

BLHS 107: The Early Modern World

Religion, Science, and Shakespeare

Professor

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Schedule

Hybrid format. Class sessions include traditional classroom meetings, and individual and group online work. Online work is done on the course Canvas site, where details of all course assignments are also given.

Classroom: Tuesdays, 5:20 pm-8:55 pm, on January 16, 23; February 6, 13; March 13, 20; April 3, 10, 24.

Individual Online Work; No Class Meeting: January 30, February 20, February 27, March 27, April 17, May 8.

Course Content

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 and Outcomes

After completing this course a student should be able to:

1. Define, understand, and critique the “Early Modern” era.
2. Analyze the development of religion and science the Early Modern period, including major theological controversies, the effect of religion on society, the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, as well as the Early Modern view of the cosmos and its impact on the Early Modern era.
3. Explore concepts of “the human” and “the divine” as well as “identity” and “difference” in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*.
4. Develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

Assessment of student learning will be achieved through consideration of a number of components, as follows:

- *Classroom Participation:* Students must read the course material carefully, take notes, and participate fully in class discussion. I encourage questions as well as critical analyses.
- *Attendance:* See full discussion below.
- *Discussion Board Postings:* For the first four sessions that are labeled “Individual online work,” students must post critical analyses (500 words minimum) based of a selection of topics, as well as replies to two postings by other class members (200 words minimum). The suggested minimum length for these postings is 500 words for the analysis and 200 words for each reply. Less substantive postings may be graded down. Details for each posting are on Canvas.
- *Essays:* Three essays requiring critical analysis are assigned. Topics are found on Canvas, along with essay criteria. Students must use MLA citation style for all sources. Essays not meeting the stated criteria will be returned before being graded.
- *Group Work:* The class will be divided into groups, which will give presentations during the last class meeting of the semester. Topics and criteria will be posted on Canvas.

Evaluation

First class exercise, 5%; Attendance and participation, 10%; Discussion Board, 20%; Essays, 15% each; virtual Museum Report 10%; Group presentation, 5%; final posting, 5%.

Grade Computation

All work except essays will be graded using letter grades. The letter course grade will be determined by entering all grades into Canvas and calculating a weighted average percentage. That percentage will then be converted back to a letter course grade according to the following ranges:

A = 100.0 to 92.5	B+ = 89.999 to 87.5	C+ = 79.999 to 77.5	D+ = 69.999 to 67.5
A- = 92.499 to 90.0	B = 87.499 to 82.5	C = 77.499 to 72.5	D = 67.499 to 60.0
	B- = 82.499 to 80.0	C- = 72.499 to 70.0	F = 59.999 to 0.0

Course Requirements

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to **attend all class meetings and to participate in all assigned activities**. In keeping with BALS policy, missing more than 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 ½ of an absence. Students missing a Discussion Board assignment deadline will receive an absence for that week's class. **Excused absences are given only if student and instructor discuss the circumstances in advance.**
- **Late Work:**
 - Discussion Board Postings will receive the grade of "zero" if they are posted after the due date.
 - Essays are submitted by posting to the Canvas site. They must be posted before 5:25 p.m. on the assigned due date. A late essay arriving after 5:30 p.m. is lowered one full grade. An essay received 48 hours late is lowered two full grades. Essays received one week or more late receive an "F." Essays not submitted receive a zero.
 - **Essays and Postings will be excused only if student and instructor discuss the circumstances in advance of the deadline.**
- **Incomplete Semester 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 extension date will result in a change of the semester grade to "F."
- **All work must be done to pass the course.**

Required Textbooks

Cohen, I. Bernard. *The Birth of a New Physics*. Rev. ed. Norton, 1991. ISBN: 9780393300451. Paper.

Hooke, Robert. *Micrographia*. BiblioBazaar, 2008. ISBN: 9781426486760. Paper.

Janz, Denis, and Jordon, Shirley, eds. *A Reformation Reader*. Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2002. ISBN: 9780800663100. Paper.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Rev. ed. Ed. Barbara Mowat. Folger Shakespeare Library. Simon and Schuster, 1992. ISBN: 9780743477123. Paper.

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Ed. Barbara Mowat. Folger Shakespeare Library. Simon and Schuster, 2009. ISBN: 9780743477567. Paper.

Weekly Course Schedule

NOTE: Use the study questions on Canvas as guides for all reading assignments.

January 16 **Introduction to the Early Modern World**
Early Modern Quiz assigned.

January 23 **The Reformation, Part I: New Perspectives on Theology, Politics, Economics**
Janz, Chapter 2 [Luther], introduction and pages 88-146; pages 56-59, 63-74.

- Janz, Chapter 5 [Calvin], introduction and pages 270-328.
Reformation essay assigned. Early Modern Quiz due.
- January 30 **The Reformation, Part II: Reformation in England; Christianity and Judaism**
Individual online work (no class meeting):
Jantz, Chapter 6 [English Reformation]: pages 329-376; page 436.
POST on the Discussion Board topics and reply to two other postings. Details on Canvas.
- February 6 **Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, the Human & the Divine**
Read Acts I-III of *Hamlet* and the Introductory sections of your text.
Reformation essay due.
- Feb. 13 **Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, the Human & the Divine**
Finish reading *Hamlet*, Acts IV and V.
- Feb. 20 **Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, the Human & the Divine**
Individual online work (no class meeting):
Review *Hamlet*; watch video of play.
POST on the Discussion Board topics and reply to two other postings. Details on Canvas.
- Feb. 27 **The Rise of Science, Part I: Macrocosm: Copernicus and Galileo**
Individual online work (no class meeting):
Cohen, pp. 3-80. POST on the Discussion Board topics and reply to two other postings. Details on Canvas. Science essay assigned.
- March 13 **The Rise of Science, Part II: Microcosm: Newton and The Invisible Universe**
Cohen, pp. 81-184; Hooke.
- March 20 **Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*; Identity & Difference within Religion**
Read *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts I-III.
Science essay due. Shakespeare essay assigned.
- March 27 **Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*; Identity & Difference within Religion**
Individual online work (no class meeting):
Read *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts IV-V. POST on the Discussion Board topics and reply to two other postings.
- April 3 **Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*; Identity & Difference within Religion**
Read the selections from James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (posted on Canvas). View video of *Merchant of Venice* film.
- April 10 **Religion, Science, and the Arts in the Early Modern World**
Study assignments as posted on Canvas. Shakespeare essay due.
- April 17 **Virtual Museum Visit and Report**
Individual online work (no class meeting):
Virtual museum visit includes Science, Reformation, Shakespeare topics. Specifics on Canvas.
- April 24 **Last Class**
Group oral presentations on Shakespeare and on Science/Religion. Full details on Canvas.
Virtual Museum Visit report due.
- May 8 **FINAL POSTING (CANVAS SUBMISSION) DUE by 7:00 p.m.**
Assignment details will be posted on Canvas.

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. Accommodations will not be applied retroactively.

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 will all 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.