

Western Civilization 102H
Dr. Pam McRae, 205 Foust, plmcrae@uncg.edu
Office Hours: 2-3 TTr & by appointment

Texts: *Journey into the Whirlwind*, Eugenia Ginsburg
A book of your choice, with instructor's approval
Selected readings to be provided by instructor

In this course we will look closely at various “hot spots” in European and Russian history, those times, events, and individuals that have helped to shape the modern world. Beginning with the Protestant Reformation and the Scientific Revolution, western culture faced many challenges, including new ways of understanding everything from the cosmos to mankind itself. If old “laws” of nature no longer worked to explain the universe, did that mean that old traditions of social order might be subject to radical change as well? If society might be examined in novel ways, then what of the individual? Which should have primacy? Religious thought, social order, individual autonomy—these will form the bases of our discussions as we work toward a greater understanding of ourselves and our place in today's world. I urge you to keep an open mind as we discuss the history of the core ideas of modernity, to challenge your own assumptions, and to consider this course as merely the introduction to a lifetime of learning and re-evaluation.

The class will include lecture, discussion, student presentations, a book review, and either a final paper or exam. Attendance is required, except for illness or family emergency. You will be expected to contribute substantially to the actual content of the course, and your participation will be important to the success of the entire class. Excessive absences will lower your grade.

Grades will be based on class participation (10%), book review (30%), presentations (30%), and final exam (or paper) (30%).

Topical Outline:

Rise of modern nation-state
Scientific Revolution
Age of Enlightenment
French Revolution
Napoleon
Industrial Revolution
Romanticism, Liberalism, Socialism, Nationalism
Congress of Vienna & European Revolutions
Marx & Darwin

Nationalism in Italy & Germany
Responses to Industrialization
Imperialism & the Scramble for Africa
Freud
World War One
Russian Revolution
Stalin
Hitler
World War Two

Key Topics:

What were the factors that shaped the politics of England and France in the 17th c.?

What was the nature of the conflict between Parliament and the king over taxation and religion in early Stuart England?

What were the causes and consequences of the English Civil War?

How was power distributed in the English Restoration?

What did the Glorious Revolution accomplish?

How did the reign of Louis XIII set the stage for the Absolutism of Louis XIV?

What was the condition of France at the end of Louis XIV's reign?

Think About:

Which form of government—constitutional monarchy or absolute monarchy—do you instinctively prefer? Construct an argument in defense of the one you like least.

How important are individuals to the course of history, as opposed to institutions and large socio-cultural groups?