

HISTORY OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION I

Tues/Thurs 11:00 AM – 2:20 PM
Cobb Lecture Hall 107

HIST 13001-05
Winter Quarter 2019

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 3:45-5 PM
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the first half of a two-quarter sequence that aims to provide an overview of European civilization from 400 A.D. to the present. We will begin by dipping even earlier, since European Civilization has been so shaped by the inheritance, loss, recovery and transformation of materials from earlier eras, as the legacies of Greeks and Romans, poets and emperors, conquerors and conquered mixed and reshaped each other. We will take a critical approach to history, not memorizing names and dates but plunging into the real work of historians: using surviving documents and evidence to determine what we can know and, just as important, what we can't know about the past. This course will not present a clean timeline of A leading to B and C, but the raw primary sources, full of gaps and confusion, lies and silences, from which historians work to cobble together the past, and to cut through misconceptions and propaganda.

This version of European Civilization Part 1 offers TWO DIFFERENT TRACKS which students may complete.

The “Letters Track” uses personal letters written by historical figures, from Pliny the Elder to Machiavelli and beyond, as a lens to access European history. Written assignments in this track focus on creative writing, writing for a specific audience, and on getting inside the minds of historical figures, thinking outside our modern timeframe. Machiavelli will be one of the focuses of this track, and students will use Machiavelli's rocky and human personal life to look past the way we tend to valorize “great minds” in history, thinking of them as inhuman and aloof from everyday concerns, to look instead at how even famous figures who shaped history faced mundane problems: grudges, romance, pranks, frustration, impatience, laundry, worrying about finding a job, etc.

The “History of Magic” track takes magic as its theme, unifying the disparate texts and time periods by examining how magic permeated Europe's pre-modern understanding of the world, universe, and society, overlapping with realms we would now call religion, medicine, and science. Alchemy, necromancy, demonology, angelology, theurgy, astrology, prophecy, conjuration, potions, charms and curses all expressed different aspects of the cosmos pre-modern societies believed they inhabited, and understanding them shows us much about how logic, argument, truth and morality evolved. This track involves extra reading and is more work than the standard track, but made available for students interested in the history of magic.

Writing is another focus of the course, and written assignments will be creative writing rather than traditional academic writing. Extra credit writing exercises will be available to those students interested in further improving your writing skills. Becoming a great writer means a long apprenticeship, and I cannot teach you how to become a great writer in one quarter, but I

can teach you how to teach yourself how to become a great writer, so you can continue honing your skill long after this class is over.

NOTE: **The use of laptops in class is permitted but at your own risk.** If you use a laptop for note-taking and for referring to e-reserves then you may bring one, but be careful: students who give in to the temptation to browse the web or text chat during class tend to see their grades suffer as a result of reduced class participation and attention.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

15% Attendance: You will receive credit for attendance at each class session. One unexcused absence is permitted at no penalty (no explanation needed: illness, family wedding, emergency rehearsal, sister's concert debut in another state, anything goes *once*). Beyond a single absence you will be marked down and your grad will suffer as a result of missed classes, but if you know in advance that you will miss a class you should contact the instructor *and* TA to let them know, and we can discuss options, and the penalty may be less if you are good about communication.

30% Class participation OR discussion responses: The majority of each class will consist of discussion of the readings. Students must arrive prepared to engage in analysis of the readings. Your participation in each class will be assessed, and you will receive credit based on your participation. Participation is expected to clearly reflect the readings—if your contributions to class do not demonstrate knowledge of the readings (or make clear that you did not complete the readings) you will not receive full credit for participation (but will still receive partial credit).

If you don't have a chance to participate in any given class, or if you find it difficult to speak up, or prefer to listen rather than to speak, you may instead turn in a one-to-two page (double spaced) written comment *at the next class* (or by e-mail to the TA *before* the next class) expressing your views on the discussion that occurred in the previous class, i.e. what you might have said if you had had a chance to speak. Turning in the written discussion response before or at the next class will give you full participation credit for the previous class session, just as if you spoke up in class.

