

BLHS 107: The Early Modern World

Fall 2016

Instructor

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Course Meetings

Hybrid Format: Thursdays, 5:20 pm-8:50 pm, C214 on September 1, 8, 22; October 6, 13, 27; November 3; December 1. September 15, 29; October 20; November 10, 17 are asynchronous online activities, **not** classroom gatherings.

Course Format: Importance of Blackboard Site

This is a **hybrid** course, which means that some class assignments are performed online rather than in the classroom. This includes some weeks of individual work and discussion board postings. The course Blackboard site will be the location of these online assignments and activities and access of designated websites and other online materials. Details of written assignments will also be posted there.

Course Description

In this interdisciplinary course, you will discover that in the early modern period (1500-1800), a variety of factors—the European age of exploration and expansion, scientific investigation, Reformation theology, Renaissance Humanism, and the spread of print culture—caused Europeans to redefine themselves and their society. You will explore this process of “modern” redefinition of human values and study how to discuss and write about the changes in intellectual and cultural life it occasioned. You will encounter the terms “Reformation” and “Catholic Reformation,” and study the scientific revolutions of the seventeenth century. William Shakespeare’s plays will enable you to address compelling questions about the interwoven themes of “The Human & the Divine” and “Identity & Difference.” As you study the scientific, religious, and artistic debates of the Early Modern era, you will practice writing and speaking critically about them, using evidence from the text, research, and sound reasoning.

Learning Goals

Generally: To practice critical thinking skills in class and in all written work

To define the “Early Modern” era; also to critique the act of periodization that identifies the “Early Modern” era

To list the five main factors affecting European culture in the Early Modern Age, but also to analyze the limits of current knowledge about these five factors

To define and analyze the significant elements of the theological controversies of the Early Modern period, and interpret the significance of their influence on European society, particularly Tudor England

To distinguish between the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Reformation, and to query why the term “Reformation” is used to identify these movements

To explain the nature, significance, and impact of the major scientific revolutions of the seventeenth century

To analyze how ideas of “the human” altered during the Early Modern era, using examples from *Hamlet*

To explain the various concepts of “the divine” that surface in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*

To illuminate the workings of “othering” within Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*

To explicate how Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* participates in the creation of a gendered, racialized, religiously coherent English nationhood

To identify and narrow and appropriate question to pursue in a short essay

To write a clear thesis statement

To write straightforward topic sentences that develop the claims outlined in the thesis

To present effectively and explain, clearly and straightforwardly, the specific evidence supporting the topic sentences and overall thesis

To revise essays in order to improve writing skills

Course Requirements

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in all assigned activities. Class participation grades are predicated on attendance at all class meetings. Students not posting or posting late Discussion Board assignments will be charged with one class absence for each such incident. In keeping with BALS policy, students with two or more absences, excused or unexcused, may receive a failing grade for the course. Late arrivals and/or early departures of more than seven minutes count as $\frac{1}{2}$ of an absence. Excused absences will be given *only* in rare circumstances and *only* if student and instructor discuss and arrange the absence **in advance**.

Participation and Classroom Etiquette:

Students are expected to read the course material carefully, take notes, and participate fully in class discussion. Laptop usage is acceptable as a means of note-taking but not as a means of engaging in any other activity. iPhones and other devices must be turned off and stowed, out of sight and out of hand, during class meetings.

Writing:

A variety of writing exercises anchors each unit of the course. These exercises are designed to help you improve your critical thinking skills as well as your writing skills. Students are encouraged to use the Writing Center for writing support. This will help you learn to think more critically and write more clearly, and may very well improve your grades. Check the SCS website to make an appointment at 640 Mass. Ave.

Postings, Essay Submissions and Late Policy:

Discussion Board Postings will receive the grade of “zero” if they are posted after the due dates. Students not posting are marked “absent” for that week. Please turn in essays electronically at the email address given at the top of the syllabus. Emails to other addresses will not be acknowledged or accepted. Essays must arrive in the incoming email box at or before 5:25 pm on the assigned due date. A late essay arriving after 5:30 pm on the due date is lowered one letter grade. Any essay received more than 48 hours late is lowered two full grades. Essays received one week late automatically receive an F. **You must, however, complete all assigned work in order to receive a grade for the course as a whole.**

Incomplete Grades:

Extension of time to finish coursework will be granted only in unusual and clear documented situations. Extensions must be mutually agreed upon between student and instructor no later than the last class meeting. Then all such agreements must be approved by the Associate Dean. In no case will the extension exceed three additional weeks. Work not received by the Incomplete deadline will result in a change of the semester grade to “F.”

Evaluation:

Your final grade is based on the following components:

- Early Modern Quiz, 5%
- Reformation essay, 10%
- *Shakespeare* paper, 15%
- Science Essay 10 %
- Virtual Museum Report 10 %
- Four Discussion Board postings, 7.5% each, 30% total
- Cumulative Blackboard posting, 10%
- Overall class participation, 10%

Essays are assigned numerical grades according to the Grading Rubric (See Blackboard, Course Documents folder). Postings and other graded assignments are assigned letter grades. All grades are entered in Blackboard’s Grade Center. The semester grade will be determined by summing and weighing as done in the Grade Center, and the assigned letter grade will be that designated by the Grade Center as corresponding to the overall numerical score.

