



**MERCER**  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## COURSE OUTLINE

<b>Course Number</b> <b>HIS 101</b>	<b>Course Title</b> <b>Western Civilization to 1648</b>	<b>Credits</b> <b>3</b>
<b>Hours:</b> <b>Lecture/Lab/Other</b> <b>3/0/0</b>	<b>Co- or Pre-requisite</b> <b>ENG 101</b>	<b>Implementation</b> <b>Semester &amp; Year</b> <b>Fall 2022</b>

**Catalog description:** An introduction to the political, social, cultural, and economic events that distinguished Western Civilization from its earliest roots to the Thirty Years' War (1648). Major topics include Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations, Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance and Reformation. Emphasis is placed on close readings of primary works, including literary and visual sources, in order to provide a deeper appreciation for the events and people that have helped shape the modern world.

**General Education Category:**  
**Goal 7: Historical Perspective**  
**Goal 6: Humanities**

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**Required texts & Other materials:** Joshua Cole, and Carol Symes, *Western Civilizations*. Vol. 1. 5<sup>th</sup> Brief Edition. NY: W.W. Norton. 2020.

### **Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

***Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:***

1. read primary and secondary historical sources critically, with an understanding of their validity, perspective bias, audience, and context. (ILG 1, 5, 6,7, 8, 9)
2. analyze and interpret primary sources (whether they seem more “historical,” “literary,” or “philosophical”) and use them as evidence to support historical arguments. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
3. identify and describe the significance of major figures, ideas, and events of western civilization. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
4. describe and analyze the context of major movements, trends, and developments of western civilization. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
5. discuss with authority, either in writing or verbally, the historical forces (e.g., religion, economics, politics, social stratification, gender, individual actors, technology, nature, intellectual and aesthetic thought, etc.) behind the major movements, trends, and developments of western civilization. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
6. use information technologies in acquiring new knowledge and perspective. (ILG 4, 7, 10, 11)

7. construct an historical essay that presents a clear thesis, a persuasive argument, and uses detailed historical evidence. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
8. analyze other time periods and cultures with little or no ethnocentrism or modernism, thus displaying a sense of informed perspective and a deeper appreciation of the common threads of human nature. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

**Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):**

**Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English.** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

**Institutional Learning Goal 4. Technology.** Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

**Institutional Learning Goal 5. Social Science.** Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

**Institutional Learning Goal 6. Humanities.** Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**Institutional Learning Goal 7. History.** Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

**Institutional Learning Goal 8. Diversity and Global Perspective:** Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples

**Institutional Learning Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action.** Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.

**Institutional Learning Goal 10. Information Literacy:** Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

**Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking:** Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

**Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:**

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Explain what is meant by "The West." (SLO 1-8)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the periodization and chronology of the course. (SLO 1-8)
- Identify primary vs. secondary sources and discuss the uses and limitations of each. (SLO 1-8)

**Unit I: The Ancient World [SLO 1-8]**

**1. The Beginnings of Civilizations, Early Mesopotamia and Egypt**

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Describe the skills and customs developed in Palaeolithic societies.
- Explain the link between the Neolithic food-producing revolution and the emergence of civilizations.
- Analyze the ways the Neolithic Revolution affected the lives of men and women.
- Define the term "civilization" and discuss some explanations for the emergence of early civilization.
- Identify the causes that transformed early communities in Southwest Asia into the first cities, kingdoms, and empires.
- Analyze how and why cultures developed distinctively in different parts of the eastern Mediterranean, and how this shaped legal, religious, technological and scientific development.
- Assess the contributions of ancient Egyptian and western Asian civilizations to the West.
- Assess key written and archaeological sources available for the study of early civilization (e.g., archaeological finds, the Code of Hammurabi, Egyptian and Mesopotamian Royal Inscriptions, etc.)

**2. Empires in the Ancient Near East**

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Explain how Egypt during the New Kingdom used warfare and diplomacy to develop an empire.
- Describe the rise of Minoan and Mycenaean civilization.

