



LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

JOHN FELICE ROME CENTER

Hist 101: The Evolution of Western Ideas and Institutions to the 17th century

Spring 2026 Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:15-3:30 PM

Sala 1

Instructor: Albert Prieto, M.Litt, PhD (Classics, History, Archaeology), aprieto2@luc.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 1:45-2:15 in the classroom and by appointment

Introduction and Course Description

This course is designed to give the student a general understanding of the persons, events, and cultural-intellectual trends and achievements which spawned Western civilization and influenced its development from approximately 4000 BC until AD 1700. The focus is primarily on continental Europe, including the ancient Greeks and Romans, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Reformation, and the Age of Enlightenment. Many areas all around the Mediterranean Sea that made significant contributions to Western civilization or interacted extensively with Western civilizations will also be considered, such as the Ancient Near East (Egypt, Sumeria, Babylonia, Persia), Anatolia, and north Africa.

One of the general themes that will run throughout this course is the "**world view**," that is, the collection of mental constructs which gave the world meaning for individuals in a given period. Another general theme is **technology and culture** as defining aspects of what it means to be "Western," in terms of the major innovations that have shaped life in Europe over the centuries. A third major theme is the **discipline of history** itself, in terms of how we know what we know about the past. The object of this course is to examine and connect world views, technological and cultural shifts, and approaches to history as they have appeared throughout the nearly 6000 years in consideration.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course the student should be able to:

- identify the key historical persons, events, ideas, and international trends of Western civilization from approximately 4000 BC through 1750;
- determine the main political, social, economic, cultural, technological, and intellectual aspects of the individual cultures contributing to Western civilization and assess their development;
- assess the contributions, individual and collective, of the above two points to the development of Western civilization, both within and across historical periods;
- develop basic skills in historical research, critical thinking, and communication.

Required Textbooks and Materials

- L. Hunt, T. R. Martin, B. H. Rosenwein, and B. G. Smith, *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures*. Volume I: *To 1750*. 7th edition. Bedford-St. Martin's, 2022. [Available via VitalSource](#)
- Additional readings for assignments (PDFs and WWW links posted on Sakai).

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the Rome Center mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, and in compliance with full-time student visa status, all courses adhere to the following attendance policy.

Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student and synonymous with academic success. Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for each course. Lateness or leaving class early will impact the course grade at the professor's discretion. All absences, including medical absences, will be treated the same, unless they are documented long-term conditions or emergencies. Such situations will be evaluated case-by-case by the Academic Affairs office.

Once-a-week classes:

- After 1 absence, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 3 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

Twice-a-week classes:

- **After 2 absences, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.**
- **Missing 6 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).**

Three-times-a week classes:

- After 2 absences, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 6 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

Assessment Components and Schedule

Assessment	Date	%
Attendance and participation	N/A	10%
Homework ("Review Questions" and "Making Connections" x 17)	N/A	10%
Assignment 1	2/19	10%
Mid-term exam	2/26	25%
Assignment 2	4/21 + 23	10%
Final Exam	4/28	35%
TOTAL		100%

Assessment Descriptions

The mid-term examination will test the student's understanding of the major events, figures, trends, and achievements covered up to that moment. The final examination will concentrate on the major events, figures, trends, and achievements covered in the second half of the course. Both exams will be based comprehensively on notes taken during class lectures and discussions, assignments, and the course readings.



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A. The **mid-term exam** will consist of

1. a series of terms (historical persons, places, concepts) to be identified briefly (2-4 sentences) in relation to their significance for the history of Western civilization;
2. a timeline of events to be arranged in chronological order; and
3. a map to be labeled (for example, with the names of major cultural centers).

B. The **final exam** will consist of

1. a series of terms (historical persons, places, concepts) to be identified briefly (2-4 sentences) in relation to their significance for the history of Western civilization;
2. a timeline of events, to be arranged in chronological order;
3. a map to be labeled (for example, with the names of major territories and cultural centers); and
4. one short (3+ page) essay addressing a theme in the history of Western civilization.

C. The **homework** consists of answering the “Review Questions” and “Making Connections” sections at the end of each chapter (17 total) in the textbook. The answers are submitted via Sakai or e-mail by midnight on the day the relevant chapter or material is covered in class.

Homework answers submitted more than a week after the deadline will be ignored.

D. **Assignment 1** is an in-class group exercise in understanding how history functions as a discipline.

F. **Assignment 2** is an individual research project relating the most important facts/details about, and the overall significance of, a specific place or monument in Rome (location, date of creation, creator, materials, notable associated events and personalities, etc.) within the context of the history of Western civilization.

