HISTORY 240A: Europe from the Renaissance to the French Revolution

COURSE OUTLINE 2019

Subject to change

Instructor: Professor R.S. Alexander
Office: Clearihue B220       Tele: 721-7391       email: rsa@uvic.ca
Office Hours: 12:30-2:00 on Wednesdays, or by appointment.

This survey consists of a broad narrative of principal developments in Europe during the early-modern era (roughly from the end of the Middle Ages to 1800). It links developments in international relations to political, social, cultural, and economic change in the leading states of continental Europe. In addition to discussion of how historians examine the past, it provides an introduction to a wide range of subjects which students can subsequently pursue in more detail in upper-level courses.

Required Reading
John Merriman, A History of Modern Europe: From the Renaissance to the Age of Napoleon, 4th edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company). This is a survey text that provides general background & serves as a complement to the lectures.


Marks
a) Term Essay - 35%.
b) Final Exam - 35%. Two Hours in Duration.
c) In-Class Tests – 20% (there are two of them; so, 10% for each).
d) Seminars - 10% (for participation). There are four of them; so 2.5 marks for each one.

*** To pass this course, students must submit the term essay & write the final exam.

Term Essay: I will provide a list of topics, but you can make up your own one provided I approve it. The essay should be approximately 2,500 words (around 10-12 pages) in length.

Exam: the Final Exam will be based on the lectures and readings of the entire term. In the final class of the term, I will discuss how to prepare for it. The Exam will be composed of two sections. In each section you will be asked to choose from a certain number of essay questions.

In-Class Tests: There are two of them. The first one will be based on materials covered in Parts A & B of the schedule; the second test will be based on materials covered in Parts C & D of the schedule. The tests will consist of a choice of identification questions wherein you will be asked to describe the historical significance of something. In essence, you
should write the equivalent of an encyclopaedia entry, explaining why something was important.

**Seminars:** you will be expected to attend four seminar classes in the term. They provide an opportunity for discussion & you will be marked for your participation in each one.

**Topics**
* There may be some variation, but the topics covered will largely consist of the following.

**Part A: The Renaissance and Reformation**
Intro
The late Middle Ages: General Characteristics
Rebirth: The Italian Renaissance
The Renaissance in Northern Europe
State Formation in the West: the ‘New Monarchies’ of Spain & France
State Formation in Central & Northern Europe
Hegemon?: Charles V & the Era of the Protestant Reformation #1
Hegemon?: Charles V & the Era of the Protestant Reformation #2

**Part B: The Wars of Religion**
New Worlds?: Spanish & Portuguese Overseas Empire
Europe Divided: Religious & Civil War
Seminar I: ‘The Spread of the Reformation’.
Philip II Part 1: War with the Ottomans & Dutch Revolt
Philip II: Part 2: Spanish Armada & Economic Collapse
The Thirty Years War: Part 1: Devastation in Central Europe
The Thirty Years War: Part 2: French Ascendancy in the West
**In-Class Test: Covers Parts A & B Only**

**Part C: The Age of Louis XIV**
Absolutism in 17th-Century France
Seminar II: ‘Staging Absolutism’.
The Cost of Glory: the Wars of Louis XIV, 1661-1715
Pursuit of Power in the North: Russia & Sweden in the 17th Century

**Part D: The Era of the Enlightenment & French Revolution**
The Enlightenment & the Age of Reason
Enlightened Despotism: Prussia & Russia
Reform & the State in 18th-Century Austria and France
Inter-State Relations in the 18th Century: the Balance of Power
Liberty?: The French Revolution: Part I
Equality?: The French Revolution: Part II
Fraternity?: The French Revolution: Part III
Seminar IV: Groups A & B: 'A Day in the French Revolution: July 14, 1789'.  
**In-Class Test: Covers Parts C & D Only**  
Conclusion & Exam Preparations