- Describe the political, religious, and cultural traditions of the Hittite, Assyrian, and Babylonian empires.
- Explain how the Persian Empire brought diverse peoples together in a stable realm.
- Compare and contrast the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian empires, especially in terms of military power, administration, and imperial policy.
- Discuss the political and religious beliefs and institutions that gave Hebrew civilization its unique character.
- Describe the results of the Hebrews' interactions with other peoples.
- Evaluate key primary sources available for early religions and identify the major problems in writing history from religious (biblical) sources.
- Analyze the interconnections between religious ideas and culture in both the Jewish tradition and Zoroastrianism.
- Assess the sources available for the study of 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE civilizations (e.g., archaeological finds, biblical texts [with special attention to the biblical Flood story as compared to the flood in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*] Assyrian and Persian Royal Inscriptions, etc.)

### 3. The Origins and Development of Ancient Greece

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Explain how the geography of Greece affected Greek history.
- Analyze the cultural relationships between the Aegean civilizations (Minoans and Mycenaeans) and the early Greeks.
- Identify the Homeric epics and discuss what they reveal about early Greek culture.
- Explain the development of the Greek city-states, with particular attention to the comparing and contrasting political developments in Athens and Sparta.
- Describe the intellectual, social, and political innovations of Classical Greece
- Assess the role of sexuality, gender, and citizenship in Greek society.
- Describe the effects of the two great conflicts of the fifth century – the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War - on Greek civilization.
- Trace the development of Greek rationalism from the Archaic through the Classical period.
- Relate Greek culture (religion, art, philosophy, drama, literature, historical writing) to the Greek belief in the importance of excellence and the relationship of the individual to the community.
- Assess the written sources available for the study of ancient Greece, with special attention to the works of the pre-Socratic philosophers, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plato.

### 4. The Hellenistic Age (ca. 336-31 BCE)

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Describe the rise of Macedonia under Philip II.
- Explain how Alexander the Great created an empire in which Greek civilization flourished amid many different cultures.
- Identify the distinguishing characteristics of Hellenistic society and culture.
- Discuss with authority the ways Greek civilization of the Hellenistic era differed from the Classical period.
- Assess the position of women, slaves, and native peoples in Hellenistic society.
- Describe important religious, intellectual, and artistic developments of the Hellenistic period.

### 5. The Origins and Development of Rome in the Republic and Early Empire

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Describe the influences of Etruscan and Greek civilization on early Rome.
- Explain the government of the Roman Republic, and assess its legacy to the later political tradition of Western Civilization, including American republicanism.
- Explain how the Roman Republic came to dominate the Mediterranean world in this period.
- Evaluate the position of women, conquered peoples, and slaves in Roman society, paying particular attention to the evidence of written sources.
- Discuss the influence of Greece on Roman military, cultural, and political life.
- Assess the role of conquest on the economic, social, military, and political problems of the Late Republic.

- Identify the political and social changes that brought the Roman Republic to an end.
- Assess key written sources available for the study of early Rome, with special attention to the Twelve Tables and the historical works of Livy.
- Explain the shift from a Republic to an imperial political state and describe the role played by Augustus.
- Describe the political developments of the Roman Empire, with attention to the roles of the emperor, senate, army, and Rome itself.
- Assess the socioeconomic effects of the Roman peace (*Pax Romana*).
- Relate Augustan and Silver Age artistic expression to social and cultural values.
- Discuss the problems faced by the Roman Empire in the third century.
- Describe how the Roman Empire successfully reorganized after the instability of the third century (Diocletian and Constantine).
- Assess key written sources available for the study of the Roman Empire, with special attention to Augustus' autobiography and Tacitus.

