Point Value
A+	90-100		4.0
A	85-89	Excellent	4.0
A-	80-84		3.7
B+	77-79		3.3
B	73-76	Good	3.0
B-	70-72		2.7
C+	67-69		2.3
C	63-66	Satisfactory	2.0
C-	60-62		1.7
D+	55-59		1.3
D	50-54	Poor	1.0
F	0-49	Failure	0.0
P	50 or above	Pass	
AU	-----	Audit	
I	-----	Incomplete	
W	-----	Withdrew	

Numerical course grades are not rounded.

**Outline of content:**

TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Course Introduction		
Major Assignment Descriptions	<i>The Life of Cato the Elder</i> (Plutarch)  <i>Secret History</i> (Procopius)	
Unit 1: Ancient and Near Eastern Cultures		
1.2 The Empires of Babylon and Assyria	<i>The Western World</i> (TWW), ch. 1, p. 3-16  <i>The Code of Hammurabi</i>	(Quiz is in next section.)
1.1 Doing History: How and Why?		
1.3 Egyptian and Hebrew Civilizations	TWW, ch. 1, p. 16-30	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 1  Forum 1 – Ancient Near Eastern Cultures
Unit 2: Classical Antiquity: Persian and Greek Civilizations		
2.1 Persian Empire: Political/Military Achievements	Persian Empire supplementary reading	
2.2 Ancient Greece: Political, Intellectual, Aesthetic and Religious Legacy	TWW, ch. 2	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 2
2.3 Exploits of Alexander the Great: The Power of the Hellenistic ‘Brand’	TWW, ch. 3	Quiz: Key Terms ch 3 Forum 2 – Classical Antiquity, Greece and Rome
Unit 3: Classical Antiquity: Rome – Republic and Empire		
		Primary Source Interpretation Due
3.1 The Roman Republic	TWW, ch. 4	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 4
3.2 The Roman Empire	TWW, ch. 5	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 5

3.3 Technological/Aesthetic Achievements		
3.4 Socio-religious Evolution		
Midterm Exam		Midterm Exam
Unit 4: Cultural flourishing after Rome		Research Project Topic Due
4.1 Constantinople and the Eastern Empire	TWW ch. 7, p. 152-166	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 7 (Byzantium)
4.2 Rise and Spread of Islam	TWW ch. 7, p. 166-175	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 7 (Arab Empire)
Unit 5: The Early Medieval West		
5.1 Migratory Peoples and Local Responses: Goths, Huns, Vandals and Franks	TWW ch. 5, p. 113-117  Summary Sheet - Background to Middle Ages	
5.2 Period Overview of Early Feudal Europe: Emergence of a Warrior Society	TWW ch, 6	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 6
5.3 Carolingian Empire, Christian Mission, and Another Wave of Migratory Peoples		Forum 3 – Early Middle Ages
Unit 6: The High Middle Ages: Political and Economic Themes		
6.1 Period Overview and Key Political and Economic Developments	TWW ch. 8, p. 178-191	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 8 (Cathedrals Were White)
6.2 Crusading and Commerce – The West Looks East		
Unit 7: The High Middle Ages: The Flowering of Medieval Culture		
7.1 Church and Society: The Sacred Canopy	TWW ch. 8, p. 191-207	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 8 (Church Triumphant)
7.2 Monks, Mission and Heresy		

7.3 The Recovery and Growth of Cities		Forum 4 – High Middle Ages
Unit 8: The Waning of the Middle Ages		Research Project Due
8.1 From Optimism to Pessimism	TWW, ch. 9	Quiz: Key Terms ch. 9
8.2 Black Death and the 100 Years War: Impact on Social and Commercial Structures		
Final Exam		Final Exam Feedback: Course Evaluation

**Historical Research Essay Evaluation:**

**Discovery:** Does the essay show an awareness of the range of historical interpretations/competing arguments on the topic of the essay (i.e. knowledge of the historiography of the topic)? Does the author make use of primary sources and of up-to-date scholarly secondary sources?

