The period from 1500 to 2001 is arguably the most eventful in human history, a period which culminated in an age of remarkable alienation across much of the world. This course will explore a series of dominant themes prevalent since 1500, while also examining the nature of historical study. Using lectures, discussions, and various activities, we will tackle a different theme each week. Topics include: religion, government, industrialization, major wars and their impacts, and even the place of music in popular and political culture. Along the way we will talk about various sources and how to use them, as well as about the nature of asking questions about the past.
REQUIRED TEXTS


Additional readings are available for download, either directly from websites listed in the course schedule or in the “Shared Files” section for this course in myUNE.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

The following text offers extensive advice about how to succeed in history courses—including information about how to write papers, how to take notes, how best to study, and how to properly cite sources. Although there will be no formal reading assignments drawn from this book, I will likely refer to it from time to time. I strongly advise you to purchase a copy and to keep it on hand throughout your tenure in history courses here at UNE.


COURSE GOALS

This course has three primary goals:

1. Improve critical thinking skills (including the ability to “think historically”);

2. Improve writing skills;

3. Gain an understanding of a range of issues that concern historians of the period extending from 1500 to the present.

With these goals in mind, you will be asked to take two essay-based exams, complete a major research project, present your research to the class, participate in group discussions, and carefully read a variety of books, articles, and primary sources. The course is divided into several two-part units as well as a handful of stand-alone lectures. Most weeks will include both a lecture and a discussion component. You should be prepared to participate actively in
both—which means both taking part in discussion and taking notes/asking questions during lecture.

**DISCUSSIONS**

We will have group discussions or small group activities each week. Discussion is required and you should come prepared to participate—this means that you must complete the assigned reading and/or coursework before each class.

Discussions are fun but they are also of major importance to your success in the course. These sessions are vital because they give you an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the subject material, to try out your ideas by discussing them with the group in a non-stressful setting, and to develop your critical thinking skills. In short, you will not get everything you can out of this class unless you are ready to take a few intellectual risks. DO NOT BE SHY!

**THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

Over the course of the semester you will engage in a research project of your own design (but approved by your professor) that engages with some aspect of the human experience from 1500 to the present. You will ultimately write a 5-7 page research paper that is double-spaced, uses 12-point Times New Roman font, and which has 1-inch margins. You will also turn in two shorter papers and (if you want) an optional rough draft. The following paragraphs explain what is required of you.

**STEP #1:** Begin by choosing a topic that interests you—the only limiting factors are the time period (roughly 1500 CE to the present) and the availability of secondary source material. For example, if you are particularly interested in biology or in medicine, you might choose to examine a topic such as the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, the plague in 17th century Britain, the Irish Potato Famine, or the many outbreaks of cholera in cities such as London and Hamburg. If you are interested in sport, you might write about the codification of sport during the late nineteenth century, the relationship between sport and nationalism, or the revival of the Olympic Games. Those interested in politics might write about the rise of Fascism, Communism, or Democracy. Other possible topics include the British, French, or Spanish empires, the rise of the novel, the industrial revolution, or the alienation associated with modernity. Naturally, there are many, many other viable topics. Feel free to speak with me if you would like some help deciding on a research subject.

**STEP #2:** Write a short 1-paragraph research statement explaining what your research question is and what you hope to learn. This paper is due in class on Thursday, February 11. This paper will be worth 5% of your overall grade.

**STEP #3:** Generate a reading list for your project that contains at least ten possible sources (ultimately, you will probably not use all of the sources that you identify, but you need to develop a fairly comprehensive list to work from). Your list may include scholarly articles
or books. *Most websites are not acceptable, though you may wish to check with me if you think that a given site merits inclusion.* Your reading list is due in class on Thursday, February 18. This paper will be worth 5% of your overall grade.

**STEP #4:** If you would like feedback on your work, you may turn in a rough draft. **If you opt to hand in a draft, it must be turned in no later than Thursday, April 15.**

**STEP #5:** *Final papers are DUE in class on May 6.* This paper will be worth 20% of your overall grade. It MUST contain footnotes. Use Chicago Manual of Style; you will find detailed instructions for how to do so online at the Chicago Manual of Style website at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Each paper will be graded according to three criteria:

1. **Writing quality:** Is grammar correct? Have you carefully copyedited your paper? Does your prose “flow” (making one want to read your work)?

