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### [HIST 113] The Birth of Europe

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**HIST 113 The Birth of Europe**  
3 Credits, Writing Enhanced

**COURSE INFORMATION**

HIST 113 is designated as a Flexible Core course under Domain A: World Cultures and Global Issues.

**Course Catalogue Description**

The formation of European civilization from earliest times into the 17th century.

**Course Narrative**

This course will introduce you to the important events, developments, persons, and ideas in pre-modern European history. We will examine the societies of the Ancient Near East, Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, Medieval Europe, the culture of the Renaissance, and early European exploration. We will talk about gods and goddesses, warriors and peasants, tyrants and kings, and priests and poets. We will compare and contrast spiritual and religious beliefs, identify forms of governance and rule, and explore cultural and intellectual developments. We will also consider the interactions between Europe and other societies. We will analyze texts and works of arts in order to better understand the past. Finally, because history is not just in the past, we will examine and challenge the way in which historical narratives continue to inform our present, in both positive and negative ways.

**Learning Outcomes as Designated under Pathways:**

In this course, students will be able to:

1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
2. Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
3. Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
4. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of the discipline of History.
5. Analyze the significance of major movements that have shaped the world's societies.
6. Analyze the historical development of non-US societies.
7. Analyze and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, language, or belief, plays in world cultures.

**Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:**

1. Interpret a wide range of primary sources (texts, visual art, and music) and appreciate them as historical evidence.
2. Employ the analytic, rhetorical, and writing skills developed in this course in a variety of academic and non-academic contexts.
3. Discuss major developments in world history with an appreciation for diversity among cultures, histories, and viewpoints.
4. Understand current events and discuss them with a historically-informed perspective.

This is a sample syllabus designed to be used alongside the  
[\*The Birth of Europe\*](#) OER textbook.

**Ancillary Learning Outcomes:**

In this course students will:

1. Use and evaluate Online sources.
2. Annotate texts
3. Collaborate with classmates

**Learning Materials and Tools**

This is a Zero Textbook Cost course which will be using an Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook developed specifically for this course. This OER textbook and all additional course material will be made available through Blackboard. Additionally, we will be using the collaborative reading and annotation tool Perusall/Hypothes.is. If you have not used this application before, you will need to create an account.

**CLASS POLICIES****Diversity and Inclusion**

My aim in this learning space is to provide a space for challenging inquiry and robust discussion. All are welcome and everyone's presence is valued here, regardless of gender identity, race, religion, age, sexual identity, or immigration status. I encourage you all to consider the material we read and the lectures I give in the context of your own experiences and perspectives and use that to inform your contributions to classroom discussions or in your written assignments. In this class, you are welcome to share your ideas and to challenge the material being presented to you; you are also asked to be respectful to each other and thoughtful in your words and actions.

**Due Dates and Late Assignments**

Due dates are designed to help you progress through the course and provide structure for the semester. They also enable the professor to provide timely feedback. Particularly when you are collaborating with classmates, being mindful of due dates is important, however in many instances late work is accepted. If you are struggling to complete assignments, please reach out so we can work together to get you on track so you can be successful in completing the course.

**Office Hours and Email**

My office hours are a time for you to come by and talk about the course, ask questions, review assignments, or just say hi. You do not need an appointment; just come on by. If the scheduled office hours do not work for you, we can absolutely arrange to meet on campus or over Zoom at another time.

You can email me at any time. I generally reply to emails within 24 hours although this might be a little longer over holidays or weekends. If you do not receive a response, please double check the address and follow up with me. I do not expect an immediate response to my emails and while I sometimes send emails outside of the traditional working day, I don't expect others to do so. Let us all be respectful of each other's time.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

1. Class Participation	10%
2. Text Annotations	5%
3. Reading Journal	10%
4. Collaborative Study Guide	15%
5. Primary Source Study	20%
6. Secondary Source Review	20%
7. Final Exam	20%

*Class Participation*

Active class participation is a required component of this course. This entails coming to class prepared and ready to engage with the material, as well as contributing to a positive learning environment. Participation points can be earned in a variety of ways including through participating in in-class discussions, completing in class assignments, or taking notes.

