

History 104: Introduction to the Modern World

Purdue University, Department of History

Course Information

Meeting Times: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 12 January – 8 May 2026 **Location:** ET 302
Office Hours: Online, by request **Zoom Room:** <https://purdue-edu.zoom.us/j/6898881530>
(“Dates: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 12th January – 8th May 2026 Location: ET 302”)

Course Goals

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand politics and society across multiple European countries, appreciate cultural diversity, and learn historical methods.
2. Analyze relationships between major and minor European powers and the influence of external actors.
3. Improve academic writing skills. (“To convey information about the politics and society... To improve students’ academic writing ability.”)

Previous study of European history, cultures, or languages is **not required**.

Students needing accommodations for disabilities or physical limitations should notify the instructor to develop an appropriate plan. (“Please notify me if you have a learning disability or have physical limitations that require accommodation.”)

Required Texts

Primary Textbook: Merriman, John M. *A History of Modern Europe: From the Renaissance to the Present* (4th ed., W.W. Norton, 2010).

Students **do not need to purchase** any texts. All readings will be provided as PDFs via the course platform. (“You do not need to buy any texts for this class. Readings will be provided in PDF form...”)

Contact Information

Email: swijeyer@purdue.edu Messages received after 6:00 PM may not receive a reply until after 9:00 AM the next day. (“Please note that if I receive messages after 1800 I may not be able to reply until after 0900 the next day.”)

Notifications of absence or extension requests must be communicated as early as possible. Emails should be professional, polite, and addressed to **Dr. Wijeyeratne**. (“Emails exchanged between us will be professional communications... You should address me as Dr. Wijeyeratne at all times.”)

Grading Scale

Grades are based on 100 total points, converted to percentages.

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

Coursework Requirements

Textbook Readings

Textbook chapters provide broad historical context. Students should understand:

- Major changes in each period
- Definitions of major concepts
- Key trends and their causes (“The purpose of the textbook readings is to provide you with an overview... what changed and why.”)

In-Class Readings

These focus on specific regional or thematic issues. Students should identify:

- How large-scale trends appear at local levels
- Current scholarly debates (“The purpose of these is to focus on one particular area... What debates are happening...”)

Sectional Videos (3 × 20%)

After each section, students submit a 3–4 minute video answering one of the provided questions. Videos outside the time limit lose 5% per extra or missing minute. (“After every section, you must submit a short video... penalised 5% for every extra/lacking minute.”)

Final Essay (2 × 20%)

Students must confirm their topic with the instructor.

- Half the grade: thesis and plan
- Half: completed essay
- Length: 1350–1650 words (5% penalty per 100 words outside the limit)
- Must use at least four primary sources (“Your final essay must be between 1350 and 1650 words... You **MUST** use at least four primary sources...”)

Extensions

Extensions are granted only for illness or family emergencies and must be confirmed by email. Late work without an extension loses one grade per day. (“Extensions are not normally granted... penalized at the rate of one grade per day of lateness.”)

Participation and Classroom Expectations

Students are expected to engage actively and respectfully.

- Sleeping, tardiness, or lack of preparation affects participation grades.
- Cell phones must be turned off; laptop web-surfing is not permitted.
- Eating or drinking is allowed only if not disruptive.
- All missed work must be completed before the next class meeting.
- Students may miss **one class** with prior notice; more than three unexcused absences result in a **-5% penalty**. (“Students with more than 3 unexcused absences will receive a -5% penalty...”)

Lectures may not be recorded except through personal note-taking. (“Lectures and classroom discussions may not be recorded in any medium other than notes.”)

Course Plan

All readings and written work must be completed in the designated online folder. (“**ALL READINGS FOR THE COURSE CAN BE FOUND HERE PLEASE DO ALL OF YOUR WRITTEN WORK IN THIS FOLDER**”)

Week 1: Basic Historical Theory (Jan 12–16)

- Introduction
- Key historical concepts

- Essay guidelines
- Videos: “What is Global History?” and “History of Ideas – Modernity”

Week 2: There Were No Dark Ages (Jan 19–23)

- Lecture: “Seriously, there were no Dark Ages”
- Textbook: ch. 1–2
- Sources: Mazlish, Sachsenmeier, Mappa Mundi, Map Explainer

Week 3: The Reformations (Jan 26–30)

- Lecture: The Reformations
- Textbook: ch. 3
- Source: Gregory
- **First video due**

Week 4: Wars of Religion and State Formation (Feb 2–6)

- Lecture: Rise of the Nation-State
- Textbook: ch. 4–5
- Sources: Columbus A & B, Leonardo

Week 5: Stuart England & Dutch Republic (Feb 9–13)

- Lecture: Protestant Golden Age
- Textbook: ch. 7
- Sources: English Bill of Rights, Salon Life

Week 6: Absolutism, Prussia, Russia (Feb 16–20)

- Lecture: Monarchy and Centralisation
- Textbook: ch. 8–9
- Sources: Green, Ukhtomskii
- **Second video due**

Week 7: Scientific Revolution & Enlightenment (Feb 23–27)

- Lecture: What is an Enlightenment?
- Textbook: ch. 10–11
- Sources: Wesley, Fichte

Week 8: French Revolution & Wars (Mar 2–6)

- Lecture: Why Revolutions Matter
- Textbook: ch. 12

- Sources: Edgerton, Wallis, Lippman

Week 9: Industrial Revolution (Mar 9–13)

- Lecture: Roots and Meaning of Industry
- Textbook: ch. 13–14
- Source: Black Code
- **Third video due**

Week 10: Half-Term Break (Mar 16–20)

Week 11: Restorations & Rebellions (Mar 23–27)

- Lecture: Europe's Liberal Revolutions
- Textbook: ch. 15–16
- Sources: Miners, IMF World Economy, Wallerstein

Week 12: Nationalism (Mar 30–Apr 3)

- Lecture: Anti-Imperialism and Nationalism
- Textbook: ch. 17
- Source: Byron

Week 13: Victorian Britain, Tsarist Russia, Third Republic (Apr 6–10)

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

Week 14: No Classes (Apr 13–17)

Week 15: Second Industrial Revolution (Apr 20–24)

- Lecture: Second Industrial Revolution
- Textbook: ch. 18–19
- Sources: Shlapentokh, Soviet Collapse, Anglo-American Mutual Aid Agreement, Rambaud

Week 16: Picnic with Dogs

- **Final essay due 8 May**