

HIS 202: Modern History

Spring 2024

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Frequency: M lecture; T-R small group discussion; 11:20 am–12:40 pm

Course Description:

HIS 202 explores the decline of Christian culture. From the Napoleonic through the Victorian Era, students will learn about liberalism, conservatism, and socialism; the rise of nationalism and militarism; Social Darwinism; imperial endeavors; and the rise of modernist philosophies. HIS 202 will consider how World War I created disillusionment and led to the Great Depression, totalitarianism, and ultimately, World War II. The course also examines the mass consumer culture, colonial revolutions, and the politics of authenticity in light of the Cold War. Finally, we will grapple with issues surrounding American exceptionalism and global terrorism.

Goal:

This course aims to provide students with a foundational knowledge of the major themes, events, and people of modern history, and develop critical thinking skills.

Required Materials:

Readings in Modern History course pack.

Objectives:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

Evaluate the major developments in modern history

Explain the causes and consequences of key developments

Identify major events, people, ideas, places and groups that shaped the modern world

Make connections between diverse sources of information

Analyze primary sources

Develop original arguments using primary sources

Express a personal view on major issues of the past based on reason and evidence

Assessment:

Participation: 10%

Quizzes: 10%

Newspaper Project: 15%

Literature Review Essay: 15%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Participation

Students are expected to be punctual, attentive, and engaged. The class is divided into three discussion groups. Each student is assigned to one of these three groups that meet once a week. Students sign up to lead two discussions on the course pack readings for that week. Discussion leaders will come up with four open ended questions. These questions might relate to a theme, an enduring issue, an interpretation, previous readings, or something along those lines. Students should be prepared to discuss the readings critically for the discussion sessions. Students who repeatedly fail to meet these standards will lose points in their participation grade.

Quizzes

Throughout the semester we will have five unannounced quizzes on the readings from the course pack. These will be brief—no more than five questions—and could be given on any discussion day.

Newspaper Project

This project aims to familiarize students with using newspapers as primary sources. Pick an event or theme and find 6 contemporary newspaper articles about it. Choose the angle you would like to take on your topic: understanding contemporary perspectives on it, how it changed over time, or how perspectives of it changed over time. You should also consider the newspapers themselves. Newspapers usually have a bias, whether it is a slant in its reporting or a firm commitment to a cause. Research your newspapers to find out if they are affiliated with a political party, ideology, or in some way have a bias. For instance, the *Daily Worker* is a well known communist newspaper. Its articles would almost certainly provide a communist perspective on any event it covered.

Some possible topics: eugenics utopian communities Catholicism
big business anarchists vegetarianism home economics presidential
campaigns military draft dam construction labor unions
major legislation race relations topic of your choice . . .

The articles that you choose must be of a substantial length—more than three paragraphs. Your essay should be 1,000 words, double-spaced, and in 12 point font.

There are several free newspaper databases that you may use, *Chronicling America*, Google News Archive, and state historical society websites often provide access to newspapers. For instance, the Kansas State Historical Society offers free access through newspapers.com to KS papers from almost every town and city from 1854–1923.

Literature Review Essay

You've completed the newspaper project and come up with an original perspective on your topic. Well done, but so what? What does your research mean? One of the main ways that historians address the “so what?” question is by situating their research within the scholarly literature. This is usually referred to as a literature review. In a literature review, the author finds the major works on a given topic and puts them, so to speak, in conversation with each other. Lit reviews are usually part of any historical research paper but can also be done independently.

The purpose of this essay is to find three important articles on your topic and put them in conversation with each other around the theme of your own newspaper project. These articles may be found on JSTOR or another scholarly database. Ultimately, you will attempt to identify how your original findings contribute to the broader scholarly discussion on the topic. This is similar to any other “conversation” in that you will be looking for what has already been stated, where the authors disagree, and what your research adds to it. Keep in mind that this project is only an introduction to the exercise of writing a lit review. A full lit review would consider many more sources.

Below is a good guide for writing a lit review.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/conducting_research/writing_a_literature_review.html

Citations should be made as footnotes following the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Compositions will be roughly 1000 words, typed, double spaced, and have an original title. Only hard copies of compositions will be accepted.

Exams

The midterm and final exam consist of short answer and/or essay questions derived from the readings, lectures, and class discussions. For essay questions, students should give substantial answers, generally three pages as a minimum.

Attendance Policy, Academic Honesty, and Late Work:

A student will have a third of a letter grade deducted from his/her final grade beginning with the fourth unexcused absence. Late assignments will have one third of a letter grade deducted for each

day late (from A to A-, A- to B+, etc.). Extensions may be issued at the sole discretion of the instructor, but only for grave reasons. It is the student's responsibility to get any late assignment to the professor.

Plagiarism is a matter of justice and honesty. Plagiarism consists of passing another person's work off as one's own. To avoid plagiarism, and to give others their due, it is necessary to give credit when using someone else's work. Always provide a citation for direct quotes, paraphrases, ideas, and anything substantially borrowed from another author. Clear evidence of plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and could result in stricter penalties at the discretion of the administration.

Syllabus

Week 1 January 15

Day 1 Introduction

2 Nationalism in North and South America

No discussion groups this week

Week 2 January 22 Ch 1 Nationalism

1 Industrial Revolution

2 Discussion

Week 3 January 29 Ch 2 Industrialization and its Effects

1 Socialism as a response

2 Discussion

Week 4 Feb. 5 Ch 3 Conservatism

1 Containing revolutionary ideas

2 Discussion

Week 5 February 12 Ch 4 Romanticism

1 Romantic Reaction

2 Discussion

Retreat February 19–24

Week 6 February 26 Ch 5 Second Industrial Revolution

1 New Things: The Emergence of Large-Scale Corporations

2 Discussion, **Newspaper Project Essay due March 1**

Week 7 March 4 Ch 6 Responses to the Industrial Order

1 The Bourgeoisie

2 Discussion

Week 8 March 11 Ch 7 Imperialism

1 **Midterm, March 11**

2 Discussion

Week 9 March 18 Ch 8 World War I

1 WWI and Disillusionment

2 Discussion

Easter Break March 25–April 7

Week 10 April 8 Ch 9 Russian Revolution and the Communist State

1 Russia before and after the Revolution

2 Discussion

Easter Break: April 3–14

Week 11 April 15 Ch 10 Depression: The State and the Land

1 Great Depression

2 Discussion

Week 12	April 22	Ch 11 Interwar Political Systems
	1 Rise of the Nazis	
	2 Discussion	
Week 13	April 29	Ch 12 Cold War
	1 Cold War Origins	
	2 Discussion	
Week 14	May 6	Ch 13 Emergence of the New Left
	1 Cultural Revolutions Literature Review Essay due May 6	
	2 Discussion	
Week 15	May 13	Ch 14 Modern Conservatism
	1 Rise of the New Right	
	2 Discussion	
Week 16	May 18, 20–22	Final Exams