AMNESTY: From time to time we all have something come up which disrupts our work: a cold, a family crisis, tech week for *Henry V*, etc. Once per quarter you may come to me before class (or e-mail) and say "I couldn't do the reading this week," and there will be no penalty if your participation that week does not reflect the readings.

35% Seven Written Assignments: these are due on the Tuesdays of each week from Week 3 through Week 10. These must be 3-4 double-spaced pages in length (~1,100 to 1,300 words). They should be turned in electronically to the instructor as well as the TA, and **MUST BE TURNED IN BEFORE CLASS IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN**. Assignments submitted during or after class will be counted as one day late. You may turn in paper copies if you prefer. Each is worth 5% of your final grade.

FLEXIBILITY AND EXTRA CREDIT: You may turn in a response paper in any of weeks 3-9. This means there are eight chances to turn in a paper, but you only need to write seven, so you

may skip one of your choice. I recommend that you look over the requirements for your other courses, and planning to skip on a week you have an exam or paper due for another class. If you wish, instead of skipping, you may write an extra (8 total) and we will drop the lowest grade.

20% Final Take-Home Essay Exam: The exam is included at the end of this syllabus. There are two versions, one for the standard track, one for the History of Magic track. Exams will be submitted electronically.

All written work must be double-spaced and submitted in Size 12 Times New Roman font, or another serif font with similar page density, on standard sized paper with standard one inch margins. Electronic files must be sent as attachments, and must be PDF TEXT or .DOC files. Standard format *does not have gaps between the paragraphs*, or other bulky layout items such as headers large enough to reduce the lines per page, or or excessively broad spacing of preliminary information on the first page. If you prefer to have spaces between paragraphs, or to include a large header section on the first page, you must write an extra half page or more to make up for the empty space. **No sans serif fonts.**

Optional Extra Credit Writing Exercises: Writing well is invaluable, but also challenging. Up to three times per semester (any time before the last class session), you may complete one of the extra credit assignments described below and receive a bonus equivalent to up to 5% of the course grade. These are exercises are based on those used in professional creative writing workshops and journalism training programs. They are designed to teach you how to improve your writing skills on your own time, which should in turn improve your grades on future writing assignments (in this class and others), not to mention giving you writing skills which will be valuable lifelong. You may do each assignment once, or repeat them, doing the same one up to three times. If you choose to do more than three extra credit assignments, only the best three will be counted. If you are interested in further opportunities to work on writing, talk to me.

- **Extra-Credit Assignment #1: Source Comparison:** Choose a historical figure or literary work we have discussed. Print out the Wikipedia article about it, then go to the library and find two different printed academic reference books which discuss the same person (i.e. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, any dictionary of historical biography). Compare the Wikipedia page to the academic source. 1,500 words.
- **Extra-Credit Assignment #2: “Half and Half Again”:** Take a paper, of at least four pages in length, which you have written for a different class (either in college or in High School) and rewrite it to make exactly the same arguments in half as many words. You must hand in both the original paper and the shortened version.
 - **To do more,** wait a week & then reduce the SAME paper by half AGAIN to one quarter of its original length. This is the ultimate exercise in mastering concision.

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT THE SEMINARY CO-OP BOOKSTORE:

If the cost of purchasing these books is a substantial financial burden for you, and you want help finding an alternative (library copies, borrowing books) speak to the instructor anytime for help borrowing copies. For those purchasing books, I encourage you to buy them at the Seminary Co-

op (instead of Amazon) to support our great local bookstore. If you want to use a different edition of one of these texts that is fine, but for Dante you must use the John Ciardi translation.

