

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
BLHS 107-01
Early Modern World
Wednesdays, 6:30 pm - 10:05 pm
Downtown campus, 640 Massachusetts Avenue NW



Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Geographica ac Hydrographica Tabula, map by Janssonius & Hondius, 1633

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Office Hours: by appointment

I. Course Objectives

Between 1453 and 1650, events and developments on either side of the Atlantic Ocean [and beyond] laid the foundations of the modern era. Europeans used the legacy of the late medieval and early renaissance periods to explore and expand their knowledge of the world, and applied the principles of science to deepen their understanding of the natural world and of the universe. Humanist thinkers located human dignity in man's freedom, and saw man as an autonomous moral agent who has the intelligence, will, and power to choose the path of progress toward perfection. What constituted perfection remained, predictably, up for vigorous debate and led to strife. Within Christianity, the Protestant-, Counter-, and Catholic Reformations resulted in a completely new religious landscape, and the Catholic Church's loss of its monopoly position in European societies had vast repercussions on the political situation as well. At the same time, the expansionist Ottoman empire reached its zenith, bringing Islam to the frontiers of Western Europe. Maritime trade connected Europe not only with the Americas, but also with well-established societies in Asia. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the economic-, religious-, political-, and cultural landscape of the world had undergone enough dramatic changes that we can apply the term 'early modern globalization' to this era.

Emphasis will be placed on writing skills, critical reading, and thoughtful analysis. Course assignments are designed to develop historical-, art historical-, and literary critical thinking. Students will be assessed on a combination of in-class discussion participation, weekly comments posted on the Discussion Board, two short reaction papers, and one term paper in lieu of a final exam. All student work should reflect a solid and contextualized understanding of assigned texts and thematic material.

II. Learning goals

After this class, students should be able to

1. Understand and comprehend the basic historical chronology and historical analysis of the period covered.
2. Explain historical cause and effect as it relates to the issues of the Reformation era, especially the importance of conflicting ideology.
3. Relate the historical trends of the early modern period to the modern era.
4. Comprehend the differences in historical interpretation in major schools of historical thought
5. Understand the global legacy of the Age of Exploration, Scientific Revolution, and the three Christian Reformations.
6. Link religious, political and social developments to the parallel developments in the arts, literature and philosophy.
7. Analyze and contextualize primary source readings.
8. Develop and defend their arguments using textual and factual evidence.
9. Develop an arguable thesis and thoughtful written analysis, using clear & concise language.

III. Format

This **reading-and writing heavy class** will meet once a week on Wednesday evening from 6.30 – 10.05 PM for a lecture and in-depth discussion. In addition to in-class sessions, the students are expected to read and analyze a range of primary and secondary sources. The quality of the weekly discussions relies on everyone having a solid grasp of the reading assignments. One or two lectures might be offered online via Echo360 or Zoom, TBD.

IV. BOOK LIST – additional readings in PDF format –films

A] To be purchased (*used is fine*) – get books in the GU bookstore or order online

- **Textbook:** Eugene F. Rice and Anthony Grafton. *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*. 2nd ed. Norton, NYC, 1994. ISBN 978-0393963045
- Elizabeth Eisenstein. *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press, 2012. Print version: ISBN 9781107632752
available as e-book: <http://ebooks.cambridge.org/ebook.jsf?bid=CBO9781139197038>
- Bernal Diaz. *The Conquest of New Spain* (1568), p. 189-277
Penguin Classics, 1963, ISBN 978-0140441239
- Hans Hillerbrand, ed. *The Protestant Reformation*
Harper Collins, rev. ed. 2009, ISBN 9780061148477.
- Galileo Galilei. *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*. Translated and edited by Stillman Drake.
24th ed. Anchor, 1957. ISBN 978-0385092395.
- Olaudah Equiano . *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*. Edited & introduction by Vincent Carretta. Revised ed. Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN 978-0142437162

- William Shakespeare:
 - o **The Merchant of Venice** (1594-1596) – a comedy
 - Signet Classics, 2nd revised ed., ISBN 978-0451526809
 - o **Macbeth** (1605-1606) – a tragedy
 - Signet Classics, 2nd revised ed., ISBN 978-0451526779

