

HIST 233: Renaissance, Reformations, (or 2/15/11) subject to change

Assistant Professor Catherine Chou (choucath@grinnell.edu)

Office Hours: M-F 9:00-10:00 p.m. CST, or by appointment

Course Description

Why is it worth studying the history of early modern Europe? How did the events that we have traditionally presented as well-defined events had ushered in a rational, secular modernity, first for 'the West' and then for 'the rest' – the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the beginnings of overseas empire.

As historians began experimenting with new methodologies, however, and calling into question entrenched narratives, the stakes for examining the history of early modern Europe shifted as well. Recasting events of world significance as contingent and contested processes both diminished their distinctiveness and recuperated the agency of a greater variety of participants. These historiographical shifts also had the effect of revealing that Europe's status as the origin point of modernity is less incontrovertible fact than a story developed by both early modern men and women, and contemporary scholars, looking to make sense of a rapidly-expanding and more interconnected world. To study early modern Europe in the twenty-first century is to understand why history built around the idea of inevitable progress, led by the West, was so appealing and durable, and why it has proven difficult and perhaps undesirable to construct a single cohesive narrative in its place.

sources are uploaded to P

3. You are allowed one excused absence for any synchronous class session without penalty, as long as you notify me ahead of time. To save time for the final project, we will only have readings and discussions for Weeks 1-5. **Therefore, it is very important that you attend each session.**

Final exam (30%), due 03/10

There will be one exam for the class, after we have finished all the readings for the term. The exam is open book, so take notes in class and as you read! You may not, however, consult with one another or use online resources aside from what is posted on P-web or the class Google Docs.

1. Dante Alighieri,

Thursday, February 18th – Rethinking the Reformation

1. Merry Weisner-Hanks,

Thursday, March 4th – The Impact of the ‘New World’ in Europe

1. Michael Ryan, ‘Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 23, no. 4 (Oct. 1981), p. 519-38

Friday, March 5th – The impact of the ‘New World’ in Europe, revisited

1. Vanita Seth, Chapter 1, “Self and Similitude: Renaissance Representations of the New World”, in *Europe’s Indians: Producing Racial Difference, 1500-1900* (Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press, 2020)

Scaffolding assignment #2 for Final Project, due Tuesday March 9th

Final Exam Posted, due Wednesday March 10th

Week Six

Monday, March 8th – Individual Meetings for Final Project

Tuesday, March 9th – Individual Meetings for Final Project

Wednesday, March 10th – Communal work time (whole class)

Thursday, March 11th – Communal work time (whole class)

Friday, March 12th – No class

Week Seven

Monday, March 15th – Individual Meetings for Final Project

Tuesday, March 16th – Individual Meetings for Final Project

Wednesday, March 17th – Class Presentations

Thursday, March 18th – Class Presentations

Friday, March 19th – No class

Exam Period

Final Projects due Tuesday, March 23rd by 11:59 p.m.