## 6. Christianity and the Transformation of the Roman World

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Describe the rise of Christianity and explain the characteristics of Christianity that enabled it to grow and triumph in the Roman empire.
- Identify the major problems in reconstructing early Christianity from religious sources.
- Explain how Christianity became the dominant religion in the Roman Empire.
- Describe the main features of Germanic law and society and explain how they differed from those of the Romans.
- Assess the impact of the Germanic peoples on the western Roman Empire.
- Explain how and why the Roman Empire in the West disintegrated.
- Discuss the chief characteristics of Benedictine monasticism and describe the role of monks in both the conversion of Europe to Christianity and the intellectual life of the Germanic kingdoms.
- Assess the experience of continuity and change by different social groups in late antiquity. Assess key written sources available for the study of the development of Christianity.

## Unit II: The Middle Ages [SLO 1-8]

### 7. Early Medieval Civilizations: Byzantium, Islam, and the Early Medieval Europe

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Discuss how the Byzantine Empire managed to survive and preserve Christian Roman traditions.
- Distinguish Byzantine political, religious, and cultural developments from their Roman predecessors.
- Describe the development of Islam in Arabia.
- Describe the core beliefs and requirements of Islam and gain a sense of the *Quran* by reading excerpts.
- Explain how the followers of Islam created a vast empire so quickly.
- Appreciate the major contributions of Islam to the development of European civilization.
- Identify the ways in which the new kingdoms of western Europe built on Rome's legal and governmental legacies.
- Evaluate the role of religious, ethnic, and regional differences in the rise of early medieval civilizations.
- Assess the successes and failures of the Frankish and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.
- Identify the ways in which the Carolingian Empire contributed to establishing a distinctive western European culture.
- Compare and contrast the political, economic, and social traditions of the Islamic, Byzantine, and Western worlds.

### 8. The High Middle Ages: Economy, Society and Politics (1000-1300)

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Explain how European monarchies (Germany, France, England) strengthened themselves.
- Assess the causes of European political and military expansion in the High Middle Ages.
- Explain the relationship between the Church and European political developments.
- Assess the religious, political and social factors behind the causes and consequences of the Crusades.
- Define the three orders (clergy, nobility, peasants), and relate those medieval ideas to rural and urban realities.
- Assess the role of logic in spurring intellectual growth and Scholasticism.
- Evaluate the reasons why the Crusades happened the way they did and analyze the importance of Pope Urban II's 1095 speech for understanding the rise of the Crusades.

#### **9. The High Middle Ages: Religious and Intellectual Developments (1000-1300)**

- Discuss the reforms of the Church (monastic reform, papal reform, Investiture Controversy, papal monarchy) and their importance for Medieval Europe.
- Discuss the appeal of spiritual movements, and explain why some were considered heretical.
- Explain the importance of the development of universities and their relationship to classical learning.
- Describe the major developments in medieval vernacular literature.
- Analyze the features and importance of medieval art and architecture.

#### **10. The Later Middle Ages (1300-1500)**

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Identify the causes of the deaths of so many Europeans in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- Describe how forces outside of Europe, in particular the Mongol and Ottoman Empires, affected conditions in the West.
- Discuss why the church failed to provide leadership and spiritual guidance during the disastrous 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- Explain how incessant warfare transformed the most powerful medieval states (Hundred Years' War).
- Describe how European culture offered explanations and solace for the calamities of the times.
- Compare and contrast the political make-up of Europe in 1500 with that of 1300.

#### **11. Commerce, Conquest and Colonization (1300-1600)**

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Discuss the rise and importance of the Mongols and the Mongol Empire.
- Describe the rise of the Ottoman Empire.
- Assess technological and cultural preconditions to European exploration.
- Explain why Europeans began to embark on voyages of discovery and expansion at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- Compare and contrast the goals and achievements of Portuguese and Spanish explorers.
- Describe colonial, political, and economic developments.
- Discuss how the arrival of Europeans in the Americas transformed native cultures and life.
- Explain why the European encounter with Asian civilizations was far less disruptive than those in Africa and the Americas.
- Describe how the world was tied together in global biological and economic systems.