*Text Annotations*

This course will utilize the collaborate reading application Hypothes.is or Perusall. For each module, students are required to submit substantial comments on the assigned readings.

*Reading Journal*

You will be using the journal tool in Blackboard to discuss selected assigned readings. For each entry in the Reading Journal, you will be given a prompt to discuss using the assigned reading(s). Through these reading entries, you will build skills in historical and critical analysis

*Collaborative Study Guide*

Over the semester, you will be working within small groups to develop a study guide which will reflect the course material including the assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions. The Study Guide will consist of a timeline, a glossary, and study questions.

*Primary Source Study and Secondary Source Review*

You will be writing two short essays for this class. For the Primary Source Study, you will present your own analysis of a set of historical primary sources. For the Secondary Source Review, you will review and critique an article related to the course material.

*Final Exam*

The final exam for this course will provide you an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the course material.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Course Introduction

*Read and Annotate:*

- Course Syllabus

### Module One: The Study of History and the Beginnings of Civilization

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: The Study of History
- Reading: The Origins of Civilization
- Primary Source: The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Story of the Flood

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: In order to analyze a primary source text, you need to understand it. In your own words, briefly summarize the story of the flood. Make sure to identify the main figures in this story, as well as who is a god and who is a human.
- Study Guide Introductory Activity: For the first two modules, you will begin building the study guide on your own. To start, identify two important dates or events, two important figures, and two important developments that are covered in this week's material. Organize them chronologically. Eventually your work will be collaborative, but for this assignment, use the submission link on Blackboard.

### Module Two: Ancient Egyptians and Ancient Hebrews

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: Ancient Egypt
- Reading: The Hebrews
- Primary Source: Book of the Dead

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: Understanding the content of a primary source is essential, but so is understanding its context. In your own words, explain the format and function of selection assigned from Book of the Dead. What is the original language of the text, where did the text come from, and what was its purpose. You can use the assigned readings or do some research on your own to answer these questions. In either case, you must cite your sources!
- Study Guide Introductory Activity: Create a timeline that indicates the periodization of ancient Egyptian history. Pick two or three important developments or events from either ancient Mesopotamian and Hebrew history and show where they fall on your ancient Egyptian timeline. Check out the submission link on Blackboard for ideas of how to present your timeline.

### Module Three: Archaic Greece and the Persian Wars

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: The Archaic Age of Greece
- Reading: The Persian Wars
- Primary Source: Hesiod, Works and Days

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: Primary sources don't just tell us what happened in the past; they can also tell us about the values of past societies, or how individuals saw themselves in relation to their present and their past. How does Hesiod characterize the period in which he lives? Is he optimistic or pessimistic? Use examples (quotes) from the primary source text to support your analysis.
- Study Guide Collaboration: Once you have been assigned a group, you will now be working with your group to contribute to the class study guide. Each group will be assigned a specific responsibility which will rotate each module.

#### **Module Four: Classical Greece**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: The Classical Age of Greece
- Primary Source: Pericles' Funeral Oration

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: Thucydides was a Greek historian who sought to present a history of the Greek past that was based on historical sources and did not explain or attribute past events to the workings of deities. For this entry, think about how you as an historian should use his history of the Peloponnesian Wars with specific reference to the account of Pericles' speech. What does this text tell us about Pericles or Athens at the time? What are the sources limitations?
- Study Guide Collaboration

#### **Module Five: The Hellenistic World and the Republic of Rome**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: The Hellenistic Age
- Reading: The Roman Republic
- Primary Source: The Rape of Lucretia

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: Like in the previous module, here we have another ancient historian writing about the past. The earliest version of this foundational story of the Roman Republic (that we know about) circulated around the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, so at least 200 years after the events allegedly took place. The version we are reading is by Livy and is included in his 142 volume *History of Rome*. Livy was writing in the tumultuous period that marked the end of the Republic and the beginning of the empirical rule. In your entry, address similar questions: what does this text tell us about the values of the Roman Republic? What are the source's limitations?
- Study Guide Collaboration

#### **Module Six: Rome from Republic to Empire**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: The End of the Republic and the Roman Empire
- Primary Source: Tacitus on Nero

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: Tacitus is another ancient historian, and his descriptions of the lives of the Roman emperors certainly contain flourish! For this journal entry, do a bit of online

research about Tacitus. Share any links that you used. Did you find any information that might be relevant to understanding Tacitus' biases or perspectives?

