

History 104: Introduction to the Modern World

Spring 2026

SCHM 113

T/TR 9-10:15am

Instructor: Keri Blair

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Office Hours: By Appointment Only

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course traces the historical development of the West from the era of the Renaissance to the present. You will learn about the changing understanding of the West as a result of its expansion into the Americas, Africa, and Asia; its political and industrial revolutions, and its hot and cold wars of the twentieth century. We will also study everyday life, ideas, art, and religious views of different eras.

In addition to providing an overview of the Western past, this course also aims to teach you to be your own historian. History isn't just a list of names and dates, but, at its basic level, is the memory of things said and done. Every day we, whether we are professional historians or not, are engaged in remembering things that have happened and trying to make sense of them. Being a good historian means analyzing past people and events honestly and fairly. This course will teach you how to engage in historical thinking through a close, critical reading, evaluation, and analysis of evidence. I also hope to demonstrate that studying the past can be both fun and useful for understanding the world around you!

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Hunt, Martin, Rosenwein, and Smith, *The Making of the West*, Volume II Since 1500, 7th Edition. Bedford/ St. Martin's/Macmillan, 2024 **with ACHIEVE**. Information for renting or purchasing this textbook is available on Brightspace.

Elin Rubin and Annemarie Sammartino, *Stepping into the Past*, (Oxford 2024). Information for renting or purchasing this textbook is available on Brightspace.

Other Readings and Videos will be posted to Brightspace as PDFs (free)

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS

Attend Class and Be Prepared. The best way to succeed in this class is to attend class; complete the required readings (before the assigned class); come ready to engage and discuss them. This doesn't mean you'll agree with or fully understand everything you've read – but, rather, that you've made a good-faith effort to grapple with the ideas and developments we'll examine over the course of the semester. You'll not only learn more; you may even enjoy it more.

Participate. This is not a class where I do all the talking. This class will include some lectures, but also discussions and activities that require your active engagement.

Ask Questions. If something is unclear or confusing, please ask.

Do **NOT** use Chat GPT or another AI/Large Language Model application in place of reading for yourself and producing your own written work. Why?

- This course emphasizes process as much as outcome. Learning to read and assess sources on your own is part of that process.
- This course is designed around human interaction: between humans of the past with each other, between you and the humans of the past, and between you and your fellow students. Artificial Intelligence still knows less about being human than any of us.
- This course has a manageable workload without AI resources.
- AI models still hallucinate and make up information. When you use it without a critical lens, you can get caught in some, often hilarious, errors.
- Finally, if you get caught using such items (see Academic Honesty Policy), you'll, at a minimum, be asked to do a longer form of the original assignment. You save yourself work by doing it the first time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements will be posted in Brightspace. Time-sensitive announcements will also be emailed. Check both regularly and always before class. If I need to cancel or modify class, I will post an announcement and email you.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION POLICY

This course follows Purdue's academic regulations regarding attendance, which states that students are expected to be present for every meeting of the classes in which they are enrolled. Strong evidence suggests that regular class attendance improves your learning, academic performance, and social and emotional well-being.

At times, missing class is unavoidable – illness, university-sponsored activities, religious observances, grief/bereavement, military service, jury duty, parental leave, or job interviews. You are allowed **3 absences** without penalty. Your overall grade will decrease for each absence after 3. Per Purdue policy, “ultimately students are responsible for all required coursework and bear responsibility for any academic consequences that may result due to absence.”

Attendance will be taken for each class. It is the student's responsibility to register their attendance.

If you are going to be absent for an extended period or otherwise unable to complete coursework due to significant illness, military service, or bereavement leave, in addition to letting me know, please also contact the Office of the Dean of Students. They can be reached at phone number (765) 494-1747 and by email at odos@purdue.edu. They can ensure that your professors receive an attendance memo from the Dean of Students, for instance. Do not hesitate to reach out: they are there to help you.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, hiring another to do your work, copying, etc.) is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in this course. Incidents of academic misconduct will be addressed by the course instructor and referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) for review at the university level. Any violation of course policies as it relates to academic integrity will result minimally in a failing or zero grade for that assignment, and at the instructor's discretion may result in a failing grade for the course. In addition, all incidents of academic misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR), where university penalties, including removal from the university, may be considered.

Cheating includes (but is not limited to): turning in someone else's work as your own, having someone complete assignments or quizzes for you, having someone sign the attendance sheet for you, and sharing quiz questions with other students (in person, on a chat room, or posted to an internet site).

AI/LLM Policy: For the purposes of this class, submitting AI/LLM generated writing or research as your own is academic dishonesty and carries the same penalties as plagiarism. If any portion of your assignment was generated by a chatbot/AI/LLM application without expressed permission from the instructor, you are in violation of the academic integrity expectations of this course and the university. It may result in a rewrite of the assignment, or in the requirement of a longer assignment. It may result in the failure of the assignment. Serious cases may result in failure of the course. Cases will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) for further review of your status at this university.