1. *Beowulf* (J. R. R. Tolkien Translation: 978-0544570306)
2. *The Poetic Edda*, Carolyne Larrington translation (Oxford: 978-0199538386)
3. Jocelin of Brakelond, *Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds* (Oxford World's Classics: 978-0199554935)
4. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise* (Penguin: 978-0140448993)
5. Boccaccio, *Decameron* (Norton, 0393350266)
6. Dante, *Inferno*, John Ciardi translation (Signet, 978-0451531391)
7. *A Corresponding Renaissance*, ed. Lisa Kaborycha (978-0199342433)
8. *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence* (978-0875805993)
9. Martin Luther, *On Christian Liberty* (Augsburg Fortress Press 978-0800636074)

Optional readings for those doing the History of Magic track:

10. *The Book of Magic*, edited by Brian Copenhaver (Penguin, 978-0141393148)
11. Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (Dover Thrift 0486282082)

Special reserve: Marlowe's *Faustus*, Globe Theater production, DVD. On reserve in Regenstien

E-RESERVES

1. Timeline of Important Dates.
2. Plato, *Republic*, Book II 376c-end; Book V beginning to 456b.
3. Pliny the Younger, letters concerning The Eruption of Vesuvius, a Haunted House, and the Practices of this New Religion of the Christians.
4. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book IV.
5. Viking Timeline.
6. Anselm, "Ontological Proof of the Existence of God."
7. Aquinas, "Proofs of the Existence of God."
8. Florence Timeline.
9. Petrarch, "Italia Mia" (poem).
10. Ficino, *Meditations on the Soul*, pp. 3-21 and 39-49.
11. Guide to Machiavelli's Letters
12. Martin Luther, three excerpts concerning witchcraft and magic.
13. The Golden Bull of 1356
14. Priests and Estates – the Treaty of Tübingen
15. The Religious Peace of Augsburg
16. The Perpetual Public Peace

The instructor has a few copies of a course packet with printed versions of these e-reserves. If you find it much easier to read a paper copy than an electronic one, ask the instructor and you may borrow one of the printed versions.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings will be discussed on the day they are listed, so the readings listed as 1b (Jan 5th) should be read before that day, and will be discussed on Jan 5th.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION: A WORLD OF ENCHANTMENT AND HIERARCHY

Tuesday Jan 8: No assignment for this class.

Thursday Jan 10:

- i. E-reserve: Plato, *Republic*, Book II 376c-end, & Book V start to 456b (14 pages).
- ii. E-reserve: Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book IV.
- iii. E-reserve: Pliny the Younger, letters on the Eruption of Vesuvius, the Haunted House, and the Persecution of Christians.

† If you are considering the optional History of Magic track, read *The Book of Magic* "Introduction," Section 1: "Study No Abomination: the Hebrew Bible and Apocrypha" (pp. 9-42).

WEEK 2: A WORLD OF ICE AND FIRE

Tuesday Jan 15: *Beowulf* (J.R.R. Tolkien translation) complete.

† If you are doing the optional History of Magic track, read *The Book of Magic* "Introduction," Section 2: "Power in the Name of Jesus: the Greek New Testament" (pp. 43-76), and Section 4: "Drugs, Charms and Fair Words: Greco-Roman Antiquity" (pp. 99-162)

Thursday Jan 17: *The Poetic Edda*, read "The Seeress's Prophecy," "The Sayings of the High One," "Vafthrudnir's Sayings," "Grimnir's Sayings," "Loki's Quarrel," "Baldr's Dream" and "The List of Rig."

† If you are doing the optional History of Magic track, read *The Book of Magic* Section 5: "The Primal Mage and Sorcerer: Late Antiquity" (pp. 163-218) subsections 1-7, 10, 13 and 14 and optionally section 3: "Fire Priests, *Magoi* and *Mageia*"

WEEK 3: MEDIEVAL LIVES, MEDIEVAL MINDS

Tuesday Jan 22: Jocelin of Brakelond, *Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds*. (122 pages).

