

HIST 4342:

*The Renaissance  
and Reformation*

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Associate Professor of  
European History

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**GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** The purpose of this course is to provide students with a strong foundation of European history from the close of the Middle Ages through the Wars of Religion. HIST 4342 focuses on the major political, economic, social, intellectual, and cultural changes that shaped Europe from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries. This course will cover the Renaissance, Reformation, Wars of Religion, and early Scientific Revolution.

An upper-level online history course, HIST 4342 consists of both intensive reading and writing components. Along with two short textbooks, students are assigned three books of supplemental reading and a series of articles. Students will be required to take two multiple choice exams (Midterm and Final) and four online essay quizzes (short essay response papers). Students are additionally encouraged to participate in two online discussion forums. All students are required to submit a final research paper (8 - 10 pages in length) that addresses an assigned historical question.

HIST 4342 follows the **Oxford Tutorial Method**, which stresses the development of time management skills, argumentation, and critical analysis. In contrast to the American classroom (standard lecturing), students engaged in this method spend very little face time with the professor and fellow classmates, and a great deal of time researching, reading, and preparing critical responses to assigned questions. The final product of the course, the final research paper, represents the culmination of many shorter assignments aimed at honing these skills. To this end, students are required to submit a bibliography of major works, a thesis statement with abstract, and a rough draft in addition to their final research paper.

All assignments will be received and returned over the Blackboard system. **The professor will not receive assignments over the university email system.** Also,

students with questions concerning the course or its requirements are encouraged to contact the professor through the Blackboard email system. For this course, students are required to read all assignments carefully and think critically about the material presented. Students are expected to turn in all materials on time and keep abreast of classroom assignments and announcements as they appear on Blackboard.

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Tuesdays, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m (online), and by appointment or pre-arranged teleconference. Please feel free to contact Professor Wirts by campus email if you would like to schedule an appointment or teleconference with her.

**Contact Information:** Office: 311 COAS Building, Phone: 665-3561 (Main Dept. Line), Email: [kristinewirts@utrgv.edu](mailto:kristinewirts@utrgv.edu).

### **PREREQUISITES AND REQUIRED SKILLS:**

To succeed in HIST 4342 students should possess the following skills: 1) Proficiency in English (both reading and writing skills). 2) A rudimentary/basic knowledge of early modern European history. 3) Proficiency in using email with attachments. 4) Proficiency in creating and submitting files in Microsoft Word format. 5) Familiarity with social studies research and style methods (Chicago style manual or Turabian).

### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

Students may obtain required books either at the campus bookstore or online vis-a-vis an online vendor (e.g. Amazon.com). All articles have been placed online and are downloadable in pdf format. Articles are also accessible either from JSTOR or the University Catalog.

#### **Textbook:**

Jonathan W. Zophy, *A Short History of Renaissance and Reformation Europe: Dances over Fire and Water* (2009).

#### **Supplemental Readings:**

Jerome Langford, *Galileo, Science, and the Church* (1992).

Darren Oldridge, *Strange Histories: The Trial of the Pig, the Walking Dead, and Other Matters of Fact from Medieval and Renaissance Worlds* (2006).

Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II of Spain* (2000).

**Articles (Articles may be downloaded from JSTOR):**

Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France," *Past and Present*, No. 50 (Feb., 1971), pp. 41-75.

Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France," *Past and Present*, No. 59 (May, 1973), pp. 51-91.

Alexandra Walsham, "'Frantick Hacket': Prophecy, Sorcery, and Insanity and the Elizabeth Puritan Movement," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 41 (Mar., 1998), pp. 27 – 66.

Alexandra Walsham, "Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Dec., 2003), pp. 779-815.

Merry E. Wiesner, "Beyond Women and the Family: Towards a Gender Analysis of the Reformation," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn, 1987), pp. 311 – 321.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Students in this course will:

- 1) Identify key themes, events, movements, and historical figures associated with the Renaissance and Reformation eras.
- 2) Explain and assess in written form the historical evolution (cause and effect) of ideas and movements of the Renaissance and Reformation.
- 3) Analyze an historical argument and identify its thesis.
- 4) Demonstrate and examine in written form how bias and points of view influence the historical record.
- 5) Present and critique in written form important historical concepts, debates and differing interpretations of the early modern era.
- 6) Conduct scholarly research using library resources and current technology such as library catalogues, networks, online information systems, academic journals, and primary sources on the internet.
- 7) Compose a bibliography following accepted social studies forms and methods (Chicago Manual Style or Turabian form.)

- 8) Develop a thesis, argument, and conclusion supported by secondary sources.
- 9) Demonstrate sustained historical research and reasoned argument using secondary sources.
- 10) Present research applying the conventions of usage and mechanics of written English (standard grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure) and following a social studies form and method appropriate for an academic setting (Chicago Manual Style or Turabian).