B] PDFs – accessible in Blackboard: Course Documents

- Huston Smith, *The World's Religions*, chapter VI: *Islam*, p. 221-270 (pdf)
- Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks*, chapter 3: *The Classical Age*, p. 67-100 (pdf)
- Jonathan Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World Maritime Empires (1540-1740)*. Leiden, 2002: *Introduction*, p. 1-39 (pdf)
- Robert Tignor et al. *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart*. (Trade in Asia), p. 110-124 and 136-149 (pdf)

C] Videos of the two Shakespeare plays:

- **The Merchant of Venice**, UK Film Council, with Jeremy Irons and Al Pacino, 2004
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bZWZEwY21Q>

Macbeth, Royal Shakespeare Company, BBC TV 1983

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0LrdOa7uZQ>

V. Requirements and Grading

A] Weekly Readings & Blackboard comments, Class Discussions, Participation - 25% of semester grade

Your **active participation in the weekly discussion of a primary source document or scholarly article is mandatory**. Students will be required to post between 2-3 comments that analyze the assigned reading onto Blackboard by the evening preceding class. Students must read the comments posted by the other students before the start of class, and must be ready to actively discuss the assigned text as well as the posted reactions during the weekly classes. The value of your educational experience ultimately rests on your commitment to prepare for class and to engage in a lively intellectual exchange.

Written Assignments

B] TWO REACTION PAPERS (4-5 pages), due by the start of class **Week 7 and Week 10**, will **each be worth 20% of your semester grade**. The papers will consist of your analytical reactions to one of the assigned primary source readings. NB: These reaction papers are NOT book reviews but **analytical pieces that display the student's intellectual interaction with the material**.

C] Final Exam = TERM PAPER - 35% of semester grade

Instead of a final exam, a **Term Paper of 12-15 pages of text** (double spaced, max. font size 12) in length will be **due via email attachment no later than 9.00 PM on the official final exam day for the course**. The term paper shall place your coherent analysis of **at least two of the primary sources** read for class within their historical context, as buttressed by the various secondary sources. Students will select their own topics following individual consultations with Professor Rahusen.

All papers will follow either the MLA or 'Chicago Manual of Style' format, and require **footnotes & bibliography** [that do not count towards the required length of the paper]. All papers should be typed and original in conception, containing a clearly argued thesis. They should present **your** analysis of a given issue based on evidence from the text, and should provide evidence of a solid understanding of the topic.

Please note: Failure to complete ANY of these assignments will result in failure of the course.

Late Work and Incompletes

You are responsible for submitting all work on time. Each **reaction paper** will be penalized by a 10 point [out of 100] reduction for each day it is late, i.e. 2% of your semester grade per day. The **Term Paper** will be penalized by a 6 point [out of 100] reduction per day past the due date, i.e. 2.1% of your semester grade per day. **Bottom line: Please submit all work by due date or earlier.**

Incompletes are granted by the professor only in the most extreme situations (medical or family emergencies), and **only when approved by the Dean**. In consultation with the professor, it is your responsibility to submit the appropriate paper work –including a mutually agreed upon final date for submission of any assignment still outstanding- and **obtain the Dean’s approval** for an incomplete. Work-related deadlines / problems do not merit the granting of an incomplete.

Attendance & Tardiness

Attendance and participation is mandatory. One unexcused absence will result in a corresponding reduction of 5% of your semester grade. Two unexcused absences will result in $2 \times 5\% = 10\%$ reduction of your semester grade, significantly increasing your chances of failing the course. **In accordance with BALS program policy, 3 absences for any reason may result in a failing grade for the course**

Excessive Tardiness (defined as more than 20 minutes) will be counted as an absence.

Repeated Tardiness (defined as being tardy between 5-20 minutes) for more than 2 classes will count as an absence.

Please note that WORK OBLIGATIONS are NOT EXCUSED.

Grades will be calculated according to the scale below:

93 and above =	A
90-92=	A-
87-89=	B+
83-86=	B
80-82=	B-
77-79=	C+
73-76=	C
70-72=	C-
67-69=	D+
60-66=	D
59 and below=	F

Georgetown Honor Code:

Honor Pledge:

In the pursuit of 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.

All students are expected to follow Georgetown’s honor code unconditionally. **Do not plagiarize:** Properly **cite the work and intellectual property of others**. Should you have questions, please refer to the honor code material available at www.georgetown.edu/honor or talk to one of the professors. All or some papers written for this course will be submitted to turnitin.com in order to verify that students have handed in original work. Any case of plagiarism upheld by the Honor Council **WILL** result in a failure for the assignment and/or for the course as decided by the professor.