First Written Assignment Due: 3-4 double-spaced pages

1. **Letters Track:** Practice writing a historical letter. Write a letter from a Christian missionary writing home to his bishop in France talking about his encounters with Vikings and early inhabitants of the British Isles. You have just read *Beowulf* and the *Poetic Edda*. Comment to the bishop about the customs and ethics of these people, and challenges in interacting with them.
2. **History of Magic Track:** Write a reflection on the readings you have done so far in *The Book of Magic*. How different does it feel thinking about stories from the Christian tradition in the context of magic? Or thinking about what you knew before of the Roman tradition? You may also comment on how these readings make you understand *Beowulf* differently.

Thursday Jan 24: Machiavelli letters 269-274 (Machiavelli's prank on the monks)

WEEK 4: "THAT ANGEL REASON"

Tuesday Jan 29: In the *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, read the *Historia calamitatum*

† If you are doing the optional history of magic track, read *The Book of Magic* Section 6 "Armies of Sorcery and Flights of Angels: Early Christian Europe" (pp. 219-270); and Section 7 "The Arts of Magic That Astonish Us: The Middle Ages" (pp. 271-340) subsections 1-17 only (subsection 17-22 optional).

Second Written Assignment Due:

1. **Letters Track:** Two options. (A) Imagine that you are one of the residents of the town near the abbey Bury St. Edmund's, and that someone in your family is in trouble. Perhaps your son or brother has killed someone in a drunken brawl. Perhaps your crops have failed. Perhaps your father or husband has died and left you without a means to support yourself. Write a letter to the abbot asking for help, modeled on our discussions of the patronage system. Alternately (B) Imagine that you are Queen Isabella, the wife of King John. Abbot Samson has just died, and you have heard the king complaining about the independence and power of this Abbey, and how it is a thorn in his side. It is time for a new abbot to be chosen, and John intends to influence the election. Write a letter (royal spouses often communicated by letter) advising him on how much you think he should or should not interfere with the election, and what qualities he should look for in a potential new abbot. It is up to you to decide whether Isabel would want to advise John to leave the abbey alone, defending its sovereignty and independence, or to try to control it firmly.
2. **History of Magic Track:** Write a reflection on the entanglement of magic and Christianity, as you have seen them in the readings so far in *The Book of Magic*, using the *Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds* as your window on Medieval religious life. What have you found surprising about the interactions between magic and Christianity? About the involvement of priests and monks with magic? About how difficult it is to draw a strict line between spells and prayers? Or magic items and holy relics?

Thursday Jan 31:

- i. *Letters of Abelard and Heloise* Letters 1-5 ("Personal Letters"; pp. 3-92).
- ii. Also from the course pack: St. Anselm, "Ontological Proof of the Existence of God" and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, "Proofs of the Existence of God." NOTE: the Anselm and Aquinas readings are short, but are some of the hardest written material in the history of European civilization, so take your time and read slowly and carefully.

WEEK 5: A CITY FAMED IN HELL

Tuesday Feb 5: Dante, *Inferno*, Canti I-XXIII (John Ciardi translation, with notes.)

Third Written Assignment Due:

- a. **Letters Track:** Write as a nun in the nunnery where Heloise is abbess. You read the *Historia Calamitatum* and also the letters between Abelard and Heloise. Write your own letter in response, addressed either to Abelard or to Heloise. (If

you wish, a pair of you could collaborate, and one could write to Abelard while the other writes a response as Abelard.

- b. **History of Magic Track:** Reflect on intelligence and scholarship as presented in our readings so far, both *The Book of Magic* and others. Discuss the entanglement of the categories of “scholar” and “sorcerer/wizard/etc.” How does this entanglement change the way you would understand the situation with Abelard and Heloise, or the arguments of Anselm and Thomas Aquinas? (You may if you prefer write the letter listed as option #1 this week instead—your choice.)

