

**History 1400: Modern Western Traditions
Spring 2026**

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COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Sharmishtha Roy Chowdhury

Time: Tue-Thurs 11:00-12:15

Place: HTB 212

Office Hours: Tues-Thurs 3:30-5:30 (In-person) or virtual (by appointment)

Email: sharmishtha.roy_chowdhury@uconn.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the catalog, Hist 1400 is described as covering the “history of political institutions, economic systems, social structures, and cultures in the modern Western world.” Using this guideline this course examines the history of the Western world from the sixteenth century to the end of the Cold War in the twentieth century. Themes addressed are the wars of religion, the rise of revolutionary politics, industrialization and urbanization, nationalism and imperialism, socialism and communism, the two World Wars and the Cold War.

The class meets two days a week. Part of the Thursday meeting focuses on discussing the assigned texts for the week.

READINGS

Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks et al, *A History of Western Society*

Selections of various primary and secondary sources from UCONN library databases and other digital collections.

Students may purchase the book at the UConn bookstore or any retailer of their preference.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

CLO 1 Identify major themes and dynamics in western history and culture, including the wars of religion, the rise of revolutionary politics, industrialization and urbanization, nationalism and imperialism, socialism and communism, the two World Wars and the Cold War.

CLO 2 Describe major movements – intellectual, social, political and economic – that shaped western societies.

CLO 3 Evaluate how gender, race and class affected western cultures and societies and how ideas concerning them have been used to justify or legitimize social and political institutions.

CLO 4 Apply historical methodologies of critical reading, analysis of primary and secondary sources, and analytical writing skills.

Alignment of Common Curriculum & Course Student Learning Objectives with Assessments

The Common Curriculum prepares students to tackle 21st-century challenges by combining coursework across disciplines to expand their worldviews, enhance their range of skills, and develop into critical, creative, emotionally

intelligent, and interdisciplinary thinkers.

The University has defined student learning objectives (what a student should know, be able to do, or attitudes/beliefs they should possess by the end of the course) for each Topic of Inquiry in the Common Curriculum.

Topic of Inquiry	Common Curriculum objective	Course student learning objective(s)	Course assessment(s)
TOI 2	1. Students will be able to analyze the cultures in a given society in their historical, linguistic, and/or sociopolitical context through an understanding of a broad array of historical actors, narratives, artistic forms, power structures, technologies, and/or beliefs.	CLO 1, 2, 3	Discussions (in- class and online), reading responses, short writing assignments including exams, and research projects.
TOI 2	2. Students will be able to engage with a variety of perspectives in the global community, distinguish their own cultural patterns, and, through a process of dialogue and/or critical self-reflection, respond flexibly to multiple worldviews.	CLO 1, 2, 3	Discussions (in- class and online), reading responses, short writing assignments including exams, and research projects.
TOI 5	Using theories and methods of social scientific or humanistic inquiry, students will be able to critically examine how institutions and values are justified and/or how they relate to political, social, economic, or familial institutions.	CLO 3, 4	Discussions (in- class and online), reading responses, short writing assignments including exams, and research projects.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Attendance: The class will meet two days a week: Tuesday and Thursday. Lectures are important and you should try to attend them. **All students should have working email addresses in order to receive course-related information.**

We will spend part of the Thursday class meeting discussing the assigned readings for the week. Students are expected to participate in discussion, as discussion is an integral part of the learning process. Accordingly, each student should prepare to present and defend his or her views in class and to generate and engage in discussion based on a careful reading of the weekly readings.

Cell phones are not to be used in class. Please keep your phone on silent or switched off. **Laptop usage for note taking is a privilege.** No one may play games on their laptops or tablets during class time.

Assignments and Grading:

Here are the assignments for this course: **one** mid-term exam, a short paper and a **final** exam. There will also be in-class written assignments periodically as well as short reading responses due in the discussions tab in HuskyCT. The short paper should be written in response to the prompt provided in class. It should be no shorter than 5 double-spaced pages. Apart from assigned readings, students must demonstrate **independent research** in their paper that will be reflected in the paper's argument and in its bibliography. I encourage you to explore the library's holdings while preparing your assignment. If you are not familiar with using the library's databases, please make an appointment with a reference librarian to get assistance.

