

# Western Civilization I

## Course Text

- Chambers, Mortimer, Barbara Hanawalt, Theodore Rabb, Isser Woloch, Raymond Grew, and Lisa Tiersten. *The Western Experience, Volume I*, 10th edition, McGraw-Hill, 2009, ISBN: 9780073385532 [This text is available as an etextbook at purchase or students may find used, new, or rental copies at [this link](#)]

## Course Description

This course provides students with a comprehensive overview of the development of early civilizations from Neolithic times to 1715. Early and contemporary Western cultures are compared and contrasted, as are major religious, social, and political reforms. Other topics include the religious influence of Judaism and the Bible, the rise and fall of ancient Greece, and the transformation of Rome from a republic to an empire. The Crusades, the origins of feudalism, and the evolution of Christianity are examined, as is the evolution of the European economy during Westward expansion. The Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment period are also discussed.

## Course Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Identify the major concepts, persons, and events that contributed to the development of early civilizations from Neolithic times to 1715.
- Compare and contrast early and contemporary Western cultures.
- Describe the religious influence of Judaism and the Bible on early Near Eastern political, social, and economic organization.
- Explain the rise, fall, and legacy of Ancient Greece.
- Describe the transformation of Rome from a republic to an empire.
- Examine the secularization of religious authority to develop a deeper understanding of the political underpinnings of the Medieval world.
- Explain how the Crusades contributed to the establishment of a stable political order in the Western World.
- Define and describe the origins of feudalism.
- Compare and contrast the major religious, social, and political reforms that contributed to the rise of Papal Supremacy in the late Middle Ages.
- Describe the evolution of Christianity during the Reformation.
- Explain the evolution of the European economy during westward expansion.
- Explain both the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment.

## Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites to take Western Civilization I.

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## Important Terms

In this course, different terms are used to designate tasks:

- Proctoring: all final exams require proctoring which can be completed conveniently from your home. A webcam is required.
- Tutoring: memberships include online tutoring for students to access with any content/subject related questions in the place of faculty. If your tutor is not able to answer your questions please contact a student advisor.
- Practice Exercise: A non-graded assignment to assist you in practicing the skills discussed in a topic.
- Exam: A graded online test.

## Course Evaluation Criteria

StraighterLine provides a percentage score and letter grade for each course. See [Academic Questions](#) section in FAQ for further details on percentage scores and grading scale. A passing percentage is **70%** or higher.

If you have chosen a Partner College to award credit for this course, your final grade will be based upon that college's grading scale. Only passing scores will be considered by Partner Colleges for an award of credit.

There are a total of 1000 points in the course:

Topic	Assessment	Points Available
4	Graded Exam #1	125
7	Graded Exam #2	125
7	Midterm Exam	250
11	Graded Exam #3	125
14	Graded Exam #4	125
15	Final Graded Exam	250
Total		1000

## Course Topics and Objectives

Topic	Topic	Subtopics	Objectives
1	Early Civilizations and the Ancient World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancient Civilizations</li> <li>• The Laws of Hammurabi</li> <li>• The Old Testament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the major concepts, and events that contributed to the development of early civilizations.</li> <li>• Identify Hammurabi and describe how his code of laws changed early human organization.</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the contributions of early Egyptians to the development of the Western world.</li> <li>• Describe the early influence of the major religions on the development of near-Eastern political, social, and economic organizations.</li> </ul>
2	Classical Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rise and Fall of Ancient Greece</li> <li>• Athenian Democracy</li> <li>• Greek Art and Culture</li> <li>• Classical Greek Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the rise, fall, and legacy of ancient Greece.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast Homer, Hesiod, and Herodotus and explain how their social and cultural outlooks shaped Greek culture and world history.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and describe the role of philosophy in Greek politics.</li> <li>• Describe what life was like in a Greek polis.</li> <li>• Examine Classical Greek art and theatre to summarize the influence of Greek culture on contemporary Western traditions.</li> <li>• Describe the evolution of Athenian Democracy and explain its impact on contemporary democracies.</li> <li>• Develop a deeper understanding of the impact of the Peloponnesian Wars on Greek history.</li> <li>• Describe the impact of Classical period Greek art and culture on contemporary Western civilization.</li> </ul>
3	The Hellenistic World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rise of Macedonia</li> <li>• The Hellenistic Age (323-30 BC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the cultural and political restructuring of Greece following Alexander the Great's death.</li> <li>• Examine the expansion of Macedonian culture and describe the transition of Greece from a collection of quarreling city-states to a part of a huge empire.</li> <li>• Define Hellenization and explain the importance of Alexander the Great in spreading Greek culture during the Hellenistic period, including his impact on the development of Western culture.</li> <li>• Examine the transition between the Greek Classical Age and the Hellenistic world.</li> </ul>
4	The Rise of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Roman</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze and describe the conditions</li> </ul>