Thursday Feb 7:

- i. Dante, *Inferno*, remainder.
- ii. Also Machiavelli letters:
 - c. Letter 22: Sodomy trials and papal corruption.
 - d. Letter 25: The pope murdering Cardinals.
 - e. Letter 70: Machiavelli’s family attempting to commit simony.
 - f. Letter 107: the Captain General of Florence praising Machiavelli’s history of these disastrous times (i.e. the Renaissance)

WEEK 6: DESPERATE MEASURES

Tuesday Feb 12:

- i. Machiavelli letter 78 (Machiavelli in danger from the plague.)
- ii. Boccaccio, *Decameron* (Selections). *Warning: the *Decameron* depicts sexual exploitation. If you are uncomfortable reading about this, skip Book III story 10. Speak with the instructor if you have questions or concerns.
 - i. Book I Prologue (Black Death)
 - ii. Book I Story 1 (Saint Cepperello)
 - iii. Book I Story 2 (Abraham and the Jew)
 - iv. Book III Story 10 (Putting the Devil Back in Hell)
 - v. Book IV Story 2 (Archangel Gabriel)
 - vi. Book VI Story 10 (The Angel’s Feather)
 - vii. Book VIII Story 6 (Calandrino and the Pig)
 - viii. Book VIII Story 7 (The Jilted Scholar)
 - ix. Book VIII Story 8 (Adultery Among Friends)
 - x. Book VIII Story 9 (Master Simone “Goes the Course”).
 - xi. Book IX Story II (Nuns Having Fun)
 - xii. Book IX Story III (Calandrino’s Pregnancy)
 - xiii. Book IX Story V (The Enchanted Scroll)
 - xiv. Author’s Epilogue.

Fourth Written Assignment Due: Both Tracks write a new Canto for the *Inferno*, addressing a new sin Dante did not include, or encountering a new historical or literary figure. You may wish to depict one of our other authors in Hell, but choosing a different or modern figure is alright. Be sure to use *contrapasso*, and to make it petty like the original. Your choice should be cultural/political not personal, i.e. it is appropriate to portray a modern crime like hacking or democide, or to choose to portray Peter Abelard, Sigmund Freud, or your Congressperson, but it is not appropriate to portray your sibling,

or a U Chicago community member. Prose is fine (no need for verses), but grades will be partly based on how well you use (and demonstrate understanding of) Dante's metaphysics. **History of Magic students** should include magic in some way in your choice of who to include: a particular kind of magic user or scholar perhaps?

Thursday Feb 14:

- i. E-reserve: Petrarch's "Italia Mia" (single poem)
- ii. E-reserve: Ficino, *Meditations on the Soul*, pp. 3-21, 39-49.
- iii. E-reserve:
 1. Letter 92: Machiavelli's friend Vespucci speculating about whether humans can alter the fate assigned by the Stars.
 2. Letter 166: an astrologer advises Machiavelli on his campaign to conquer Pisa.
 3. Letters 223 & 224 (Machiavelli and his friend Vettori discuss their love of the ancients while Machiavelli is in exile)

† If you are doing the optional History of Magic Track read *The Book of Magic* Section 8 "Ancient Wisdom and Folly: The Earlier Renaissance" (pp. 337-398).

WEEK 7: PENS OVER SWORDS

Tuesday Feb 19:

- iv. *A Corresponding Renaissance*: Read letters 1-4, 6-18, 20-22, 26-27, 29, 31, 35, 36, 37, 50, 53. You can skip the introduction to the whole book but you must read the biographical introduction to each letter.

† If you are doing the optional History of Magic Track read *The Book of Magic* Section 9 "Ancient Wisdom Modernized: the Later Renaissance" (pp. 391-440).

Fifth Written Assignment Due:

1. **Letters Track:** Either (A) Write a letter from Dante to Boccaccio or from Boccaccio to Dante discussing their work, or (B) Rather than a letter, write a short story in the style of the Decameron tales, using some element of magic we have studied in class.
2. **History of Magic Track:** Reflect on how Boccaccio represents magic in his stories. He has both fake magic and real, as well as both fake miracles and real—what do you make of that?

Thursday Feb 21: Machiavelli. Machiavelli letters on sexuality, family, and on the chaotic political catastrophe which birthed, both *The Prince*, and the Reformation. Important: see the guide to the letters for notes on who people in the letters are.

