

Purdue University, Department of History
HISTORY 104

INTRODUCTION TO THE MODERN WORLD

PLACE AND TIME

Dates: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 12th January – 8th May 2026

Location: ET 302

Office Hours: Online, by request

Zoom room: <https://purdue-edu.zoom.us/j/6898881530>

COURSE GOALS

1. To convey information about the politics and society of the multiple countries of Europe, to instil an appreciation of other cultures, and to create an understanding of historical methods.
2. To analyse the dynamics of the relationship between minor and major centres of power in Europe, and the interventions of external powers in the region's history.
3. To improve students' academic writing ability.

Previous study of European history, cultures or languages is not required for this course.

Please notify me if you have a learning disability or have physical limitations that require accommodation. We will work together to develop a plan that suits your needs.

REQUIRED TEXTS

[Merriman, John M. *A History of Modern Europe: from the Renaissance to the Present*. \(Fourth Edition, New York :W.W. Norton, 2010\)](#)

You do not need to buy any texts for this class. Readings will be provided in PDF form and will be accessible to all students via an online platform.

CONTACT

I can be reached at swijeyer@purdue.edu. Please note that if I receive messages after 1800 I may not be able to reply until after 0900 the next day. Notification of absence or requests for extensions should be communicated **as soon as possible**; messaging immediately before the deadline is generally unacceptable except under extenuating circumstances. You may also email if you have questions or concerns, but I may not be able to respond to all emails. If it is important, please speak with me in person.

Emails exchanged between us will be professional communications and should therefore be composed politely and properly. You should address me as Dr. Wijeyeratne at all times. Please do not message me as if composing a text to a friend. Explanations should be clear and concise. You will be expected to be polite and respectful of others in class.

Lastly, there are a lot of confusing and sophisticated terms, which can be particularly challenging for folks who are not specialists in the humanities. Please don't be shy about messaging me with questions!

CLASSWORK

You will be marked out of a total of 100 points for work in this course, which will be adjusted to a percentage for grading.

Grading for this class will be as follows:

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| A+ (99%-100%) | B- (80%-83%). | D+ (68%-69%) |
| A (94%-98%) | C+ (78%-79%) | D (64%-67%) |
| A- (90%-93%). | C (74%-77%) | D- (60%-63%). |
| B+ (88%-89%) | C- (70%-73%). | Below 60% is failing. |
| B (84%-87%) | | |

COURSEWORK

- **Textbook readings**
 - The purpose of the textbook readings is to provide you with an overview of the major changes in the period identified. You need not know every date and name from them, but you must have a sense of:
 - The major changes that occurred in each period
 - The definitions of major concepts
 - Enough detail to be able to explain to someone precisely *what* changed and *why*.
 - If you are stuck regarding what trends, etc., to keep an eye on, use the weekly questions as a guide.
- **In-class readings**
 - The purpose of these is to focus on one particular area of the period identified. For example, within the broader issue of European colonialism, the secondary reading will focus on the economic impact of British imperialism in India.
 - Read these documents with a view to getting a sense of:
 - What the big trends identified in the textbook look like at a more regional level
 - What debates are happening about this particular period and its changes *within* the historical community
- **Sectional Videos [3 x 20%]**
 - After every section, you must submit a short video of between **3 and 4 minutes**.
 - Videos outside of this time limit will be penalised 5% for every extra/lacking minute.
 - Please select **ONE** of the Video Questions listed at the end of every section to answer. Your video should answer the question you have chosen.
 - You **MUST** use the textbooks and primary sources provided for that week.
 - Please title the videos as follows: SURNAME, FIRST NAME, Section X - e.g., SMITH, JOHN, Section I.
- **Final essay [2 x 20%]**
 - For your final essay, **please discuss and confirm your topic with me before beginning**.
 - Half of the grade will be given for a rigorous **plan and thesis**.
 - The other half will be for your **completed essay**.

- Your final essay must be between **1350 and 1650 words long**.
 - Submissions outside of this time limit will be penalised 5% for every extra/lacking 100 words.
- You **MUST** use at least **four** primary sources in your essay. The sources can be from any section.
- **Make sure you read the formatting guidance for essays provided below.** Essays that are not formatted, footnoted, or properly grammatical will be penalised at the instructors' discretion.

Make sure you read the guidance linked [here](#) for essays.
Essays that are not formatted, footnoted, or properly grammatical will be penalised at the instructors' discretion.

- Students unable to complete an assignment by the due date should consult their instructor as early as possible to discuss an extension.
- Extensions are not normally granted for reasons of work due in other courses or extra-curricular activities, but may be granted for reasons of illness or a death in the family. Any extension granted must be confirmed by email from the instructor. In no case will an extension of more than one week be granted. Students submitting written assignments late without an extension are penalised at the rate of one grade per day of lateness.

PARTICIPATION AND IN-CLASS BEHAVIOUR

I will try my level best not to make this class boring, but in return I expect you to pay attention and engage with the subject matter.