2. **Research quality:** Did you critically examine a range of sources? Are you thorough? If one source prompts logical follow-up questions, did you pursue answers to these new queries?

3. **Argument:** Every paper should have a thesis and an argument supporting that thesis. Do you make your argument clear? Do you develop a coherent and logical argument supporting and developing your thesis?

**ORAL PRESENTATION**

Each student will present a 10-minute talk followed by a 10-minute question/answer period. Presentations should give an overview of your findings and introduce your professor/fellow students to your topic—including any relevant debates, important sources, etc. Audio-visual presentations (or any other visual props) are entirely optional. Be aware that while 10-minutes may seem impossibly long now, when it comes time to present your work the time will fly by. If you read your talk at a normal pace (be sure to give plenty of eye-contact and to really to engage with your audience!), it will take roughly 2 minutes per page. If you add any extemporaneous commentary (you should!), you need to add time accordingly. Your toughest job should be figuring out what information to include and what to leave out.

Oral presentations will be graded based primarily on: 1) content, 2) presentation (pacing, not visibly reading your talk, etc.), and 3) ability to answer questions (we will talk more about this later).

The oral presentation will be worth 10% of your overall grade.
EXAMS

There will be two exams during the semester. Each mid-term will include five (5) multiple-choice questions and one (1) essay. There will not be a final exam. Eighty percent of each exam grade will be based on the essay portion of the test.

As the first exam approaches, we will talk in detail about how to succeed on an essay examination. In a nutshell, successful essay writing requires that you develop a clear and defensible thesis, defend your thesis using accurate evidence drawn from lectures/readings, and ultimately that you prove that your thesis is correct. Thus, your essays should contain three parts:

1. A short introductory paragraph that succinctly summarizes the issue with which you will be dealing (the question), states your 1-2 sentence answer to that question (thesis), and outlines how you will more thoroughly argue your position;

2. Several paragraphs (usually 3-5 for an essay such as this) which carefully present information (evidence) from the lectures and readings to “prove” that your thesis is defensible. Be sure to explain why the evidence that you provide is relevant;

3. A concise conclusion that summarizes your argument, reiterates some of the evidence that you have discussed thoroughly in the body of the essay, and restates your thesis. The conclusion is your last opportunity to drive home your main point and to convince the reader that your answer is viable.

As you write your exam essays, remember that your job is both to answer the question and to effectively utilize evidence to prove your point. If you do both of these successfully, you will do very well on the three tests.

Each mid-term will be worth 20% of your overall grade.

PARTICIPATION

Your attendance and participation are vital for success in this course. You cannot learn, nor can you contribute to the group’s progress, if you are absent. I will keep track of both who attends regularly and of who participates in discussion. Participation is worth 10% of your overall grade.

IN THE EVENT OF PANDEMIC OR OTHER DISASTER

As you are probably aware, there is a very real chance that our semester will be thrown into disarray by a pandemic outbreak of flu. In Britain and Ireland, academic years are starting late and around the world school administrators are weighing potential responses to the H1N1 or “Swine” Flu. Should school be interrupted for any length of time, this class will, to the extent possible, move online and I will provide you with a revised set of course
requirements that are tailored to the situation. In broad terms, you will be required to provide short written responses to readings and to participate in online “chats.” The precise grading scheme will depend on the timing of any disruptions.

Individual cases of flu that do not result in school cancellations will be dealt with in the same manner as any such personal matters—on an individual and case-by-case basis. Should you become ill, face personal hardship, or have any other problem that keeps you away from class, let me know immediately via email and we will discuss alternatives.

**OTHER POLICIES**

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

- All papers must be handed in on the day that they are due. This must be done in class. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED; THIS INCLUDES THE FINAL PAPER.**
- Papers will not be accepted electronically unless otherwise specified.

Having said this, if an unforeseen and serious problem arises, please contact me and we will work something out. Please be prepared to provide a doctor’s note, obituary, or other paperwork as needed.

**CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONICS**

Cellular phones, MP3 players, and other electronic devices (excluding laptops) are distracting to others and are therefore not acceptable in the classroom.

If you would like to take notes on a laptop, please feel free to do so.

**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism represents serious academic misconduct. As per UNE guidelines, students who steal the words or ideas of another party will be referred to the Dean for disciplinary action.

The University of New England defines plagiarism as:

a. The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement; or

b. The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

—Student Handbook, pp. 33-34
You can learn much more by consulting the following:

http://www.une.edu/library/resguide/default.asp

If you have any questions about how to properly cite sources, please contact me.