The purpose of this policy is not to be punitive or to be anti-AI, but to make clear that in this class, **your own** reading, interpretation, analysis, and writing are more valuable than AI. You are serving as *your own historian*, a task that AI cannot replace. If I want to know what Chat GPT or other LLM thinks, I can feed it prompts and read its response. In this class, I am interested in YOUR responses and the maturing of your knowledge, ethics, values, and wisdom.

If you have concerns or questions about the AI/LLM policy, please come speak with me. This technology is still emerging. We all are figuring out its positive and negative implications for learning.

This policy may be updated in response to the rapid evolution of AI.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Please be on time. If you must come in late, please be unobtrusive.

Use electronic devices *only* for class purposes. Examples: watching YouTube or sports highlights; texting, engaging in social media, or doing other homework during class. It is rude to me and distracting to your classmates. Fair warning: I reserve the right to call you out when you do it. For those who persist, I reserve the right to count you as absent on days you are not paying attention and deduct attendance/participation points.

Remove earbuds/headphones during class.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Achieve Learning Curve Quizzes over Textbook Readings (15% of final grade)

- Learning Curves are intended to help you discern both main ideas and specific details as covered in your textbook. You will read a chapter in the textbook (Hunt, *The Making of the West*) and then will complete the Learning Curve quiz for that chapter.
- Learning Curves are graded on *completion*. To earn complete points for a Learning Curve quiz, you must hit the specificized target score (earned by correct response) for the Learning Curve quiz for that chapter. There is no partial credit. If you do not meet this threshold, you will not earn credit for that Learning Curve quiz.
- There is a link in each Brightspace module for that week's quiz. The link will take you to MacMillan's website. You will need to have purchased Achieve to access Achieve. Instructions are provided on Brightspace
- Learning Curves must be completed by Thursdays at Noon.
- You also have an Intro Quiz (Week 1- Brightspace) over the policies and assignments for this course. It will count in the Learning Curve quiz category, even though it is a quiz within Brightspace.
- There are 14 quizzes in the Learning Curve category throughout the semester (including the Intro Quiz). Week 16 contains an optional credit (Chapter 28 Learning Curve in Week 16) that can be used to drop a previous quiz or for extra credit in this category.

Activities/Discussion (15% of final grade)

Seven weeks out of the semester, one of our class sessions will be an activity or discussion rather than a lecture format. These are marked as Activity or Discussion on the course schedule. For these sessions

- Read the assigned readings and bring the readings with you to class.
- Be prepared to engage.

- Being prepared to discuss and having the discussion material are counted as part of your participation score.
- You will need an electronic device to access the readings and contribute to your group.
- Unannounced reading checks may occur
- Assignments must be completed in class
- **One Activity/Discussion grade will be dropped**

Unannounced Short In-Class Assignments (5% of final grade)

These will include reading checks, informal writing prompts on in-class topics, multiple choice questions, etc. Their primary purpose is to keep you engaged in the topic of that class.

Exams (65% of final grade)

Exam 1: February 12th (10%)

Exam 2: March 12th (15%)

Exam 3: April 16th (20%)

Final Exam: Take-Home Exam Due Monday, May 4th (20%)

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

As an active learning class, your participation in course activities is essential for your success in this course. Because the course is divided into weekly units, assignments in this course have weekly deadlines. One reason for deadlines is that assignments build on each other. They also maintain your consistent involvement in the course and limit procrastination. **Late assignments will not be accepted, except by permission of the instructor.** Rare exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

CONTINGENCY DISCLOSURE

Any changes to the syllabus or course schedule will be communicated in class and on Brightspace announcements.

In the event of a major campus emergency (such as a natural disaster, epidemic, etc.), the requirements, deadlines, and grading policies/percentages as detailed in this syllabus are subject to changes that may be required by an officially revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted on Brightspace once the course resumes or can be obtained by contacting the instructor.

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

For information on disability resources and accessibility, see the enclosed link to the Disability Resource Center. For those with DRC accommodations, please provide them to me as soon as possible. Please contact me to discuss your accommodations so that we can work together to make sure the appropriate accommodations are in place.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION POLICY

In this class, I encourage you to exercise your rights to free inquiry and expression. You are welcome to discuss and express any view relevant to subject matter introduced by me (the instructor) or other class members, at appropriate times and places within the structure of the course. Disruptive or disorderly behavior (including threats or harassment) is strictly prohibited. Such behavior will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students in accordance with Purdue University policy.

GRADING SCALE

94-100 = A	90-93 = A-
87-89 = B+	83-86 = B
80-82 = B-	77-79 = C+
73-76 = C	70-73 = C-
67-69 = D+	63-66 = D
60-62 = D-	0-59 = F

Grades will not be rounded up.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Recognize and describe historical problems and patterns of human experience in the history of the West from 1350.
- Describe the history, arts, religious views, and traditions of Western societies since 1350.
- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- Synthesize information and arguments from both types of sources.
- Analyze and evaluate texts, works, objects, events, or ideas in their historical contexts.
- Analyze diverse historical evidence across space and time.