/20

**Instruction:** Does the essay demonstrate mastery of the chosen subject/event and historical context surrounding it? Does the author provide understanding of the times and of key events from the worldview of someone living in that period and not a presentist one?

/40

**Critical judgment:** Does the essay show evidence of a logical and plausible argument for the historical significance of the event/subject being described? Does the author present a clear interpretation of the significance of the event/subject being researched by responsibly using the evidence of primary and secondary sources?

/40

Deductions for grammar, spelling and punctuation errors: It is expected that students will edit and proofread their work before submitting it so that it will be free of misspellings, bad grammar and mistakes in punctuation. Such errors will cost the students a loss of 1% per mistake up to a maximum of 30%.

## Footnote citations, bibliography entries, and stylistic conventions for written assignments

When citing sources in the two research assignments, use the format given below.

*Footnote format:* The full bibliographic information on each source will be given in the bibliography at the end of each assignment. Therefore, students only need to use a short form for each footnote entry. Do not use endnote format, but footnote format so that all citations appear at the bottom of the page on which the quoted/paraphrased/summarized source material is used. The only elements required in each citation are as follows: the last name of the author, a short form of the document title, and the page number(s). For an electronic source which contains no page references, author and abbreviated title of the document are sufficient. Use the examples below as models.

For the book *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, by John Huizinga, the footnote would be:

Huizinga, *Waning*, 36.

For a chapter or single essay in an edited book of essays by different authors such as “The Orthodox Church in Byzantium”, by Mary B. Cunningham in *A World History of Christianity*, edited by Adrian Hastings, the citation would be:

Cunningham, “Orthodox Church”, 67-68.

For an electronic source (not a published source found online, but a source available **only** in an electronic format online such as a podcast, weblog, unpublished essay, or an electronic journal) such as “Chivalry”, BBC Radio 4 program *In Our Time* podcast, 13 February, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03tt7kn> in which program host Melvyn Bragg interviews three British scholars, Miri Reuben, Matthew Strickland, and Laura Ashe, on the topic of chivalry:

“Chivalry”, BBC Radio 4.

The important part of a footnote citation/reference is that it clearly indicates which source in your bibliography is being cited.

Do not use any “In Text” forms of citation. The only exception would be citing Bible references which should appear in parentheses at the end of the quotation or the sentence in which the biblical text is used.

*Bibliography format:* The bibliographic format needs to include things such as the publisher, place and date of the publication in addition to the author(s), title, and editor(s) of the document or electronic source. Again, the key to these entries is to provide sufficient information for the reader to track down the source should he or she so choose. The format style is some form of what is known as Turabian or Chicago style formatting. Sources are organized alphabetically by author surname. Where no surname is given use

the first initial of the document title. Bibliographies are single spaced using a hanging indent. A double space is used to separate each entry.

For a book by a single author:

Bebbington, David W. *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House 1989.

For a book with more than one author:

Clark, Francis E., and Clark, Harriet A. *Gospel in Latin lands: outline studies of Protestant work in the Latin countries of Europe and America*. New York: Macmillan, 1909.

For a chapter in an edited book with multiple authors:

Cox, Jeffrey. "Master narratives of religious change", in Hugh McLeod, and Werner Ustorf (eds.), *The decline of christendom in western Europe, 1750-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 201 – 217

For an article in a scholarly journal:

Conway, John S. "How shall the nations repent? The Stuttgart Declaration of guilt, October, 1945". *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38 (October 1987). 596-622

For an unpublished document:

Woodfin, Carol Gale. "Rüschlikon: the establishment and early development of an international Baptist theological seminary in the heart of post-war Europe." Unpublished MA thesis, Wake Forest University, 1987.

For an electronic source with a listed author:

Peachy, Paul. "Puidoux conferences". *Global Anabaptist Encyclopedia Online*. 1989. <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/P856.html> last accessed 27 April 2009.

