

Welcome to History 101, Western Civilization Part 1 (NV280.HIS.101.E80L), offered by the Extended Learning Institute of Northern Virginia Community College. My name is Becky Linford (Rebecca R. Linford) and I am your instructor. I have taught history at a number of universities and colleges in the area, including Georgetown (where I obtained my Ph.D.), Marymount, McDaniel College, Lord Fairfax Community College, and now at NOVA. (I especially love teaching the Western Civilization series.) My area of expertise is early modern European history, and I have developed courses that focus on topics, people and events from that period, including the Renaissance and Reformation; the daily life of women and the family; the European witch-craze; and crime and punishment.

I used to work for the federal government as a political analyst and am also extremely interested in current events, such as the run-up to the 2012 presidential election and global terrorism both before and since 9/11. We tend to think that life has never been as frightening, dangerous, or difficult as it is today; however, history demonstrates that people through the millenia have had those same fears and challenges. One of my main goals for you in this course is to help you identify the similarities AND differences between events of the past and the present, and to see how the past has led to the world we live in today—in other words, to "connect the dots."

I watch a LOT of news on TV, mostly CNN, the BBC News, occasionally FoxNews or the major networks, but *ALWAYS The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*. In fact, I might assign you a project where you compare the coverage by FoxNews and *The Daily Show* of a major world event, such as the ongoing Republican presidential debates, or the large-scale protests that broke out in different countries in the Middle East this past Spring. Hopefully this will help you develop a critical eye and clearer judgment about how events are communicated, processed and interpreted.

On a personal note, I am married and have 2 kids, both of whom are in college now--my son is finishing up his degree(s) in Computer Science, Physics and Philosophy; my daughter just started studying Advertising at VA Commonwealth. They were worried I'd be lonely without kids at home, so in May they got me 2 golden retriever puppies, Duke & Casey (pictures to come soon!). Both kids are smart and funny but have struggled academically all their lives because they have Attention Deficit Disorder. I'm telling you this (with their permission) so you'll know I understand some of the challenges people with ADHD face, and that I am sympathetic and willing to help you in any way I can to be successful in this class, and hopefully to get an "A"! PLEASE contact me as soon as possible if you have any questions or concerns about the course material or about your ability to succeed.

In this course, we will review the general history of the West from about 300 BCE ("Before the Common Era"--used to be BC, "Before Christ") to 1600 CE ("Common Era"--used to be AD, or Anno Domini, literally translated as "Year of our Lord"). We will seek to reach a basic understanding of the characteristic features of the West's historical development. The course will also help you develop an understanding of the academic discipline of history and why the study of history remains relevant and important.

Some of the objectives of HIS 101 include the following:

- Define “the West” and identify the characteristics necessary for a successful civilization.
- Define and describe the importance of key individuals and events in Western history.
- Understand the general chronology and geography of Western history.
- Understand the main forces at work in the historical development of the West.
- Develop an ability to analyze historical sources and reach conclusions based on that analysis.
- Compose critical essays that explain the importance of certain historical events in the West.

The best way to succeed in this class is pretty simple: stay ahead on the reading and turn in your assignments on time. Word to the wise: there is a LOT of reading required, and you really do NEED to READ in order to do well on your exams. So, with this in mind:

- Remember that **THIS COURSE RUNS FOR ONLY 8 WEEKS!**
- Read through each section of the course SYLLABUS carefully.
- Be sure to **review the *Grading, Withdrawals and Incompletes* section.** This section includes information on **assignment completion dates** that will prevent you from being automatically withdrawn from this course.
- Click the ASSIGNMENTS button and begin working on the lessons.
- Feel free to contact me if you have questions or problems.

Good luck! I look forward to reading your work and getting to know each of you.

Becky Linford

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