3. Before reading the letters (listed below), go to the blog www.exurbe.com and read the Machiavelli series (linked at right).
4. Letter 91: rumors that an army from Naples is marching on Florence, a sample of the kind of fragmentary information Machiavelli had to work with.
5. Letter 112: Machiavelli's advice to Florence, a sample of his job analyzing rumors and advising the Republic.
6. Letter 121: Machiavelli advises his boss Chancellor Soderini. Concentrate on page 2, where the ideas of *The Prince* begin to take shape from Machiavelli's political work.
7. Letter 169: A friend laments that no one trusts Machiavelli's ideas.

8. Letter 203: Machiavelli describes the fall of the Republic, and his arrest and torture.
9. Letter 212: Machiavelli's friend Vettori has asked for his analysis of the situation with Spain, and Machiavelli demonstrates his analysis—this conversation leads to the drafting of *The Prince*. Optionally you may read 211, 213 and 215-216 as well.)
10. Letters 226-228, 231, 328 and 332, on sex, romance, and family. IMPORTANT: in letter 231, “Giuliano Brancacci” is a pseudonym for Machiavelli himself.
11. Optionally you may read 229, 230, 236 and 238 (to hear more sexual adventures of Machiavelli and his friends).

WEEK 8: REJECTION AND REFORMATION

Tuesday Feb 26: Special Session on the Holy Roman Empire

- i. E-reserve: The Golden Bull of 1356
- ii. E-reserve: Priests and Estates – the Treaty of Tübingen
- iii. E-reserve: The Religious Peace of Augsburg
- iv. E-reserve: The Perpetual Public Peace

Sixth Written Assignment Due:

Letters Track: Three choices. Either (A) choose a woman in *A Corresponding Renaissance* and write a reply to her letter as if you were the recipient; (B) choose a woman from *A Corresponding Renaissance* and write as that woman to one of the other women in the collection or to Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ficino, or Machiavelli, or (C) Write a letter to/from a figure in one of our Byzantium readings.

History of Magic Track: Reflect on the Renaissance revival of antiquity through the lens of the history of magic, and its entanglement with the history of scholarship. Or, reflect on the women in *A Corresponding Renaissance*, and on the gendered elements of magic and spiritual mysticism we have seen in our shared readings as well as in *The Book of Magic*.

Thursday Feb 28:

- i. Luther, *On Christian Liberty* (complete).
- ii. *A Corresponding Renaissance*: letter 5.

† If you are doing the optional History of Magic track, read Luther, Selections Concerning Witchcraft

WEEK 9: LAUNCHING INTO THE UNKNOWN

Tuesday March 5:

- i. E-reserve: Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *The Native Conquistador*, pp. 6-7, 19-35, 88-98, 106-112.
- ii. E-reserve: Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, pages 5-25, 31-56.
- iii. E-reserve: Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Memoirs*, excerpts (chapters LXXIII, LXXXV, LXXXVIII, XCI, XCII, XCIII).

† If you are doing the optional History of Magic track, read *The Book of Magic* Section 10 “Magic Seen, Heard and Mocked” (pp. 453-512).

Seventh Written Assignment Due:

Letters Track: Imagine it is 1518 and Luther considering whether or not to break with Rome. Write as Machiavelli to advising Luther on whether to do it, and what to expect and do in the aftermath if he does.

History of Magic Track: Reflect on the shifts in how magic is being understood now that we are entering the Reformation era. How are the changes of the Reformation and Renaissance reflected in these changing attitudes? What do you make of Luther's comments on witchcraft? The great witch burning craze which leads eventually to Salem will *begin* in this era, rather than diminishing—how does that complicate the idea that the rising interest in reason and science and new ideas is in tension with belief in magic?

Thursday March 7:

- i. E-reserve: Galileo, Letter to Grand Duchess Christina
- ii. *A Corresponding Renaissance*: Read letters 51 and 54.

