

Department: History

Course No: 101

Credits: 3

Title: Modern Western Traditions

Contact: Nancy Shoemaker

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Catalog Copy: HIST 101. Modern Western Traditions. Either semester. Three credits.

History of political institutions, economic systems, social structures, and cultures in the modern Western world.

Course Information: a. This course provides students with an opportunity to examine some of the cultural, social, political, and economic developments of the last five hundred years of European history. Through a combination of lectures and discussions, it presents an overview of some of the major changes of the period while focusing in greater depth on analysis of some specific themes, events, and issues that continue to have a profound impact on modern society.

b. Requirements will vary somewhat by instructor but will usually consist of five books (a textbook and/or documents reader, memoirs, novels, or other classic texts from the time period under study); written assignments will consist of a short-answer midterm and final exam with essay questions as well as 5-8 additional pages of writing in either a single essay or shorter essay assignments.

c. The course covers European expansion and colonialism; the emergence of new ideas in religion, science, politics, and economics; anti-monarchical political revolutions, industrialization, and the emergence of new ideas about the citizen, liberalism, and nationalism; the world wars and cold war of the

twentieth century; and the tensions between unity and diversity evident in the post-World War II period (the European Union, labor and immigration issues, and the nation-state).

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: All seven of the goals of general education are addressed in the course. (1) In weekly discussion sections and in essay writing, students will be able to practice the skills to help them become more articulate, particularly how to construct an argument, employ evidence persuasively, and in general communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. (2) The diverse readings and topics for lecture and discussion cover economic, political, social, and cultural issues, all looked at from a variety of perspectives and modes of presentation (fiction, non-fiction, visual images, statistical tables, documents from the time period representing different points of view, etc.) (3) Throughout the course, questions of point of view and how we know what we know will be raised so that students will learn to read critically and in other ways evaluate the reliability, inherent prejudices, and purposes behind information and information's sources. (4) The content of the!

course frequently addresses issues of moral sensitivity by dealing with how people and nations treat others (their own citizens, foreigners, and colonized peoples); moral crises and failures, such as the holocaust, are covered in the course. (5) This course is in many ways comparative, as events of the past become material for us to reflect on for the future; students will grapple with how individuals in the past conceptualized their place in the world and how that compares or contrasts with students' own perspectives. (6) By studying the history of the West over 500 years, students will be exposed to the diversity of nations in their interactions with each other as well as the diversity of people and views (on religion, politics, and

society) within nations. (7) The course will give students knowledge about what happened in the past but more importantly intends to acquaint them the never-ending process of acquiring new knowledge, starting with asking questions, refining questions, seeking outside sources that can provide answers to the questions, and then developing yet again more questions.

CA1 Criteria: This course satisfies activities #1 and #2. It encompasses a wide variety of human experiences, and like the humanities in general concerns itself with fundamental questions about the nature of human existence, the functions and flaws of human institutions, and how ideas and institutions have changed over time. Major European theorists of the past 500 years (Locke, Rousseau, A. Smith, Darwin, Marx, and others) and the impact of their ideas on succeeding generations constitute a substantial portion of course lectures and reading material and will serve as topics for discussion.

Role of Grad Students: Teaching assistants will attend lectures, lead discussion sections and grade assignments and examinations of students in those sections. The teaching assistants will be M.A. and Ph.D. candidates in European history and supervised by the Instructor of Record through regular meetings and occasional classroom visits. Advanced graduate students (ABD) with previous teaching-assistant

experience in the course will be assigned their own course to teach and will be under the supervision of the History Department's graduate committee member appointed to serve as teaching director.