

Fall 2020
MW 1:10-2:25 pm EST

Prof. Deborah Valenzi
Office hours: T 3:00 – 5:00 pm & by appt.
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HIS BC 1101x Introduction to European History: The Renaissance to the French Revolution



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, c. 1555.

Eugene Rice and Anthony Grafton, *Foundations of Early Modern Europe* (Norton) (e-book through CLIO and Hathi Trust).

Richard S. Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1715* (Norton).

Isser Woloch and Gregory S. Brown, *Eighteenth-Century Europe*, 2nd ed. (Norton).

Thomas More, *Utopia* (Hackett) (e-book)

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

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

Stephen Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago). (pdf on Canvas)

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 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 lists 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 four 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.

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 cell phones in any way during class. Texting and even simply activating the screen of your phone will distract others and detract from your ability to listen, take notes, and participate in discussions. 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**. 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.

Several of our texts have been made available as e-books during the pandemic. If you need to economize in purchasing the others, look for used copies on the Internet. Assignments marked with an asterisk (*) indicate readings available through links on Canvas and/or on reserve. You are encouraged to print out short reserve readings for personal use and to have handy for discussion sections.

The **course requirements** are as follows:

- a 4-page essay (typed, double-spaced) due October 7 (30%)
- a mid-term exam on Wednesday, November 11 (30%)
- attendance and active engagement in discussion section meetings (10%)
- a final take-home exam due on December 18th at 1 p.m. (30%)

Information regarding the Office of Disability Services:

If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations, you must visit the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for assistance. Students requesting eligible accommodations in their courses will need to first meet with an ODS staff member for an intake meeting. Once registered, students are required to visit ODS each semester to set up new accommodations and learn how to notify faculty. Accommodations are not retroactive, so it is best to register with ODS early each semester to access your accommodations. If you are registered with ODS, please see me to schedule a meeting outside of class in which you can bring me your faculty notification letter and we can discuss your accommodations for this course. Students are not eligible to use their accommodations in this course until they have met with me. ODS is located in Milbank Hall, Room 008.

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>
- <http://barnard.edu/counseling>
- <http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>
- [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.

I. The Renaissance: when, where, why? (Sept. 9, 14)

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. 16, 21)

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. 23, 28)

Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*.

IV. The Reformation: A Challenge to Authority (Sept. 30, Oct. 5, 7)

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

Please consult the following map in order to understand the reading assignment on witchcraft:

http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/262/268312/art/figures/KISH_13_309.gif

***** **ESSAY DUE – October 7th by 11:40 a.m.** *****

V. The Early Modern State: Centralization of Power (Oct. 12, 14, 19)

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.

No class meeting on October 21; please watch this film: "The Return of Martin Guerre"

VI. The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Civil War and Political Revolution (Oct. 26, 28)

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”).

*Keith Thomas, “Women in the Civil War Sects,” *Past and Present*, no. 13 (April 1958), pp. 42-62.

**No class – November 2
ELECTION DAY HOLIDAY
(Make sure you are registered and be sure to vote!)**

VII. The Scientific Revolution and the Wider World (Nov. 4, 9)

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.

**MID-TERM – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11
(no class meeting on that day)**

Your midterm exam will be administered during class time (1:10 to 2:25 EST) on Wednesday, November 11. You may consult any of the assigned texts while writing your responses. Please do not consult a classmate or anyone else while completing the exam; your work must be entirely your own. You will be asked to deposit your completed exam in an assignment folder on Canvas.

VIII. The Age of Absolutism (Nov. 16, 18)

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.

Please speed-read the following documents, available in a Canvas folder, following the guidelines that will be handed out in class (this will be a fun-filled assignment):

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 and the World Economy (Nov. 23, 30)

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

*Lorna Weatherill, "The Meaning of Consumer Behaviour in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century England," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter, pp. 206-25.

*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 (Dec. 2, 7)

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 at the following website:

<http://rbsche.people.wm.edu/teaching/plp/>

Read the following: Letters 10-14 (inclusive); 24-26; 46-48; 55-56; 83-95; 105-106; 116-117; 125-128; 142-145.

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. 9, 14)

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 TAKE-HOME EXAM
distributed in class on December 14 and
due on Canvas: Friday, December 18th by 5:00 pm