	Rome	<p>History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Expansion Period</li> <li>• From Republic to Empire</li> </ul>	<p>and major events that fostered and contributed to the founding, rise, and Western expansion of Rome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the Hellenization of Rome, and compare and contrast Roman and Greek cultural and political structures.</li> <li>• Explain how the Punic Wars and internal political conflicts contributed to the destabilization and end of the Roman republic.</li> <li>• Examine the elements of the expansion and stabilization of the early Roman economy, and relate this to the development of Rome from a republic to an empire.</li> <li>• Examine Julius Caesar and explain the significance of his rise to power.</li> </ul>
5	The Roman Empire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Last Days of the Empire</li> <li>• The Christianization of Rome</li> <li>• The Decline of Rome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine Roman life under Augustus, also known as Octavian Caesar, to identify his major political, social, and economic policies and his role in defining the early Empire.</li> <li>• Summarize the reign of Marcus Aurelius and describe how his Stoic principles exemplify the rule of the Empire at its height.</li> <li>• List briefly the reforms of Diocletian and explain why they did not halt the decline of Rome over the long run.</li> <li>• Identify key Christian figures and describe the impact of the growth of Christianity on the Roman social and political systems.</li> <li>• Summarize the major events that contributed to the decline of Rome as an Empire.</li> <li>• Identify Constantine and describe the Christianization of Rome, including the impact of Christianity on Roman law.</li> </ul>
6	The Early Middle Ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Western World Divided</li> <li>• The Medieval World</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define and describe the origins of feudalism.</li> <li>• Analyze the Germanic invasions of Roman Europe.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the role of the Byzantine Empire in preserving Western culture during the Middle Ages.</li> <li>• Identify Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor, and describe his relationship with the Church.</li> <li>• Examine the secularization of religious authority to develop a deeper understanding of the political underpinnings of the Medieval world.</li> <li>• Identify the Vikings and describe the expansion of Viking culture.</li> </ul>
7	Islam in the Medieval World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Birth of Islam</li> <li>• Muslim Empires</li> <li>• The Decline of Medieval Islam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the Prophet Muhammad and describe his role in spreading Islam throughout the Western world.</li> <li>• Explain what the Qur'an is and the relationship it lays out between Islam and other religions.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.</li> <li>• Analyze how and why Islam spread so quickly right after its birth.</li> <li>• Describe European interaction and resistance to Islam.</li> <li>• Explain the decline of medieval Islamic Civilization.</li> </ul>
8	The Restoration of Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feudalism</li> <li>• The Rise of Centralized Monarchies</li> <li>• Describe what peasant life was like.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the evolution of medieval culture and explain what life was like in Medieval Europe.</li> <li>• Analyze Medieval Europe's reaction to lack of centralized government to explain the evolution of nation-states and monarchical systems.</li> <li>• Identify the technologies that contributed to the age of agriculture, and describe the relationship between an agrarian-based economy and rapid population expansion.</li> </ul>
9	The Crusades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking Back the Holy Land</li> <li>• The Later</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Pope Urban II and describe the Church's motivation for initiating the Crusades.</li> </ul>