For Assignment 2 the student will

1. compose a brief written summary (minimum 3 double-spaced typed pages of text) of the research to be submitted to the instructor via Sakai or e-mail, and
2. make a brief (6-minute) presentation of the research before the class with images and bulleted lists of the most important points.

The individual topics and presentation dates for Assignment 2 will be assigned after the mid-term exam. The instructor will provide guidance on research sources. The written summary must be submitted via Sakai or e-mail by midnight of the presentation date.

The paper and presentation for Assignment 2 will be evaluated on

1. the quality and depth of the research and
2. the clarity of the delivery, both written and oral.

The assignments and the chapter homeworks must be submitted in standard document formats (.doc/x, .pdf, or .rtf ONLY).

Grading

The course grade scale is 94-100 = A, 90-93 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 84-86 = B, 80-83 = B-, 77-79 = C+, 74-76 = C, 70-73 = C-, 67-69 = D+, 60-66 = D, 59 and below = F.



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Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards [here](https://catalog.luc.edu/academic-standards-regulations/undergraduate/): <https://catalog.luc.edu/academic-standards-regulations/undergraduate/>
Students are not allowed to use AI (artificial intelligence) or other such assisted technology for any assignment or deliverable that will be graded as part of the course unless they are specifically authorized to do so by the instructor.

Students are responsible for complying with the LUC Student Handbook.

Late or Missed Assignments & Exam Policy

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. **As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.**

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Academic Affairs Office at the John Felice Rome Center in the first week of classes.

Statement on Title IX

The Rome Center follows Loyola's [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Retaliation](#) and will comply with those as indicated and instructed.

Class Policies

- All work in class will be based on lectures, readings, assignments, and discussions. As history is by nature largely subjective and often touches sensitive subjects (race, gender, politics, religion, class, sexuality), there is a lot of room for debate, disagreement, and definition. Be curious and forthright, and always respectful.
- During class smartphones and other personal communication devices should be switched off or set to silent mode.
- Lectures may be recorded for study purposes, but only with the instructor's prior and express permission.
- Students are expected to do all of their assigned work independently, including the assignments and the homework.

Disruptive Classroom Behavior

The classroom is a particular environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their



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identities, and to develop an understanding of the community in which they live. Student conduct which disrupts the learning process will count significantly against the participation grade component and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, habitually:

- whispering or talking to classmates
- reading non-related materials on paper or digital media
- communicating with external parties in any format (phone, text message, VoIP, e-mail, etc.)
- working on any other coursework during class
- arriving to class late or leaving class early
- exiting and re-entering the classroom for bathroom breaks and other non-emergency uses

Subject to Change Statement

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. It is the student's responsibility to check for announcements made during his/her absence.

Weekly course schedule

Week 1

T 1/20: Course introduction; what is history, and how do you make it?

Th 1/22: Early Western civilization
Readings: Chapter 1

Week 2

T 1/27: Near Eastern empires and the reemergence of civilization in Greece
Readings: Chapter 2

Th 1/29: The Greek golden age
Readings: Chapter 3

Week 3

T 2/3: From the Classical to the Hellenistic world
Readings: Chapter 4

Th 2/5: The rise of Rome and its republic
Readings: Chapter 5

Week 4

T 2/10: The creation of the Roman empire
Readings: Chapter 6

Th 2/12: The transformation of the Roman empire
Readings: Chapter 7



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Week 5

T 2/17: Assignment 1

Th 2/19: review for mid-term exam (Chapters 1-8)

Assignment 1 due

Week 6

T 2/24: The heirs of Rome: Islam, Byzantium, and Europe
Readings: Chapter 8

Th 2/26: Mid-term exam

Week 7

T 3/3: From centralization to fragmentation
Readings: Chapter 9

Th 3/5: Commercial quickening and religious reform
Readings: Chapter 10

Week 8 Spring Break NO CLASS

Week 9

T 3/17: The flowering of the Middle Ages
Readings: Chapter 11

Th 3/19: The Medieval synthesis – and its cracks
Readings: Chapter 12

Week 10

T 3/24: Crisis and Renaissance
Readings: Chapter 13

Th 3/26: Global encounters and the shock of reformation
Readings: Chapter 14

Week 11

T 3/31: Wars of religion and the clash of worldviews
Readings: Chapter 15

Th 4/2: Absolutism, constitutionalism, and the search for order
Readings: Chapter 16



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Week 12

T 4/7: The Atlantic System and Its Consequences
Readings: Chapter 17

Th 4/9: Brief history of slavery

Week 13

T 4/14: Brief history of the Jewish people

Th 4/16: review for final exam

Week 14

T 4/21: Assignment 2 presentations (group 1)

Th 4/23: Assignment 2 presentations (group 2)

Assignment 2 paper due

Week 15

T 4/28 final exam 11:30-1:30