- Students who sleep, are consistently tardy, do not read the materials, and/or are otherwise not paying attention in class will see their behaviour impacting this mark.
- Please familiarise yourself with the university's policies on:
 - [Academic honesty](http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html) (www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html)
 - [Use of copyrighted materials](http://www.purdue.edu/policies/academic-research-affairs/ia3.html) (www.purdue.edu/policies/academic-research-affairs/ia3.html)
 - [Attendance and other regulations](http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/regulations_procedures/classes.html) (www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/regulations_procedures/classes.html)
- Please turn off all cell phones and pagers. E-mailing or web-surfing via your laptop is also not appropriate. Such distractions will affect your participation grade.
- Depending on the location, you may be allowed to eat or drink in the classroom, but please do not distract other students; if you do, your participation will be affected.
- All work, including readings and web postings, missed due to absence must be made up before the next scheduled class meeting.
- **Attendance is not optional**, but with prior notice you may miss one class without incurring any penalty. Except in the case of genuine and documented emergencies, such absences must be confirmed with me via email before class begins.
- **Students with more than 3 unexcused absences will receive a -5% penalty to their score.**

Lectures and classroom discussions may not be recorded in any medium other than notes.

COURSE PLAN

*Items in **red** designate items that must be prepared before you come to class; failure to do so will affect your participation score.*

*Items in **bold red** are graded items that must be finished by the date indicated in order to receive points.*

ALL READINGS FOR THE COURSE CAN BE FOUND HERE
PLEASE DO ALL OF YOUR WRITTEN WORK IN THIS FOLDER

Week 1: Basic Historical Theory (Mon 12/01, Wed 14/01, Fri 16/01)

- Introduction
 - [TL;DR](#)
 - [Slides on key historical concepts](#)
 - [Essay guidelines](#)
- Secondary reading/watching
 - [Birkbeck Explains: What is Global History?](#)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3upKyJsaRI>)
 - [The School of Life: History of Ideas - Modernity](#)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIdflecVQG8>)

Week 2: There Were No Dark Ages (Mon 19/01, Wed 21/01, Fri 23/01)

- **Lecture:** Seriously, there were no Dark Ages
- **Textbook reading:** ch.1-2
- **In-class sources:**
 - 1B Mazlish
 - 1B Sachsenmeier
 - 2A Mappa Mundi
 - 2A Map Explainer

Week 3: The Reformations (Mon 26/01, Wed 28/01, Fri 30/01)

- **Lecture:** The Reformations
- **Textbook reading:** ch.3
- **In-class sources:**
 - Gregory
- **First video due**

Week 4: Wars of Religion and State Formation (Mon 02/02, Wed 04/02, Fri 06/02)

- **Lecture:** The Rise of the Nation-State
- **Textbook reading:** ch.4-5
- **In-class sources:**
 - 2A Columbus A
 - 2A Columbus B
 - 3A Leonardo

Week 5: Stuart England and the Dutch Republic (Mon 09/02, Wed 11/02, Fri 13/02)

- **Lecture:** The Protestant Golden Age
- **Textbook reading:** ch.7
- **In-class sources:**

- 2B English Bill of Rights
- 4A Salon Life

Week 6: Absolutism, Prussia, and Russia (Mon 16/02, Wed 18/02, Fri 20/02)

- **Lecture:** Monarchy and Centralisation
- **Textbook reading:** ch.8-9
- **In-class sources:**
 - 4A Green
 - 4B Ukhtomskii
- **Second video due**

Week 7: The Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment (Mon 23/02, Wed 25/02, Fri 27/02)

- **Lecture:** What is an Enlightenment?
- **Textbook reading:** ch.10-11
- **In-class sources:**
 - 4A Wesley
 - 5A Fichte

Week 8: The French Revolution and its Wars (Mon 02/03, Wed 04/03, Fri 06/03)

- **Lecture:** Why Revolutions Matter
- **Textbook reading:** ch.12
- **In-class sources:**
 - 5A Edgerton
 - 5A Wallis
 - 5A Lippman

Week 9: The Industrial Revolution (Mon 09/03, Wed 11/03, Fri 13/03)

- **Lecture:** The Roots and Meaning of Industry
- **Textbook reading:** ch.13-14
- **In-class sources:**
 - 3B Black Code
- **Third video due**

Week 10: HALF TERM BREAK (Mon 16/03, Wed 18/03, Fri 20/03)

Week 11: Restorations and Rebellions (Mon 23/03, Wed 25/03, Fri 27/03)

- **Lecture:** Europe's Liberal Revolutions
- **Textbook reading:** ch.15-16
- **In-class sources:**
 - 7A Miners
 - 7A IMF World Economy
 - 7A Wallerstein

Week 12: Nationalism (Mon 30/03, Wed 01/04, Fri 03/04)

- **Lecture:** Anti-Imperialism and Nationalism
- **Textbook reading:** ch.17
- **In-class sources:**
 - 4B Byron

Week 13: Victorian Britain, Tsarist Russia, and the Third Republic (Mon 06/04, Wed 08/04, Fri 10/04)

- **Lecture:** Royal Politics
- **Final essay thesis and plan**

Week 14: NO CLASSES (Mon 13/04, Wed 15/04, Fri 17/04)

Week 15: The Second Industrial Revolution (Mon 20/04, Wed 22/04, Fri 24/04)

- **Lecture:** The Second Industrial Revolution
- **Textbook reading:** ch.18-19
- **In-class sources:**
 - Shlapentokh
 - 6B The Atlantic, Soviet Collapse
 - 6A Anglo-American Mutual Aid Agreement
 - 6A Rambaud

Week 16: Picnic with dogs

- **Final essay due 8th May**