

Department: History

Course No: 1300 [100]

Credits: 3

Title: WESTERN TRADITIONS BEFORE 1500

Contact: Nancy Shoemaker

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Catalog Copy: 100. Western Traditions Before 1500.

Either semester. Three credits.

An analysis of the traditions and changes which have shaped Western political institutions, economic systems, social structures and cultures in ancient and medieval times.

Course Information: a. Course description: An introductory historical survey designed to introduce freshmen to issues and developments related to the formation of various "Western" societies, their ideals, and their interactions. It is also intended to expose students to historical analysis. Range and topic emphasis varies, depending on instructor specialty.

b. Course Requirements: 1) 50 pages of reading per week in translated primary and secondary literature; 2) weekly verbal discussion of events, issues, texts in historical context; 3) written essays, including short reading-response or source-criticism papers; 3) written examinations, including essays on reading and lecture material.

c. Themes & topics: Contributions of Ancient Near Eastern, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Muslim and medieval European societies to evolving and/or competing notions of civilization, humanism, monotheism, philosophy, politics, education, sexuality, social identity, etc.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: This course meets most if not all of the seven basic purposes of general education as stated in the UConn General Education Guidelines. Integral to the course are the following:

- 1) Becoming articulate: Course assignments include numerous written essays or analytical papers, with emphasis on writing skills and clarity of argument.
- 2) Acquisition of intellectual breadth and versatility. Course topics include a wide range of issues and events, ranging from philosophy to athletics, in multiple historical contexts over 5,000 years, as attested by primary sources of various types.
- 3) Acquisition of Critical Judgment: Course lectures and readings introduce the concept of secular historical analysis. Course writing exercises require students to assess sources or statements according to criteria of historical analysis.
- 6) Acquisition of consciousness of diversity of human culture: Course readings, lectures and writing exercises introduce students to Mesopotamian, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Christian, Muslim and other cultures, as well as to the variety within each of them.
- 7) Acquisition of Understanding of Knowledge-Acquisition & Implementation Processes: Course writing exercises include exposure to or exercises in historical analysis, i.e. methods of breaking down a historical source or event to constituent elements, in order to reframe in illuminating patterns. Assignments also include exposure to library resources.

CA1 Criteria: Because this course emphasizes historical analysis and deals with the origins of "Western" politics and philosophy, it meets the Arts and Humanities criteria #1 ("Investigations and historical/critical analyses of human experience") and #2 ("Inquiries into philosophical and/or political theory").

Role of Grad Students: Teaching Assistants attend lectures, lead discussion sections and grade assignments and examinations of students in those sections. They are drawn from MA and Ph.D. candidates in European History, and are supervised by the Instructor of Record through regular meetings and occasional classroom visits. Advanced graduate students (ABD) teaching their own sections would be under the supervision of the teaching director on the history department graduate committee.

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