For an electronic source but no author listed:

"The Lausanne covenant, 1974" The Lausanne Movement, <http://www.lausanne.org/covenant> last accessed September 21 2010

*Stylistic conventions:*

When to cite (in a footnote) material in an essay. The reason for using citations—footnote or endnote—is to give credit to authors whose work you are using as part of your research. It is simply acknowledging your debt to them and attributing the use of their intellectual property. It prevents you from being accused of plagiarism, which is simply passing someone else's work off as your own. Material that is generally considered common knowledge, such as basic dates of well known events, or uncontested facts of an event or a person's life (June 6, 1944 marked the invasion of France by allied forces in World War II; or Michelangelo's most famous work of art is the Sistine Chapel ceiling) need not be cited.

You should use a footnote citation when:

- 1) directly quoting a passage from another author/document: use double quotation marks to indicate the material being used and place the footnote marker at the end of that sentence or paragraph containing the quoted material.
- 2) when paraphrasing another person's insights or interpretations about an event that would not be considered common knowledge or is still up for debate. For example, if you were writing an essay on Alexander the Great's genius as a military commander and you used a document which claimed that Alexander the Great's success in battle against the Persians lay primarily in his ability to use disinformation and propaganda more than in his actual battlefield tactics, you would need to cite the author's work. This is a contestable, even unconventional interpretation of Alexander's campaigns, not simply a fact of when and where his battles took place. As such you are relying on the credibility of your source to give this claim its argumentative strength, so the author's work needs to be cited.
- 3) when making reference to little known facts about an event which will have a particular bearing on the argument you are making. For example, if one were doing research on Martin Luther's role in the Protestant Reformation and you state the his town of Wittenberg became the leading city in Europe for the newly emerging printing press industry, a citation would be in order. This is a statistically verifiable claim, but few people would know it as 'a matter of fact,' so it should be cited.
- 4) the best general axiom for citing sources is "when in doubt, cite your source".

A word about using direct quotations: use them sparingly. It is best to summarize material you gleaned from an author in your own words so as to remain in control of your sources. Remember, it is you who are writing the essay and your own voice needs to come through. Direct quotations are most effective when referring to material from a **primary source**, not a secondary source. It is appropriate to cite a secondary source when the author puts something in such a memorable or clever way that it adds value or rhetorical "punch" to the material being described. Don't let your sources, either quoted or summarized, take over your paper so it ends up looking like a composite of pasted together material from other documents. Use your research to tell your story in your words, and to make your interpretive claims about what is important and significant about the topic and material you have chosen.

When quoting a document at length, if the quoted material runs to more than four lines of

text in your essay put in a block quote—that is a separate single-spaced paragraph set off from the rest of the essay, and place the footnote number at the end. No quotation marks are necessary. However, try to keep all quotations as streamlined and concise as possible.

Regarding titles for both footnotes and bibliography: the basic format requirements are that book titles and titles of journals or other periodicals are put in *italics*; chapter and article titles, or entries in an encyclopedia are placed in “quotation marks.”

Formatting for the Bibliography. The bibliography comes at the end of the essay on a separate set of pages. Sources are alphabetized by author surname. Each entry is single spaced using a hanging indent, with a double space between each entry. **Do not** number your entries. Sources should also be divided into two basic sections: 1) published sources, which include books, journals (print and online), encyclopedia entries; 2) unpublished sources both printed and online. These would include doctoral dissertations, weblogs, personal papers, interview transcripts, and other website material which is not part of an online journal.

Title page for both assignments: you don’t need a separate title page, but at the top of your first page you need to include the following:

- 1) name of the assignment and course it is for,
- 2) a specific title of your work which is meant to grab the reader’s attention,
- 3) your name,
- 4) date submitted,
- 5) a word count is optional.

Once you have put this information on the top half or third of the first page, then double space down and begin your essay.

Essay format: use 12-point font in a fairly standard font style that is easy to read. Use double spacing for the entire essay.

If you have questions about any of the above or any other matters relating to the assignments, feel free to contact the instructor.