		Crusades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare and contrast the attitudes of Muslims and Europeans during the Crusades.</li> <li>• Explain how the Crusades contributed to the establishment of a stable political order in the Western world.</li> <li>• Describe the achievements of the first few Crusades, and contrast this with the results of later Crusades.</li> <li>• Examine traditional European fighting styles and explain why Europeans were at a strategic disadvantage for maintaining control over Jerusalem.</li> </ul>
10	The Late Middle Ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proclamation of Papal Supremacy</li> <li>• The Conciliar Movement</li> <li>• The Black Death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare and contrast the major religious, social, and political reforms that contributed to the rise the doctrine of papal supremacy.</li> <li>• Identify St. Thomas Aquinas and describe the impact of <i>Summa Theologiae</i> on secularization.</li> <li>• Define the Conciliar Movement and describe the impact of the Great Schism on papal authority.</li> <li>• Analyze the long-term results of the Hundred Years' War.</li> <li>• Describe the political and economic consequences of the fall of Constantinople.</li> <li>• List and describe the causes of the bubonic plague and the social, economic, and political changes in Europe that resulted from it.</li> </ul>
11	The Renaissance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Italian Renaissance</li> <li>• Politics in Italy</li> <li>• The Northern Renaissance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze the Renaissance and describe the evolution of European culture during the late Middle Ages.</li> <li>• Define humanism and describe the influence of Francesco Petrarch and Niccolo Machiavelli on the concept of individualism.</li> <li>• Examine the relationship between early Greek philosophy and the Renaissance.</li> <li>• Describe the birth of the Italian Renaissance.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the art, people, and culture that characterize the Italian Renaissance.</li> <li>• Describe the politics of Italy during the Renaissance.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast the Italian and Northern Renaissances.</li> </ul>
12	The Reformation of the Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martin Luther and the early Protestant Reformation</li> <li>• Piety, Protest, and Politics</li> <li>• The Catholic Counter-Reformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List and analyze a variety of internal tensions and reformist traditions in the Roman Catholic Church that initiated the Protestant Reformation.</li> <li>• Explain how the Reformation strengthened the role of secular government.</li> <li>• Describe the influence of Christian humanism on Catholic Reformation.</li> <li>• Discuss the creation of the Society of Jesus and how the Jesuits exemplify the Catholic Counter-Reformation..</li> <li>• Describe the role of the Council of Trent in attempting to eliminate Church corruption.</li> <li>• Describe the evolution of Christianity during the Reformation.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast the beliefs and doctrines of Martin Luther and John Calvin, and describe their roles in the Protestant Reformation.</li> </ul>
13	The New World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Search for the New World</li> <li>• The New World Discovered</li> <li>• Conquest of the New World</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe Portugal and Spain's contributions to westward expansion.</li> <li>• Identify Christopher Columbus and describe his role in the European colonization of the Americas.</li> <li>• Describe the function of the slave trade during westward expansion.</li> <li>• Define colonialism and explain the nature of European colonialism.</li> <li>• Explain the evolution of the European economy during westward expansion.</li> <li>• Describe the transformation of European culture during westward</li> </ul>

			expansion and describe how it affected the peoples and cultures of the Americas.
14	The Age of Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Wars of Religion</li> <li>• Absolutism in France</li> <li>• The Power of the English Parliament</li> <li>• The Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the evolution of France under Henry IV.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast the French and English Civil Wars and describe their impacts on future Western governments.</li> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of what the English House of Commons is and explain the function of Parliament.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, and explain how they contributed to our contemporary understanding of physics and astronomy.</li> <li>• Define absolutism and develop an understanding of the effect of French absolutism on world politics and its connection to mercantilism.</li> <li>• Describe the importance of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment to contemporary Western culture.</li> </ul>
15	Review Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a review of key content covered in this course.</li> </ul>