- Study Guide Collaboration

### **Module Seven: Roman Decline and Early Christianity**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: The Late Empire and Christianity
- Primary Source: The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: Perpetua and Felicity were early Christian martyrs. In your reading journal, discuss what this text can tell us about early Christian communities. Point to specific examples (quotes) from the text to support your analysis.
- Study Guide Collaboration

### **Module Eight: Byzantium and the Early Muslim World**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: Justinian I and the rise of Byzantium
- Reading: Islam and the Caliphates
- Primary Source: Epistle to the Secretaries
- Primary Source: Procopius on Justinian and Theodora

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: For this module's journal you will focus on the selections by Procopius. His account of the Nika revolt was composed in Procopius' official capacity as a court official and historian, while the selection from *Secret History* was, as the text implied, written privately and not circulated. Does the existence of the *Secret History* compromise Procopius as a reliable source on Justinian's reign? What do you think?
- Study Guide Collaboration

### **Module Nine: The Early Middle Ages**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: Early Medieval Europe
- Primary Source: Egil slays Ljot the Pale

*Module Assignments*

- Reading Journal: Using the selection *Egil slays Ljot the Pale*, describe in your own words what a "berserker" is. How does the concept of a "berserker" fit the Viking stereotype?
- Study Guide Collaboration

### **Module Ten: The High Middle Ages**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: The High Middle Ages
- Primary Source: Gesta Francorum
- Primary Source: Usamah Ibn Munqidh, Autobiography

*Module Assignments*

- Reading Journal: For this module's reading journal, you will focus on the selections from the *Gesta Francorum*. Describe the perspective of the author. How does the author

characterize the Crusaders (the knights who participated) as well as the Crusade? Use specific examples (quotes) from the text selection to support your analysis.

- Study Guide Collaboration

### **Module Eleven: The Late Middle Ages**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: The Crises of the Middle Ages
- Primary Source: Boccaccio, *The Decameron*

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: While Boccaccio might not have been in Florence when the plague hit the city, he had both family and friends who perished from the disease. In your own words, how would you characterize his depiction of the city and its inhabitants impacted by the Black Death? What in his description was the most striking or stood out the most to you?
- Study Guide Collaboration

### **Module Twelve: Culture and Politics in the Age of the Renaissance**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: The Renaissance
- Reading: Renaissance Era States
- Reading: The Early Reformation and Martin Luther
- Primary Source: *The Book of the City of Ladies*

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: All the primary source texts we have read so far have been written by men. *The Book of the City of Ladies* was written by and woman and is about women. Considering the selections you have read, what challenges or dangers that women faced did Christine de Pizan want to emphasize? Use specific examples (quotes) to support your analysis.
- Study Guide Collaboration

### **Module Thirteen: Exploration and Conquest**

*Read and Annotate:*

- Reading: European Explorations and Conquest
- Primary Source: Christopher Columbus, Journal Excerpts

*Module Assignments:*

- Reading Journal: How did Christopher Columbus view the places and people he encountered on his first voyage in relation to Europeans? Does this reflect the general European view of the Americas and/or other non-European places and people? Use specific examples (quotes) from the text selections to support your analysis.
- Study Guide Collaboration: This is the final module and so the study guide you have all contributed to will be complete! You can use the finished product to prepare for the final exam.