\*Note: The above Learning Objectives are based on Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills 113.42 & 113.48.

### **WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

**RESEARCH PAPER:** Each student is required to write an 8 – 10 page research paper that addresses a major historical question. The paper should be double-spaced and in 12 point font. The total number of pages each student submits should not exceed ten pages, excluding foot and/or end notes. Please note Professor Wirts will only read the first ten pages each student submits. Papers that are less than eight pages in length may be subject to a point deduction. Students are additionally required to use proper grammar and punctuation for all their writing and quiz assignments. Only writing assignments that are typed and that follow Turabian or the Chicago Style form will be accepted. Either foot or end notes are acceptable, though not both forms for the same paper. Dr. Wirts will assign each student a research question during the first week of the course. **Please note that all students are required to submit a final research paper. Only those students who submit a final research paper by the due date (May 2) will be eligible to receive a B or A for the course.**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Each student is required to submit a bibliography of scholarly books and articles that he or she intends to use for the research paper. The bibliography should be as thorough as possible and include all major works relating to the research topic. While students may include in their bibliography articles and books Dr. Wirts has assigned for this course, students are expected to demonstrate a depth and mastery of the proposed topic by seeking sources well beyond the list of assigned readings. Students experiencing difficulty locating sources should notify Professor Wirts as soon as possible. Students should avoid using sources from the internet unless they can verify the content as scholarly. Students are encouraged to use sources accessible from JSTOR. **Finally, all students are required to submit a bibliography. Only those students who submit their bibliographies by the due date will be eligible to receive a B or A for the final paper grade.**

**THESIS STATEMENT & ABSTRACT:** Within the first month of the semester, each student will be required to submit a thesis statement (one or two sentences) and an abstract of approximately 200 words. Though students do not receive points for the Thesis Statement and Abstract, students are required to submit a thesis statement and abstract. **Only those**

**students who submit a Thesis Statement and Abstract by the designated due date will be eligible to receive a B or A for the final paper grade.**

**ROUGH DRAFT:** Each student will be required to submit a rough draft. Students are advised to submit rough drafts that are as clean and final as possible. Rough drafts submitted before the due date are accepted. All students are required to submit a rough draft. **Only those students who submit a rough draft by the rough draft due date will be eligible to receive a B or A on the final paper.** In preparing papers for final submission, students are strongly encouraged to address questions raised in Dr. Wirts' written feedback.

Students may access guidelines for citing sources from the following web addresses:

**Chicago Style Guidelines:** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>

**Turabian Guidelines:** <http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/turabian2009.pdf>

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. **The Early Modern European Economy:** How did Europe's economy change from the late Middle Ages through the early seventeenth century? What factors contributed to the expansion of Europe's economy? What was the Price Revolution and what was its impact?
2. **The Italian Renaissance:** What was the Renaissance and why did it begin in Italy? In what ways did urban society influence the culture of Renaissance Italy?
3. **The Renaissance Prince:** What do the works of Niccolò Machiavelli reveal about Renaissance politics and government? Were Renaissance monarchs stronger than their Medieval counterparts? Did they rule differently? What specific challenges did European monarchs face in governing the Renaissance state?
4. **The Renaissance State:** By the sixteenth century, Spain had risen to become the most powerful state in Europe. How was this achieved?
5. **Renaissance Elites:** How did changes in military technology transform the lives of Renaissance elites? Was there a "crisis of the nobility?" What steps did nobles take to protect and defend their status?
6. **Northern Humanism:** Did Erasmus lay the egg that Luther hatched? Explain the role of northern humanism in fostering the Reformation. How did Humanism influence the thought of Martin Luther and other leaders of the Protestant Reformation?
7. **The Protestant Reformation:** How do historians explain the popular appeal of the Protestant Reformation? Who tended to convert and why?
8. **The English Reformation:** How did England become a Protestant nation?

9. **The Catholic Reformation**: Compare and contrast the religious life and beliefs of Catholics before and after the Catholic Reformation. How did the Catholic Reformation change the way Europeans lived?
10. **The Wars of Religion**: What caused the French Wars of Religion?
11. **The European Family**: Describe the conditions of life for the European family during the early modern era. What are the most important factors explaining changes to European family structure during the Renaissance?
12. **The Scientific Revolution**: Identify the major intellectual trends that contributed to the development of early modern science. To what extent did early modern science have its roots in the Medieval past?
13. **The Witch Craze**: What triggered the Witch Craze?
14. **The Ottoman Empire**: Discuss Ottoman – European foreign relationships during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In what ways did the Ottoman Empire influence European foreign relations during the Renaissance and Reformation eras?
15. **Popular Rebellion**: The Holy Roman Empire experienced an upsurge in peasant rebellions during the early sixteenth century. How do historians explain the various peasant revolts that swept across the Holy Roman Empire and other parts of Europe during the early modern era?