**OVERALL COURSE GRADE**

It is very important to understand how your grade will be assessed in this class, as well as what the various grades actually mean. In essence, letter grades are used as shorthand for the level of proficiency achieved in the classroom. The following criteria are in effect:

**A:** Student demonstrated a level of knowledge (writing, content, etc.) relevant to the course that *goes considerably beyond* what is expected.

**B:** Student demonstrated a level of knowledge of material relevant to the course that is *beyond basic expectations*.

**C:** Student demonstrated an acceptable level of knowledge that is *in line with course expectations*.

**D:** Student knowledge *barely meets expectations* and the student will likely face significant difficulty in more advanced history courses.

**F:** Student has not learned or demonstrated enough mastery of material to receive a passing grade.

These criteria are not intended to be off-putting, but merely to make clear that simply showing up for class, doing assignments, and talking occasionally generally earns a “C” or a “D”—not an “A” or “B,” both of which denote a student who exceeded the basic expectations outlined in this syllabus.

The basic grade breakdown is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #1:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #2:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question:</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading List:</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation:</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following grading scale is in effect:
A+ = 97-100
A  = 93-96
A-  = 90-92
B+  = 87-89
B   = 83-86
B-  = 80-82
C+  = 77-79
C   = 73-76
C-  = 70-72
D   = 60-69
F   = 59 and below

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that the following schedule is provisional. Changes may be made as demanded by the weather, class progress, etc. Please watch your email for alterations/revisions.

THURSDAY, JAN. 21, 2010: INTRODUCTIONS

Today we will get to know one another while, at the same time, making certain that everybody understands the syllabus and goals of this course. We will also spend a few minutes discussing the nature of a history.

Lecture: Introductions

Required Reading:


TUESDAY, JAN. 26, 2010: RELIGION, PT. 1

During the early sixteenth century, the “one church” split apart, generating what would eventually turn into some 38,000 different Christian sects. Today’s lecture will trace the forces that are traditionally cited as helping to secularize society.

Lecture: Religion and Secularization: From Reformation to the Present

Required Reading:

Frederich Nietzsche, The Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer (Penguin Classics, 1990), 125-162.
Thursday, Jan. 28, 2010: Religion, Pt. 2

In at least two of his most famous books, German philosopher Frederick Nietzsche famously stated “God is dead.” In essence, he meant that the idea of a divine being had been made a mockery amid a collection of rules and regulations designed to subjugate mankind. Religious leaders created an ethnical system that oppressed rather than raised up western society. Today we will discuss Nietzsche, his critique of Christianity, and the question of whether society is more secular than in the past.

Discussion: Nietzsche and the question of a secular society

Required Reading:


Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010: The Origins of Inequality, Pt. 1

George Orwell famously noted: “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” In what ways are people different and how were these differences perceived across time? Today’s lecture examines a few of the different ways in which humans have identified “difference.”

Lecture: The Origins of Inequality: Social Class, Race, and the Creation of the “Other”

Reading:


Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010: The Origins of Inequality, Pt. 2

Today we will discuss the nature of difference. Are we different? Are some means of distinguishing difference more justified than others? What are the implications of difference? Furthermore, was Rousseau correct? Are we the same in the state of nature?

Discussion: Created Equal?

Reading:

Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 109-137.
TUESDAY, FEB. 9, 2010: UTOPIAN VISIONS, PT. 1

Our lecture today will briefly explore a few of the various approaches that humans adopted to create order and asks whether one is better than the others.

Lecture: Utopian Notions: The Search for an Ideal Government

Reading:


THURSDAY, FEB. 11, 2010: UTOPIAN VISIONS, PT. 2

Given the evident need to perceive difference, how should we govern ourselves? Is government necessary?

Discussion: What is the Ideal Government?

Reading:


TUESDAY, FEB. 16, 2010: THE CHALLENGE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION, PT. 1

The Industrial Revolution is perhaps the most important transformative moment in modern history. It shaped identity, politics, economics, and the realities of day-to-day life. Today’s lecture will explain why the revolution took place and will briefly touch on some of the myriad implications.

Lecture: The First Industrial Revolution and its Implications

Reading:

THURSDAY, FEB. 18, 2010: INDUSTRIALIZATION, PART II

Today we will discuss the Industrial Revolution and its results, paying particular attention to the myriad social, cultural, economic, and political results.