† If you are doing the optional History of Magic track, read *The Book of Magic* Section II "Magic in an Age of Science" (pp. 513-572)

WEEK 10: AGENTS OF HISTORY

Tuesday Mar 12: No new required reading.

† If you are doing the optional History of Magic track, read or watch Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*

Eighth Written Assignment Due:

Letters Track: Imagine that you are one of the women from *A Corresponding Renaissance* (pick a specific one). You have just read these accounts of the discovery (and destruction) of the New World. Write a letter about it to either (A) another of the women in the collection, (B) King Phillip of Spain, (C) one of the authors of one of our New World texts, or (D) Machiavelli. Try to think deeply about how that woman would feel, and what she would want to say.

History of Magic Track: Write a letter to Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. You may write as anyone we have studied (Machiavelli, Ficino, Heloise, Snorri Sturlson, the monks at St. Edmunds...) Imagine that you are writing to Faustus either (A) at the beginning of the play, when he is trying to decide whether or not to sign the contact with Mephistopheles, or (B) at the end on his last night before the contract expires.

The Essay Exam due by e-mail BY MIDNIGHT on March 14th. Completed take-home exams must be sent by e-mail BOTH to the instructor AND to the TA.

EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION I: FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM STANDARD TRACK

You must write two exam essays. Each should be about 1,500 words long. No footnotes, citations or bibliography are expected (just as if you were writing this as an in-class closed book exam on paper) but you may include short quotations if you wish. The language should be formal, with correct grammar etc., but (as with the letters) the voice and structure should be appropriate to the genre. If you are doing the History of Magic track you have a different exam.

Essay 1:

Thinking of the letters Petrarch wrote to Cicero and Homer, write a letter addressed to one of the authors or major figures we studied in this class (i.e. Beowulf, Abbot Samson, Heloise, Petrarch, Ficino, one of the women from *A Corresponding Renaissance*, Machiavelli, Luther, Doctor Faustus, etc.). Your letter may and should be personal, and emotion and strong opinions are welcome. You may discuss anything you like, but you should focus on the following issues:

- How you personally feel about the addressee, her or his life, ideas, accomplishments,
- How the addressee is remembered now, why we consider the addressee important, why we study the addressee now,
- What has happened to the addressee's works, legacy, family, homeland, whatever she or he cared about and worked toward,
- How you personally judge the addressee, your praise, criticisms, advice,
- Information about the future which you think the addressee would really want to know or be strongly affected by, things you think would be a consolation, or a shock,
- Your general opinions on the effect the addressee had on the world, considering *both* later *and* earlier developments, and placing the addressee in long-term context.
- The addressee's place in the long, evolving continuity of history. Remember, odd as it is to say it, that you know more about history than many of these figures, or at least you know different things. Most of the people you might write to did not have the opportunity to read *Beowulf*, *the Poetic Edda*, *the Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds*, etc. They knew little about the realities of the ancient world, or distant regions in their own time, and they certainly did not have the benefit of a synthetic long-term history course in the age of statistics and critical reasoning. You have as many new and surprising things to say to your addressee about her or his past as you do about her or his future, so make certain to devote a good portion of your letter to the parts of history that came before your figure lived, especially if you choose to write to someone from the later centuries of our syllabus (i.e. Pico, Luther or Galileo). If you choose to write to someone very early (Beowulf) then you may spend more of your time discussing that figure's future. If you write to someone from the middle of our syllabus (Heloise, Dante) then you should spend approximately equal time discussing earlier and later periods.

Remember to keep in mind the huge gulf of perspective between the addressee and yourself, and to describe future *and past* events in ways you think the addressee could understand and relate to. The best letters will draw broadly on your knowledge of these thinkers from lecture and readings, and will reflect on how the addressee's world was a different world from our own.

