

Fall 2023
TTh 1:10-2:25 pm

Prof. Deborah Valenzi
(she/her/hers)
Office hours: T 3:00-5:00 pm
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Teaching Assistants:
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HIS BC 1101x Introduction to European History: The Renaissance to the French Revolution



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Wedding Dance* (1566).

Eugene Rice and Anthony Grafton, *Foundations of Early Modern Europe* (Norton).

Isser Woloch and Gregory S. Brown, *Eighteenth-Century Europe*, 2nd ed. (Norton). This title is out of print, but see if you can buy a used copy.

Thomas More, *Utopia* (Hackett ed. recommended, but any edition will do)

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms* (Johns Hopkins)

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard)

Stephen Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago).

Early modern European history is about fundamental problems that continue to engage us today: the consequences of human desire for riches, power, truth, and beauty. Now that you're finally enrolled in college, you may wish to contemplate both the benefits and shortcomings of the western culture in which all of us are enmeshed. Its formative period reveals the ideals of humanism, visible today in your own liberal arts education and institutions like research foundations and museums; the civic values of the Renaissance, alive in modern-day notions of civil society; the beliefs, values, and perils associated with religious evangelism and freedom, perpetuated in contemporary practices and conflicts worldwide; innovative and sometimes brutal centralized political power, institutions and methods of governance; new modes of scientific inquiry that revised the way we understand life on this planet; social and political revolutions,

replete with exhilarating and destructive ideals revived in later centuries; new forms of production and global realms of commercial relations, alongside the inhumane institution of slavery in American colonies; an enormous transformation of material life and new patterns of consumption; and finally, a culmination of cultural practices associated with acquiring knowledge, including a fearless curiosity associated with the word “enlightenment.” All along the way, we will discuss why this material is worth knowing. To quote a recent book on colleges in the United States, this course should help you “in figuring out just what it is that’s worth wanting.” It may also help you to pursue, to quote W.E.B. DuBois, the “one goal” of the “true college”: “not to earn meat, but to know the end and aim of that life which meat nourishes.”

This approach is designed to engage students who are unfamiliar with European history and wish to learn both the subject matter and the methods used to understand the past. We shall meet for two lectures every week and students will then attend weekly discussion groups led by the teaching assistants. Attendance at all meetings is required. Please be an **active participant**. That means (1) keeping up with the assignments; (2) taking good notes at lectures and discussion groups; (3) reflecting on the material at hand, **commenting and asking questions during lecture** whenever appropriate; (4) participating in discussion class and turning in assignments on time. Because of the number of students in the class, **no extensions will be given**. Plan ahead and organize your time accordingly. Don’t hesitate to seek help when you need it.

This syllabus indicates only the dates of lectures; **your discussion group meetings will be organized during the first two weeks of the semester**. **Please be patient** with this somewhat difficult process, as we will be aiming to find best times for group meetings. If we ask for volunteers to move from one section to another, please help us by accommodating that request. We aim to make all discussion groups roughly equal in number and no larger than 15.

Learning objectives, or what you can expect to achieve through successful completion of this course:

- appreciation for the diversity and complexity of human experience
- critical understanding of the relationship between past events and modern life
- the ability to conduct close readings of key texts, primary and secondary
- the ability to analyze and interpret historical material
- the skill of presenting arguments cogently and logically in writing and speaking
- the skill of responding constructively and critically to the views of others

Please refrain from using laptops and cell phones in any way during class. Simply activating the screen of a laptop or phone will distract others and detract from your ability to listen, take notes, and participate in discussions. You all know exactly how this practice leads students down the path of disrespectful and impractical behavior during class time. Everyone loses by your exempting yourself from the rules; please be

courteous and honor this request. Take a break from all your electronic devices by keeping them out of sight.

This syllabus and other supplementary material are available on **Canvas** and reading assignments marked with * will appear in folders filed under **Files** and then **Resources**. Make sure that you have created a shortcut to Canvas on your personal computer. You will need to follow your syllabus carefully in order to know what material you are responsible for at each meeting. Aim to have the reading completed by the time you meet with your discussion section or by second lecture of the week, whichever comes first.

If you need to economize in purchasing the textbooks, look for used copies on the Internet. You are encouraged to print out short reserve readings to have handy for discussion sections and for subsequent personal use.