Some primary source readings for the assignments are on the Internet. **Students must be prepared** to spend time reading these texts either on their personal computers or on a library computer. In order to get remote access to library databases, you will need to get a UCONN NetID and password. **Please remember that although these documents are in the public domain, they are copyright of the websites where they are located.** Please acknowledge them in your citations wherever necessary.

Evaluation: The reading responses, class participation, in-class written assignments count for 25% of the grade. These assignments are graded complete/incomplete. The mid-term exam will constitute 25% of your final grade. The paper counts for 20% of the final grade. The final exam will be 30% of your final grade.

Academic Integrity:

In general, intellectual and academic integrity demand that you acknowledge your sources. Plagiarism is a violation of the UConn Student Code. Please review the information here: <https://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/>. See the following resources for more guidance about student conduct and how to maintain academic integrity:

- Academic Integrity: <https://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code/the-student-code-appendix-a/>
- [Understanding Plagiarism](#), a tutorial from UConn Library
- [Citing Sources](#), a UConn guide to introduce citing MLA, APA styles and more
- [Citation Machine](#), interactive citation tool for MLA and APA styles

- [KnightCite](#), interactive citation tool for MLA, APA, and Chicago styles
- [Assignment Calculator](#), interactive tool that provides a timeline for writing
- [Research QuickStart](#), guidance on common questions and needs in the research process
- [Research Now](#), guides to help you develop your research skills

AI Policy:

Regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence tools, here is an important reminder: The University of Connecticut has an iterative AI policy that permits faculty to customize class policies for the use of large language learning models and other AI tools in research and writing. While you may be permitted in other disciplines and classes to use these tools, **students enrolled in HIST 1400 are not allowed to integrate these tools in the following activities: answering discussion posts, quizzes and exam prompts, essays, and other short and long-form writing assignments.** AI tools aggregate the ideas, insights, scholarship, and intellectual property of many researchers and writers without giving them credit. Submitting AI-generated text as your own will be treated as an act of plagiarism in violation of the guidelines for academic integrity. Because you will receive course-specific rules in each of your classes, the university has assembled a useful [website](#) with tips for students to protect themselves from charges of academic dishonesty.

Note: I accept late submissions of papers, however there will be a reduction of grade points for each day the paper is overdue (in other words, submit papers late at your own risk). **No papers will be accepted after the final exam.**

STUDENT SERVICES

The Writing Center: <https://wcenter.hartford.uconn.edu> Please contact Jacob Horn.

Accommodation: The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You should also approach the Center for Students with Disabilities: <https://csd.uconn.edu/>

RESOURCES for STUDENTS EXPERIENCING DISTRESS

The University of Connecticut is committed to supporting students in their mental health, their psychological and social well-being, and their connection to their academic experience and overall wellness. The university believes that academic, personal, and professional development can flourish only when each member of our community is assured equitable access to mental health services. The university aims to make access to mental health attainable while fostering a community reflecting equity and diversity and understands that good mental health may lead to personal and professional growth, greater self-awareness, increased social engagement, enhanced academic success, and campus and community involvement.

Students who feel they may benefit from speaking with a mental health professional can find

support and resources through the [Mental Health Resource Center](#). Students can make an appointment with a mental health professional and engage in confidential conversations or seek recommendations or referrals for any mental health or psychological concern.

Mental health services are included as part of the university's student health insurance plan and also partially funded through university fees. If you do not have UConn's student health insurance plan, most major insurance plans are also accepted. Students can visit the Student Health and Wellness-Mental Health located in Storrs on the main campus in the Arjona Building, 4th Floor, or contact the office at (860) 486-4705, or <https://studenthealth.uconn.edu/> for services or questions.

Accommodations for Illness or Extended Absences

If illness prevents you from participating in class, it is your responsibility to notify me as soon as possible. If life circumstances are affecting your ability to focus on courses and your UConn experience, students can email the Dean of Students at dos@uconn.edu to request support.

Policy against Discrimination, Harassment, and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships

The University is committed to maintaining an environment free of discrimination or discriminatory harassment directed toward any person or group within its community – students, employees, or visitors. Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate romantic relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Refer to the [Policy against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships](#) for more information. To protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report assaults they witness or are told about to the [Office of Diversity & Equity](#) under the [Sexual Assault Response Policy](#). The University takes all reports with the utmost seriousness. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with University officials who can help. Refer to the [Sexual Assault Reporting Policy](#) for more information.