## QUIZZES AND EXAMS:

**QUIZZES**: Each student will be required to take four quizzes. Each quiz is worth 50 points for a total of 200 points. The quizzes will be open-book essays and cover all the assigned readings. Students will be given three days to take each online quiz. Quiz essays must be no more or no less than one page in length, double-spaced (12 point font). Students are required to use proper grammar and punctuation for all of their quizzes. Students are also expected to cite sources appropriately following the Turabian or Chicago style form. Only those quizzes that are typed and that follow the proper guidelines for citations will be accepted.

**EXAMS**: There are two multiple-choice exams. The exams will be administered over Blackboard. The two exams will cover all assigned readings. The second exam is not comprehensive. Students will be given 45 minutes to take each exam and will be permitted an unlimited number of times to take the exam until **May 11**, the Midterm and Final Exam deadline. The highest score achieved by **May 11** on the Midterm Exam will stand as the final grade for the Midterm. The highest score achieved by **May 11** on the Final Exam will stand as the final grade for the Final Exam. Students are required to work independently when taking their exams. **Collaboration conducted in the course of an online exam is strictly prohibited.**

**LATE QUIZZES AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** Students experiencing technical difficulties in accessing their online quizzes and tests are encouraged to contact the Center for Online Learning, Teaching, and Technology (COLTT) at (956) 665-5327. If any student still cannot access his or her system due to technical difficulties, then he or she may contact Professor Wirts for the needed course materials. Please note that it is incumbent upon the student to address his or her technical difficulties. The Professor will not continue to email quizzes to students throughout the course of the semester. Students who experience difficulty in submitting their work through Blackboard may turn in a hard copy. **Late papers may be submitted within 48 hrs following the official due date. Finally, no late papers will be accepted after May 2.**

### **GRADING POLICY:**

Grades are based on the numerical score achieved in the multiple choice exams, combined with the total points achieved in all written work. Dr. Wirts follows a rubric for written work (quiz essays and all other written assignments). Rubrics for writing assignments and quiz essays are located in the instructions/drop box section of each assignment.

***In general, Dr. Wirts employs the following criteria in evaluating written work:*** 1) Clearness of Writing (proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, transitions, and sentence structure). 2) Analytical Content (Did the Student address the question in a thoughtful and critical way?). 3) Strength of Argument (Has the student demonstrated mastery of content and presented a strong case for his or her thesis? Is the thesis clearly outlined and viable?). 4) Research (Did the student conduct research relying on scholarly sources appropriate for the assigned task? 5) Form (Did the student adhere to proper standards for citation of sources, following either Turabian or Chicago style form? Does the paper satisfy the length requirement?). Finally, Overall Progress/Improvement (In evaluating the final research paper, the professor also considers the extent to which the student incorporated revisions suggested in feedback from previous assignments (i.e., bibliography, thesis & abstract, and rough draft) Does the student's final product demonstrate improvement/growth over the course of the semester?).

***Return Policy on Writing Assignments:*** Note that all writing assignments will be returned to students within two weeks of submission. Please allow for up to three weeks for written feedback on rough drafts.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

#### **PART I: THE RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION**

**Week 1 (1/17): Early Modern Society**  
Reading: Zophy, Chapters 1, 2, & 3

**Week 2 (1/22): The Italian Renaissance**  
Reading: Zophy, Chapters 4, 5, 6, & 7

**Week 3 (1/29): The Italian Renaissance (continued)**  
Reading: (same readings from Week 2)  
**Bibliography -- Due Sunday, 1/ 29**

Week 4 (2/5): **The Northern Renaissance**

Reading: Zophy, Chapters 8 & 9

**Quiz #1 - Due Sunday, 2/5**

Week 5 (2/12): **The Protestant Reformation**

Reading: Zophy, Chapters 10, 11, 12, & 13

Merry E. Wiesner, "Beyond Women and the Family." **JSTOR**

Week 6 (2/19): **The English Reformation**

Reading: Zophy, Chapters 14 & 15

Alexandra Walsham, "' Frantick Hacket.'" **JSTOR**

**Thesis Statement and Abstract -- Due Sunday, 2/19**

Week 7 (2/26): **The Catholic Reformation**

Reading: Zophy, Chapter 16

Alexandra Walsham, "Miracles and the Counter - Reformation Mission to England." **JSTOR**