### **Unit III: Renaissance and Reformation [SLO 1-8]**

#### **12. The Civilization of the Renaissance (1350-1550)**

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Discuss the characteristics that distinguish the Renaissance from the Middle Ages.
- Identify the ways in which the political and social climate of the Italian city-states helped create Renaissance culture.
- Describe "humanism" and show its effect on philosophy, education, attitudes toward politics, and the writing of history.

- Discuss the impact of classical values on Renaissance thought.
- Evaluate the impact of classical models on Renaissance art, and what was "new" about Renaissance art.
- Compare and contrast the development of Renaissance culture, especially humanism, in Italy and in the rest of Europe.
- Discuss how the monarchies of western Europe gathered the strength to become more assertive and effective ("New Monarchies"; "Renaissance states").
- Assess a selection of literary, historical and artistic primary sources from the Renaissance.

### 13. Reformations of Religion

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Explain the late medieval context of popular piety and reform ideas preceding Luther's call for change.
- State how Luther's basic ideas on religion differed from those of Catholicism and analyze how he arrived at his conclusions.
- Analyze how imperial political problems contributed to the spread of reformed religion in the Holy Roman Empire.
- Identify the principal Protestant traditions that emerged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and how they differ from each other and from Roman Catholicism.
- Discuss the different application and development of reformed religion in England, France, and other states.
- Discuss how the Catholic Church reformed itself during this period.
- Evaluate the effect of the Reformation on society, morality, and community life.
- Discuss how the religious turmoil of the 16<sup>th</sup> century transformed the role of the visual arts in public life.
- Analyze the writings of Martin Luther and identify his main disagreements with the Roman Catholic Church.

### 14. Religious Wars and State Building (1540-1660)

Learning Objectives: *Students will be able to*

- Describe the role of religion in the European wars of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- Explain how economic change affected tradition urban and rural society.
- Assess how religion motivated and affected political action in Spain, France, and England.
- Evaluate the causes and effects of the Thirty Years' War.
- Discuss how art and literature of this age reflect political, social, and religious tensions.

### Evaluation of student learning:

Instructors have some discretion in determining the format and content of required work. However, written and verbal assignments in any history course are designed to help students develop the General Education skills (historical perspective, critical thinking, information literacy, writing, and public speaking) listed above. Instructors will emphasize these goals in their assignments and should state them in their written and verbal instructions to the students.

History courses will, therefore, utilize essay examinations, written reports and oral presentations as standard methods of assessing student learning. Below are the parameters within which instructors may operate:

#### **Reading Assignments**

- ♦ Textbook as well as primary documents will be clearly assigned to the students

#### **Exams & Quizzes**

- ♦ At least two (2), one-hour exams
- ♦ A final exam
- ♦ Exams should include at least a short essay component.

**Writing Assignments** (to assess discipline specific knowledge, communication skills, and critical thinking skills). Students are expected to develop the ability to construct narratives—written or verbal or both—that clearly present their own thesis based on solid evidence that has been thoroughly and critically evaluated. Students are directed in developing competencies in accumulating evidence from a variety of sources, assessing the validity of the evidence, and extracting substantive generalizations from what they have discovered (Information Literacy).

A minimum of two (2), but preferable three (3), writing assignments:

- At least one (1) essay should concentrate on primary documents
- At least one (1) one assignment should incorporate library or internet research or both; this assignment may be a term paper or group presentation or some other type of project
- Length of the essays may be determined by the instructor; short (e.g., two-three page) essays are acceptable
- Writing assignments should all be designed to develop student learning outcomes in critical thinking, information literacy, and writing

For further tips on the preparation of class assignments, see the document, Tamara Hunt, “Making Assignments in the Western Civilization Classroom: Papers, Reports, Projects.” In *Instructor’s Guide to Accompany The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures* by Lynn Hunt, et. al. pp. 142–146. New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2001.