Essay 2:

Right now, the new things you met in this course, the alien minds and foreign time periods you encountered and the perspectives they opened up for you, are fresh, vivid, and at their most powerful. Five years from now, you will be moving on in your life path, working to launch your career, to complete grad school or training, to shape and strengthen your family and friendships, choosing between different opportunities, and finding the causes which will become important focuses of your life's work. At that time you will be surrounded by distractions, deadlines, fatigue, people counting on you, tasks to face; the things you learned in this course will still be with you but quiet, half invisible, like a picture hanging on the wall that's been there so long you don't really notice it anymore. Write a letter addressed to yourself five years from now, in which you remind yourself of the things you learned in this course which were most powerful, important, which changed the way you think about history, and which you want your future self, five years from now, to remember as you carry forward. Your essay may contain advice to yourself if you wish, but above all it should be a synthesis of what you learned and how it changed your ways of thinking. This letter should not be a repetitive summary going text by text and regurgitating the central points, but should focus on your overall ideas and feelings about what was valuable and important, and may treat any given text only in passing or as a quick example as you concentrate on the big issues.

(You may want to program your calendar to e-mail you five years from now to remind you to reread this letter, to reflect on this moment of contact between your present and future self.)

GUIDELINES FOR BOTH ESSAYS:

While in letter form, these essays are intended to test your comprehensive knowledge of the first half of the European Civilization sequence. The best essays will refer to many or nearly all of the texts we read in this class (I will count, and will subtract points if you omit too many, but I do not expect you to use every single author; it is OK if you use an author in just one essay and not the other, you don't have to use them all in both). The best essays will also discuss all the periods we covered, key differences between them, and the broad themes discussed in class. A good essay will not read like a rambling checklist in which you have gone text-by-text to check off all the authors without any real flow. Instead you should let your ideas guide you, and use sources naturally as they come up to illustrate and inform your points, drawing upon them as evidence or examples.

You may briefly bring in sources and issues from outside of class if one comes up as you are writing and feels central to your thoughts, but, if you choose do this, I urge you to make it brief; you need as much space as possible to treat the texts and themes from this course, and you could easily drown them out if you let yourself plunge too deeply into outside material. Better to err on the side of caution, so you don't take valuable word count away from the part you are being evaluated on.

Remember above all that concision is a virtue. You have only 1,500-2,000 words for each essay to synthesize and convey a huge amount of material, and the more ideas you pack in the stronger your essay will be, and the better your grade. Review your prose carefully to make sure you have stripped away all the padding and extraneous verbiage and that every paragraph is densely filled with ideas. Often the strongest essay will result if you write the essay to be 2,500 words at first, then sleep on it and go back a few days later to strip the essay down, removing extraneous material and focusing in on the most important parts.

You must write one paper. It should be about 3,000 words long, or a little longer. No bibliography is required, but you must quote from our primary source readings, and cite them (either in-line or in footnotes) by title and page number. The language should be formal, with correct grammar etc., but (as with the letters) the voice and structure should be appropriate to the genre.

First, read Christopher Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus*, OR (and the latter is recommended) **watch the Globe Theater production on DVD**. It is on reserve in Regenstein, and we can schedule a group screening. The full text of the play is also available free online in many places.

Looking back over European history, and especially the history of knowledge—how people pursued it, how people understood it, what people tried to do with it—reflect on Marlowe's *Faustus*, and what it shows us about the 17th century understanding of what it meant to be a scholar, and what knowledge is/was/can do/should be. The concepts of scholar/philosopher and wizard/sorcerer/witch have long been entangled with each other in European history; how does *Doctor Faustus* reflect and comment on these entanglements, and how does it reflect the many accumulated ideas about magic and knowledge that Europe has developed in the ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation eras? How does *Doctor Faustus* reflect the history of magic differently from how it might have had it been written *before* the 17th century rejection of the presumptive authority of the past, instead of after. You may if you wish use this essay to reflect on the histories of formal education and universities, and your own place as a student at a university which is an inheritor of this tradition, but that is not required.

The best papers will make extensive use of quotations from texts to support their arguments, and will draw on *Doctor Faustus*, on *The Book of Magic*, and on other primary sources from our syllabus. Papers which make only limited use of sources, or which use few sources, will receive lower grades.