Reading:


TUESDAY, FEB. 23, 2010: MID-TERM EXAM #1 REVIEW

Discussion: Mid-Term #1 Review

Reading:

No Reading Assignment

THURSDAY, FEB. 25, 2010: MID-TERM EXAM #1

Mid-Term #1

Reading:

No Reading Assignment

TUESDAY, MAR. 2, 2010: THE AGE OF EMPIRES, PT. 1

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, Europeans engaged in a campaign of imperialism that permanently altered human relations internationally. The lecture today traces the roots of the “new imperialism” and briefly explains why it is so controversial.

Lecture: The Age of European Imperialism

Reading:

Thursday, Mar. 4, 2010: The Age of Empires, Pt. 2

There is considerable debate about the merits of imperialism. A majority of observers argue that European imperialism was an unmitigated disaster. A small number of scholars suggest that actually these empires had many positive effects. Today you will debate the merits of each argument, while also commenting on Conrad’s famous *Heart of Darkness*.

**Debate:** Is Empire “Ethnical?”

**Reading:**


Tuesday, Mar. 9, 2010: Seeing A Brave New World, Pt. 1

Mountains and beaches are beautiful. If this statement were not true, tourism in Maine and New Hampshire would face serious difficulties—yet it was not always true. Prior to about 1750, mountains and beaches were anything but attractive; they were repulsive. Today we explore the reasons behind the late-eighteenth century aesthetic revolution.

**Lecture:** The Aesthetic Revolution

**Reading:**


Thursday, Mar. 11, 2010: Seeing A Brave New World, Pt. 2

How do aesthetics shape our lived experience? How have aesthetics changed with time? What are some of the implications of aesthetic change? Today we will explore the ways in which we “read” the world around us while seeking answers to these and other questions.

**Discussion:** Reading the Visual

**Reading:**

We live in a consumer-drive society. Life is about getting the latest, the best, the fanciest. Social prestige is found in owning snazzy clothes and fast cars. We’ve simply got to have the latest computer and the fastest software. Advertising is quite literally everywhere. It was not always this way. Consumer society, like so much else, is relatively modern. Today we’ll examine the origins and evolution of consumption.

**Lecture:** Buy It Now!: The Rise of Consumer Culture

**Reading:**


**Thursday, Mar. 25, 2010: Consumer Culture, Pt. 2**

Products have meaning. Today we’ll try to figure out how and why by focusing our attention on the marketing of sewing machines and champagne.

**Discussion:** Buying Yourself

**Reading:**


**Tuesday, Mar. 30, 2010: World War I and the Crisis of Modernity, Pt. 1**

The First World War, the “war to end all wars,” represented perhaps the single most transformative moment in the history of the twentieth century. Today we will talk about the war while also saying a few things about its impact.

**Lecture:** World War I and the Birth of the Modern
Reading:


**THURSDAY, APR. 1, 2010: WORLD WAR I AND THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY, PT. 2**

Ideas about mental health were among the many changes that emerged from the experience of total war. Today we will discuss the nexus of the war experience, health, and gender.

**Discussion:** Mental Illness and Gender in the Wake of World War I

**Reading:**


**TUESDAY, APR. 6, 2010: THE RISE OF ISLAMIST THOUGHT AND THE ROAD TO 9/11**

**Video:** *Jihad: The Men and Ideas Behind Al Qaeda*

**Reading:**

*No Reading Assignment*

**THURSDAY, APR. 8, 2010: MID-TERM EXAM #2 REVIEW**

**Discussion:** Mid-Term #2 Review

**Reading:**

*No Reading Assignment*

**TUESDAY, APR. 13, 2010: MID-TERM EXAM #2**

**Mid-Term #2**

**Reading:**
*No Reading Assignment*

**Thursday, Apr. 15, 2010: Student Presentations**

**Reading:**

No Assigned Reading.

**Tuesday, Apr. 20, 2010: Student Presentations**

**Reading:**

No Assigned Reading.

**Thursday, Apr. 22, 2010: Student Presentations**

**Reading:**

No Assigned Reading.

**Tuesday, Apr. 27, 2010: Student Presentations**

**Reading:**

No Assigned Reading.

**Tuesday, May 4, 2010: Student Presentations**

**Reading:**

No Assigned Reading.

**Thursday, May 6, 2010: Student Presentations**

**Reading:**

No Assigned Reading.