Statement of Disability

If you have a disability, you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies. Website: <http://www2.georgetown.edu/studentaffairs/arc/disability/>

VI. Lecture schedule and Discussion topics

- Week One – Jan 18** **Introduction - the World circa 1450**
Language and History
-reading: textbook, p. 45-76
- Week Two – Jan 25** **Science & Technology; the Printing Revolution**
-reading: - textbook, p. 1-18
-reading: - Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, p. 3-91
- Week Three – Feb 1** **Europe and the Ottoman Empire**
- reading: Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks*, chapter 3: The Classical Age, p. 67-100 (pdf)
- reading: Huston Smith, *The World's Religions*, chapter VI: Islam, p. 221-270 (pdf)
- Week Four – Feb 8** **Exploration & Conquest**
- reading: textbook: p. 26-44
- reading: Bernal Diaz. *The Conquest of New Spain*, Penguin Classics, 1963, ISBN-10: 0140441239 / ISBN-13: 978-0140441239. p. **189-277**
- Week Five – Feb 15** **Columbian Exchange**
-online lecture & discussion via Echo360
-reading: Alfred W. Crosby. "The Columbian Exchange: Plants, Animals, and Disease between the Old and New Worlds", essay, 2012.
<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntecoindian/essays/columbian.htm>

- reading: Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian. "The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease, Food, and Ideas", in *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Spring 2010), pp. 163-188
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.georgetown.edu/stable/25703506>
- Week Six – Feb 22** **Slave Trade and Slavery**
- in-class viewing of portions of Solomon Northup's *12 Years a Slave* (1853), movie 2013
-reading: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, chapters 2, 3, 5 - 8, and 11.
- Week Seven – Mar 1** **Protestant & Catholic Reformations**
- reading: textbook: p. 146-199
- reading: Hillerbrand, ed. *The Protestant Reformation*, p. 3-59; 73-98; 137-149
 o optional further reading: Elizabeth Eisenstein, *Printing Revolution*, p. 148-186
- **FIRST REACTION PAPER DUE IN CLASS**

SPRING BREAK – March 4 – 12

Week Eight – Mar 15 Scientific Revolution

- reading: textbook: p. 18-26
- reading: Galileo Galilei. *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*:
 - *The Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina*
- optional further reading: Elizabeth Eisenstein, *Printing Revolution*, p. 187-254

Week Nine – Mar 22 Formation of Early Modern States & Concept of Dynastic Power

- reading: textbook: p. 110-145 plus p. 200-202
 - reading: Hillerbrand, p. 255-274 “*A Defence of Liberty Against Tyrants* (1579), by Philip Mornay
- Term paper PROPOSAL [1 paragraph] due via email by class time**

Week Ten – Mar 29 Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and Stuart England

- reading: **William Shakespeare (1564-1616), *Macbeth***
- *Overview and Introduction* (p. vii-lxxiv)
 - **view the BBC TV film** (1983) on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0LrdOa7uZQ>

Week Eleven – Apr 5 Early modern globalization

- **SECOND REACTION PAPER DUE IN CLASS**
- **individual consultations about your term paper proposal – to be scheduled before and after abbreviated class session**

Week Twelve – Apr 12 Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*; the Jewish Diaspora

- reading: Jonathan Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora, Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World Maritime Empires (1540-1740)*. Brill, Leiden, 2002: *Introduction*, p. 1-39 (pdf)
- reading: **William Shakespeare (1564-1616), *The Merchant of Venice*** (1594-1596):
Introduction (p.lxii-lxxxii)
- **view the film** (2004, with Al Pacino and Jeremy Irons) on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bZWZEwY21Q>

Week Thirteen – Apr 19 China, Japan, and the Mughal empire in the 17th century

- reading: Robert Tignor et al. *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart: Trade in Asia* - p. 110-124 and 136-149 (pdf)

Week Fourteen – Apr 26 Art & Architecture of the Early Modern World

- illustrated lecture
- no readings; use the prep time to work on your term paper instead
- additional term paper consultations, after class upon request and by appointment

Exam Week May 8 - 13

TERM PAPER due on the official day of our class’ final exam (TBD) by 9.00 PM VIA EMAIL