The **course requirements** are as follows:

- **a 4-page essay (typed, double-spaced) due October 3 (30%)**
- **a mid-term exam on November 2 (30%)**
- **regular attendance and active engagement in discussion section meetings (10%)**
- **an in-class final exam on December 19th at 1:10 pm (30%)**

Use of an AI text generator when an assignment does not explicitly ask or allow for it is plagiarism. In this class, students will not be allowed to use AI in order to complete writing assignments. Using such tools will prevent you from developing your own capabilities of reasoning, research, and analysis. AI cannot generate the kind of reflection on historical data that this course is trying to teach you how to do. Moreover, AI tools raise serious questions of integrity and ethics: as regulatory laws in Europe have argued, ChatGBT scrapes information from sources without giving attribution, a form of plagiarism that is equivalent to stealing. In some instances, AI will generate fictional footnotes and sources, which you as an inexperienced historian won't realize are false. AI often leads students down irrelevant and even incorrect pathways of thinking, thus defeating the purpose of an assignment. In your own best interests, you should aim to be engaged in a college-level learning process and AI will interfere with your gaining a college education. Please don't be fooled; instructors have detected the use of ChatGBT and other AI tools fairly easily. For all these reasons, students who use AI in this class will be penalized.

Information regarding the Barnard Center for Accessibility Resources and Disability Services (CARDS):

*If you believe you may encounter barriers to the academic environment due to a documented disability or emerging health challenges, please feel free to contact me and/or the **Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS)**. Any student with approved academic*

accommodations is encouraged to contact me during office hours or via email. If you have questions regarding registering a disability or receiving accommodations for the semester, please contact CARDS at (212) 854-4634, cards@barnard.edu, or learn more at barnard.edu/disabilityservices. CARDS is located in 101 Altschul Hall.

Columbia disability services information can be found here:

<https://www.health.columbia.edu/services/register-disability-services>

Barnard College Wellness Statement:

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself--your own health, sanity, and wellness--your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

- <http://barnard.edu/primarycare>
- <https://barnard.edu/furman-counseling/about-counseling>
- <http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>
- <https://www.health.columbia.edu/content/patient-resources>
- <https://www.health.columbia.edu/services/individual-counseling>
- [Stressbusters Support Network <pdf>](#)

All students are expected to adhere to the Barnard College Honor Code:

Approved by the student body in 1912 and updated in 2016, the Code states:

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism of any kind. Assignments that reflect any form of direct copying without quotation marks and attribution will receive no credit. It is not advisable to copy and paste passages from published materials into your laptop notes and then into your written work. Even if you think you

will remember to footnote such pasted passages, you may easily forget to add a citation. This is the most common way students “accidentally” plagiarize, a mistake your instructors will not accept as an accident. If you want to take notes with your computer, do so in a way that will not lead to oversights like this. Please ask me or your Teaching Assistant if you are uncertain about any aspect of how to use and cite secondary sources.

I. The Renaissance: when, where, why? (Sept. 5, 7)

Rice & Grafton, *Foundations of Early Modern Europe*, Chap. 1, “Science, Technology, and Discovery” and Chap. 2, “The Economic Expansion of Europe,” 1-76.

II. The Material Culture of Renaissance Europe (Sept. 12, 14)

Rice & Grafton, *Foundations of Early Modern Europe*, Chap. 3, “Renaissance Society and Humanist Culture,” 77-109.

*Susan Groag Bell, ed., *Women from the Greeks to the French Revolution*, Part 5, “Humanism and the Renaissance Education of Women,” pp. 181-95 and pp. 200-11.

Please study the following map:

http://www.euratlas.com/history_europe/europe_map_1500.html

III. Humanism, Women, and a New World (Sept. 19, 21)

Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*.

IV. The Reformation: A Challenge to Authority (Sept. 26, 28, 3)

Rice & Grafton, *Foundations of Early Modern Europe*, Chap. 5, “Revolution and Reformation in the Church: The Problem of Authority,” 146-77; Chap. 6, “Revolution and Reformation in the Church: The Problem of Conversion,” 178-202.

*E. William Monter, “The Sociology of Jura Witchcraft” and

*H. C. Eric Midelfort, “The Devil and the German People” from *The Witchcraft Reader*, ed. Darren Oldridge, pp. 87-96, 240-53. [Canvas folder]

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, Sections 1-28, 42, 44, 46, 61-2

***** **ESSAY DUE – October 3rd at the end of class** *****

V. The Early Modern State: Centralization of Power (Oct. 5, 10, 12)

Rice & Grafton, *Foundations of Early Modern Europe*, Chap. 4, “The Formation of the Early Modern State,” 110-45.