Academic Integrity:

See the UNIVERSITY POLICY section below for information about the Georgetown University Honor System. Any incident of plagiarism, however minor or major, results in an “F” for the course. You must cite every source. The Writing Center or a Reference Librarian will happily assist you if you have any questions about how to cite your research sources. I expect students to follow the MLA citation style, which is outlined in detail on the following website:

<http://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/research-guides/mla-guide>. You may also find the Purdue University “OWL” website helpful: just search online for “Purdue University OWL.”

Plagiarism—including *accidental* plagiarism—has *extremely* serious ramifications. Professors are required, by university regulations, to report any suspicion of a violation. The University Honor Council adjudicates all cases, and if the allegation is upheld the Council may add to the professor’s penalty other sanctions. Please seek my assistance and follow the Honor Code assiduously.

COURSE OUTLINE

Thurs., Sept. 1 **Introduction to the Early Modern World**
Early Modern Quiz assigned.

Thurs., Sept. 8 **The Reformation, Part I: New Perspectives on Theology, Politics, Economics**
Assignments for today’s class:
Janz, Chapter 2 [Luther], introduction and pages 88-146; pages 56-59, 63-74.
Janz, Chapter 5 [Calvin], introduction and pages 270-328.
Reformation short essay assigned. *Early Modern Quiz due in electronic form.

Thurs., Sept. 15 **The Reformation, Part II: Reformation in England; Christianity and Judaism**
Assignments for this week’s individual online work (no class meeting):
Jantz, Chapter 6 [English Reformation]: pages 329-376; page 436.
POST on one of the assigned Discussion Board topics and reply to two other postings. Details on the Discussion Board site for this date.

Thurs., Sept. 22 **Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, the Human & the Divine**
Assignment for today’s class:
*Reformation essay due in electronic form.
Read Acts I-III of *Hamlet* after studying the Introduction, Background, and William Shakespeare sections of your text. Use the *Hamlet* Reading Guide posted on Blackboard.

Thurs., Sept. 29 **Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, the Human & the Divine**
Assignments for this week’s individual online work (no class meeting):
Finish reading *Hamlet*, Acts IV and V. Use the *Hamlet* Reading Guide posted on Blackboard.
POST on one of the assigned Discussion Board topics and reply to two other postings. Details on the Discussion Board site for this date.

Thurs., Oct. 6 **Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, the Human & the Divine**
Assignments for today’s class:
Review *Hamlet*; watch streaming video film if possible.

Thurs., Oct. 13 **Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*; Identity & Difference within Religion**
Assignments for today’s class:
Read *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts I-III, using the Reading Guide.
Shakespeare essay assigned. See Blackboard for this essay assignment.

Thurs., Oct. 20 **Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*; Identity & Difference within Religion**

Assignments for this week's individual online work (no class meeting):

Read *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts IV-V, using the Reading Guide.

POST on one of the assigned Discussion Board topics and reply to two other postings. Details on the Discussion Board site for this date.

Thurs., Oct. 27 **Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*; Identity & Difference within Religion**

Assignments for today's class:

Read the selections from James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (posted on Blackboard).

Thurs., Nov. 3 **The Rise of Science, Part I: Macrocosm: Copernicus and Galileo**

Assignments for today's class:

Cohen, pp. 3-126. Study questions posted on Bb.

*Shakespeare essay due in electronic form.

Science essay assigned.

Thurs., Nov. 10 **The Rise of Science, Part II: Microcosm: Newton and The Invisible Universe**

Assignments for this week's individual online work (no class meeting):

Cohen, pp. 127-184; Hooke. Study questions posted on Bb.

POST on one of the assigned Discussion Board topics and reply to two other postings. Details on the Discussion Board site for this date.

Thurs., Nov. 17 **Virtual Museum Visit and Report**

Assignments for this week's individual online work (no class meeting):

Virtual museum visit includes Science, Reformation, Shakespearean interests.

Specific assignment posted on Blackboard.

*Science essay due in electronic form.

Thurs., Dec. 1 **Last Class**

Assignments for today's class:

*Virtual Museum Visit report due in electronic form.

*Oral Presentation due on Shakespeare and on Science/Religion Unit:

See full assignment on Blackboard in the Assignments folder for this date.

Mon., May 6 7:00 pm *CUMULATIVE RESPONSE (BLACKBOARD SUBMISSION) DUE

Assignment TBA on Blackboard.

Required Texts

Cohen, I. Bernard. *The Birth of a New Physics*. Rev. ed. Norton, 1991. ISBN-10: 0393300455. Paper.

Hooke, Robert. *Micrographia*. BiblioBazaar, 2008. ISBN-10: 1426486766. Paper.

Janz, Denis, and Jordon, Shirley, eds. *A Reformation Reader*. Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2002.

ISBN-10: 0800663101 or ISBN-13: 9780800663100

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Revised Edition. Ed. Roma Gill. Oxford School Shakespeare Series. USA: Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN-10: 0198320493

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Ed. Roma Gill. Oxford School Shakespeare Series. USA: Oxford University Press, 2006. ISBN-10: 019832152X

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.

Turnitin.com

Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

Georgetown Honor System

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at <http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code>, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course may be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Plagiarism

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail. If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student will receive a grade of F for the course.

Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances

The following is university policy:

Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.