## SECONDARY SOURCE REVIEW

In the context of history, secondary sources are books or articles written after the fact about a historical event or period. Secondary sources use primary sources to offer analysis and draw conclusions. They also respond to or build upon the historical analysis of other scholars. Through books and articles, historians and other scholars of the past shape and frame the sorts of questions asked about the period and available sources. As historians it is important to think critically when reading secondary sources and be attentive to how scholars approach their analysis.

For this assignment you will be writing a critical review of a scholarly article, "Woman, City, State: Theories, Ideologies, and Concepts in the Archaic and Classical Periods" by Madeleine M. Henry and Sharon L. James. We will explore some of the themes discussed in this article in our discussion of Livy's *The Rape of Lucretia* in Module Five.

A review is NOT a book report; you will not simply be summarizing the text, rather it is a critical evaluation of the article. A review is a critical commentary on the article which considers what the authors' thesis is, their methodology and sources used, and how successfully the analysis and argument is presented.

Your essay should include the following:

- The main thesis of the article.
- A summary or description of the main points or themes of the article.
- An explanation of the sources or types of sources that the authors use to support their thesis.
- A discussion of the persuasiveness of Henry and James' thesis and use of evidence. This is not a yes or no statement, but an analysis of the strengths and weakness of how the authors lay out and presents their argument.
- Finally, include your own impression of the article and Henry and James' argument. Did this text enhance your understanding of ancient Greece and Rome? Where did you find it lacking? What questions did it raise?

All of these points are interrelated and so your paper should not be a list of questions and answers but a proper essay with an introduction and conclusion.

Your paper should be three to four pages in length, double-spaced (about 800 – 1000 words). You will be uploading a file in Blackboard. Please review the required format for naming your file.

## PRIMARY SOURCE STUDY

### Assignment Overview

A primary source is a document or object created or produced during the time-period and place of study. Historical research is based on primary sources; however primary sources cannot be taken at face value. The job of an historian is to interpret and analyze primary sources in order to better understand the historical period in question. The first task when you begin to look at any primary source is to understand the context of the source and determine its historical value. Second, you need to analyze the source: consider what information the source provides and what further questions the source raises.

The purpose of the Primary Source Study is to examine a selection of primary source documents to see what they can tell you about a particular topic or period in history. The point of this assignment is not to reiterate what is said in the textbook or lectures, but to **add something new based on your own analysis of primary texts.**

### Sources

For your primary source study you will be using the *Gesta Francorum* which we will read and discussed in Module Ten along with one other primary source from the following options. These texts are all available through our Blackboard site:

- Stephen of Blois, Letter to his Wife
- Godfrey, Raymond and Daimbert to the Pope
- Anna Comena, *The Alexiad*, selections on the First Crusade
- Ibn al-Athir, *The First Crusade*

The majority of your essay should be your own interpretation and analysis of your selected documents. You can use the textbook, class discussions, and letters for background information and to contextualize your sources. You do not need outside sources, however ALL sources must be cited (we will go over how and what to cite in class).

Your essay should include the following:

- An introduction to the primary sources (who wrote them and when; what are the sources about).
- The historical context of the sources (what is happening at the time that is relevant to your reading of the source).
- Your analysis of these texts. Think about how these texts help you understand the experience of individuals who participated or witnessed the First Crusade, how participants and observers perceived the ideology of the Crusades, or how they reflected upon the events of the First Crusade.

**COLLABORATIVE STUDY GUIDE\***

Over the semester, you will be working in groups to produce a class study guide that reflects the course material, lectures, and class discussions. You will begin by working individually in the first two modules before being randomly assigned to a group. From Module Three through to Module Thirteen, each group will be responsible for creating one component of the study based on the material for that module. Components include: a timeline, a glossary of important events, developments, terminology, or people, and study questions. Other components might be added depending on class make up and what you as a class decide is essential. Details, including necessary links and registration information for the collaboration platform (such as Teams) is available on Blackboard.

\*Alternately, students could work as individuals in building a collaborative study guide where student get credit for participating in a variety of ways each module. This model could include students posing questions or asking for clarification and other students answering those questions.