Hist 80020: Literature of European History I

Fall 2023  
Wednesdays, 4:15-6:15pm  
Francesca Bregoli  
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Office hours: Wednesdays 3pm-4pm (room 5381), and on Zoom by appointment

Introduction
This course offers an introduction to the literature of European history from the late Middle Ages through the eighteenth century. It explores key historiographical debates, themes, and methodologies pertinent to the study of the so-called early modern period. We will examine classic and recent works on cultural and political history, the economy and society, religion, states and empires, science and technology, popular culture, gender and sexuality, and more. The course prepares students for the end-of-semester comprehensive examination and for further study of European history.

Course objectives
By the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate a command of key themes and major debates in early modern European historiography; to improve critical reading skills, paying attention to a work’s historical context, methodology, and the nature of the sources employed; to address broad historical arguments cogently drawing from several works, in preparation for the rigorous first written exam.

Requirements

Attendance and participation (30%)
Students are expected to attend regularly and contribute substantially to class discussion.

Weekly response papers (30%)
Every week students are expected to submit a critical response to the assigned readings (1-2 pages; double spaced, 12-point font), which we will use to jumpstart class discussion. The paper should not summarize the readings, but rather address some of the common threads among them and their approach to the week’s main theme. Students should email their essay to me by **10am on the day of the class.**

Historiographical papers (20% each = 40%)
Students are expected to submit two historiographical essays on major themes from the course, addressing 4 to 6 readings each (8-10 pages; double spaced, 12-point font).

Required Books

While most of the readings include journal articles or book chapters, we will read four books in their entirety (marked with * in the schedule below). They are available for purchase on the GC online bookstore and are on reserve in the Mina Rees library.


**Recommended reference tools**

https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/page/renaissance-and-reformation


**Schedule and Readings**

**WEEK 1 – August 30**

**Introduction to the Course**

**WEEK 2 – September 6**

**Past and Present: The Pull of Modernity, the Impact of Post-Modernity**


**WEEK 3 – September 13**

**North and South, East and West: What is Early Modern Europe?**


**WEEK 4 – September 20**  
**Bodies and Emotions: The Middle Ages**


**WEEK 5 – September 27**  
**The Renaissance: Intellectual Trends and Material Culture**


**WEEK 6 – October 4**  
**Reformations of Religion**


**WEEK 7 – October 11**

**Family, Gender, and Sexuality**


**WEEK 8 – October 18**

**Popular Culture and Microhistory**


**WEEK 9 – October 25**
** First Historiographic Paper Due by October 25**

Global Exchanges: Exploitation and Consumption


**WEEK 10 – November 1**

“The Years from 1620 to 1650 Were Bad”: Crisis Reconsidered


**WEEK 11 – November 8**

The Growth of the State


**WEEK 12 – November 15**  
**Economy and Society**


**WEEK 13 – November 22 (NO CLASSES, Thanksgiving)**

**WEEK 14 – November 29**  
**Science, Medicine, and Technology**


Mario Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), prologue, chapter 1, epilogue.


**WEEK 15 – December 6**  
**Second Historiographic Paper Due**

**Enlightenments**