**\*Midterm Commences, 2/26**

**PART II: THE WARS OF RELIGION AND SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION**

Week 8 (3/5): **The Wars of Religion**

**Quiz #2 - Due Sunday, 3/5**

Reading: Zophy, Chapter 17

Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence." **JSTOR**

Week 9 (3/12): **Spring Break: No Class**

Week 10 (3/19): **Early Modern Empire**

Reading: Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (2000)

**Rough Draft - Due Sunday, 3/19**

Week 11 (3/26): **Early Modern Empire (continued)**

Reading: Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (2000)

Week 12 (4/2): **Early Modern Mentalities**

**Quiz #3 - Due Sunday, 4/2**

Reading: Zophy, Chapter 18, Darren Oldridge, *Strange Histories* (2006)

Week 13 (4/9): **Early Modern Mentalities (continued)**

Reading: Same readings from Week 12

Week 14 (4/16): **Popular Culture**

**Quiz #4 - Due Sunday 4/16**

Reading: Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule." **JSTOR**

Week 15 (4/23): **Early Modern Science**

Reading: Jerome Langford, *Science, Galileo, and the Church* (1992)

Week 16 (4/30): **Final Paper - Due Sunday, 5/2**

Week 17 (5/7): \*Final Exam Commences, 5/7  
\*Midterm and Final Exam Close Thursday, 5/11

### **Exams**

**Midterm 100 Points**

**Final 100 Points**

### **Final Course Grade:**

**A = 540- 600 Points**

**B = 480- 539 Points**

**C = 420- 479 Points**

**D = 360- 419 Points**

**F = 359 Points or Less**

### **Writing Assignments**

**Bibliography 10 Points**

**Thesis & Abstract 20 Points**

**Rough Draft 20 Points**

**Final Paper 150 Points**

### **Quizzes**

**Quiz #1 50 Points**

**Quiz #2 50 Points**

**Quiz #3 50 Points**

**Quiz #4 50 Points**

## **OTHER COURSE POLICIES:**

**ONLINE ETIQUETTE:** At all times, students should keep in mind that the online environment is a public space. Students are asked to exercise common courtesy and professional standards appropriate for an academic setting. Students are asked to write in standard English (in both formal writing assignments and online discussions) and respect their fellow students in all email, chat, and group discussion. In online discussions and chats, students are additionally asked to communicate in complete sentences.

**TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES:** As previously stated, students experiencing technical difficulties are encouraged to contact UTRGV's Center for Online Learning, Teaching, and Technology (COLTT). COLTT can be reached either by phone at (956) 665-5327 (Edinburg Campus) or (956) 882-6792 (Brownsville Campus). Students may submit an outline ticket at <http://colttapps.utrgv.edu/helpme>. COLTT's Website address is <http://utrgv.edu/online> and E-Mail address is [coltthelp@utrgv.edu](mailto:coltthelp@utrgv.edu). The IT helpdesk can also assist in resolving technical issues and can be reached by phone at (956) 665-2020. The IT helpdesk is located at Visit ACSB 1.102. If any student still cannot access the Blackboard system due to technical difficulties, then he or she may contact Professor Wirts for the needed course materials. Please note that it is incumbent upon the student to address his or her technical difficulties. The Professor will not continue to email course materials to students throughout the course of the semester.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Plagiarism is prohibited. Any student who plagiarizes will receive a zero for the writing assignment or quiz on which he or she has plagiarized and a grade of F for the course. Professor Wirts will additionally recommend that UTRGV take appropriate disciplinary action against any student caught plagiarizing. Professor Wirts does not consider group study or consulting a tutor (or the professor) as academic misconduct. In writing your papers, keep in mind that all written material should be properly cited. If the idea is not yours, cite the source from which you found the material. If you are using a direct quote, put the quote in quotations and cite the source. If you are not sure what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, ask the professor. Finally, students are also required to work independently when taking their online exams. **Collaboration with other students during an online exam is strictly prohibited.**

**MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:** Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (<http://my.utrgv.edu>); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Online evaluations will be available near the close of the semester. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades.

**EMAIL COMMUNICATION:** Per UTRGV policy, all email communication between the UTRGV faculty and staff and students must be conducted through the students' official University supplied Email account. Therefore, please use your UTRGV assigned Bronc Mail for any correspondence with UTRGV faculty and staff. Other emails may be blocked by the spam filter. Students are responsible for the consequences of an undelivered or delayed email blocked by the spam filter. For online courses students should use the email system in Blackboard.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time. **Brownsville Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at [accessibility@utrgv.edu](mailto:accessibility@utrgv.edu). **Edinburg Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at [accessibility@utrgv.edu](mailto:accessibility@utrgv.edu).

**ATTENDANCE:** Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV's attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.