NOTE

Syllabus information is subject to change, with the exception of materials for purchase. The most up-to-date version of the syllabus is in the Weekly Schedule tab in HuskyCT.

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SCHEDULE OF CLASSES ON THE NEXT PAGE

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Jan 20: Wars of Religion and the Rise of Absolutist Monarchy

Tue: The Thirty Years War and European Religious Tensions

Thu: The Tudors of England; Louis XIV and Early Modern France

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt 15

Martin Luther's "Ninety-Five Theses":

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/luther95.txt>

Elizabeth I, Act of Uniformity, 1559:

<https://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er80.html>

St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, 1572:

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1572stbarts.asp>

Louis XIV, Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685):

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1685revocation.asp>

Week 2: Jan 27: The Enlightenment in Europe

Tue: The Enlightenment

Thu: The Philosophes and Political Culture

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt 16

Voltaire, *Candide* (extracts):

<http://web.archive.org/web/19980116133002/http://pluto.clinch.edu/history/wciv2/civ2ref/cand.html>

Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1763):

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/rousseau-soccon.asp>

Week 3: Feb 3: The Making of the European World System

Tue: Europe and the Voyages of Discovery and Exploration

Thu: Colonial Trade and European Economies

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpts. 14, 17

Privileges and Prerogatives granted to Christopher Columbus by Spain's Monarchs:

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th_century/colum.asp

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: <https://www.slavevoyages.org/blog/overview-slave-trade-out-africa>

Week 4: Feb 10: Women, Gender and Family in Early Modern Europe

Tue: Marriage and Family

Thu: Religion and Medicine

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt 18

British Broadside Ballads from the 18th Century (on HuskyCT)

Other primary sources on HuskyCT

Week 5: Feb 17: The Age of Revolutions (Midterm Exam)

Tue: Sister Revolutions: The Origins of the American and French Revolutions

Thu: The Reign of Terror

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt 19

Primary sources on HuskyCT

Week 6: Feb 24: Napoleonic Europe (Midterm exam alternate date)

Tue: From Pro-Consul to Emperor

Thu: The Napoleonic Empire

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt 19

Primary sources on HuskyCT

Week 7: Mar 3: Restoration Europe

Midterm Exam alternate date

Tue: Louis XVIII and Restoration France; Romanticism

Thu: The Revolutions of 1830 and 1848: Socialism and Liberalism

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt. 21

Honoré de Balzac, *Colonel Chabert* (Extracts)

Week 8: Mar 10: Industrialization in the West

Midterm Grades this week

Tue: The first and second industrial revolutions

Thu: Society and culture in the Age of Industrialization

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt. 20, 22

Primary sources on HuskyCT

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: Mar 24: National Unification Movements in Europe

Short Paper Due This Week

Tue: German Unification

Thu: Italian Unification

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpts. 23

Primary sources on HuskyCT

Week 11: Mar 31: The New Imperialism and Supremacist Ideologies

Tue: Theories of Imperialism

Thu: Social Darwinism and the road to World War I

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt. 24, 25

Primary sources on HuskyCT

Week 12: Apr 7: World War I and Revolution

Tue: Origins and Trench War

Thu: War and Revolution in Russia

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt. 25

Primary sources on HuskyCT

Week 13: Apr 14: Interwar Crisis and World War II

Tue: The Treaty of Versailles, the Economic Crisis

Thu: Fascism and Nazism in Europe; war and the Holocaust

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpts. 26-27

Film, "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari"

Week 14: Apr 21: World War II and the Cold War in Europe

Tue: Western Europe: Stability, Cultural change and Nuclear Anxiety

Thu: Eastern Europe: The Iron Curtain and Dissidence

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpt. 28

Primary sources on HuskyCT

Week 15: Apr 28: The End of the Cold War in Europe

Tue: Perestroika and Glasnost in the Soviet Union

Thu: The End of the Cold War and German reunification, 1989

Readings:

Wiesner-Hanks, *Western Society*, Chpts. 29 -30

Other readings TBD

Final Exam: Date and Time TBA