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Read the book as efficiently as you can.

**Please watch this film: "The Return of Martin Guerre"
on reserve at both libraries and easy to access online**

VI. Crisis in the Seventeenth Century: The Dutch and the English in an Age of Revolution (Oct. 17, 19)

*Richard S. Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1715*, Chap. 1, “Calvinism vs. Catholicism in Western Europe,” 30-57 only; Chap. 2, “Political Disintegration in Central and Eastern Europe,” 82-92 only; Chap. 3, “The Psychology of Limited Wealth,” 103-51; and also Chap. 4, 164-78 only (“The Puritan Revolution”). **A note about this book: look in the Canvas folder for a sheet on instructions on how to access an online version of this textbook, which is out of print.**

*Maarten Prak, “Urbanization,” *Cambridge Companion to the Dutch Golden Age*, 15-31.

VII. The Scientific Revolution and its Impact on Europeans (Oct. 24, 26)

*Richard S. Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1715*, Chap. 5, 199-258.

*Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Chap. 18, “Witchcraft: Decline,” pp. 681-98.

Stephen Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution*, Chaps. 2 and 3.

**Catch-up & Review during our regular class meeting
Tuesday, October 31**

MID-TERM – THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2

**No class – Tuesday, November 7
ELECTION DAY HOLIDAY
(Make sure you are registered and be sure to vote)**

VIII. The Age of Absolutism and European Expansion (Nov. 9, 14)

*Richard S. Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1715*, Chap. 4, “Absolutism Versus Constitutionalism,” 152-98; Chap. 6, “Toward a New Balance of Power,” 259-301.

*Lauro Martines, *Furies: War in Europe, 1450-1700* (2013), “Prelude,” vii-xv.

*Please *speed-read* the following documents, available in a Canvas folder, following the guidelines that will be added to the folder. (This will be a fun-filled assignment, so see it as a challenge: test your historical acuity!):

[Readings are copied from John Pinkerton, *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in all Parts of the World* (17 vols.)]

Vol. 8, *Extract from Tavernier’s Voyages* (1678);

Vol. 9, *The Travels of Sir John Chardin* (1671ff);

Vol. 11, *An Account of New Holland and the Adjacent Islands* (1699) by Capt. William Dampier;

Vol. 14, *An Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Chile* (1649) by Alonso de Ovalle, Jesuit.

IX. Eighteenth-Century Capitalism, Slavery, and the World Economy (Nov. 16, 21)

*Isser Woloch and Gregory Brown, *Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Chap. 4, “Demographic and Economic Change,” 113-50.

*David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, Chap. 1, “Slavery and Freedom in the Early Modern World,” 1-28

*William Sewell, “The Empire of Fashion and the Rise of Capitalism in Eighteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present*, No. 206 (2010): 81-120.

X. The Enlightened Eighteenth Century: Intellectuals and Social Realities (Nov. 28, 30)

*Isser Woloch and Gregory S. Brown, *Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Chap. 6, “The Enlightenment” and Chap. 7, “Living the Enlightenment: The Public Sphere,” pp. 181-255.

*Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” [Canvas folder]

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau, excerpt from *Emile* [Canvas folder]. Read introductions to all three excerpts included in that xerox; do NOT read the Wollstonecraft or Macaulay writings in that document, but instead, read them in the following formats:

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Chaps. 1-4 at the following site: <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/3420/pg3420-images.html>

*Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education* (1790) [Canvas folder].

Baron de Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, available here through CLIO (remember to sign in):

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.%24b313551&seq=25>

Read the following: Letters 10-14; Letters 24-26.

*William Robertson, *History of America* (1777), Vol. 2, 10-18; 35-52, 78-95. [Canvas folder]

Please examine the following map:

<http://www.euratlas.net/history/europe/1700/index.html>

XI. The Old Regime and the Coming of the French Revolution (Dec. 5, 7)

*Isser Woloch and Gregory S. Brown, *Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Chap. 3, “The Social Order,” pp. 73-112; Chap. 5, “Poverty and the Public Order,” pp. 151-80; Chap. 9, “Toward an Age of Democratic Revolution?” pp. 288-325.

FINAL EXAM

Tuesday, December 19th, 1:10 – 4:00 pm

(Check the university exam schedule for room location)