

**HIST1081: Modern History I**

Boston College Summer Session 2019

Session I, May 14–June 20

Tuesday &amp; Thursday, 9:00am-12:15pm

**Instructor Name:** David Sessions – [session@bc.edu](mailto:sessions@bc.edu)**BC Email:** sessionh@bc.edu**Office:** Stokes Hall South 352**Office Hours:** Tues & Thurs, 12:30-1:30 p.m.**Boston College mission statement**

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry. Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

**Course summary**

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The idea of progress—of the forward movement of history and the constant improvement of humankind in knowledge, politics, and economics—is intimately linked to Europe's rise from an economic backwater in the medieval period to dominating most of the globe by the 1800s. In this course, we will follow the rise of European progressive optimism in its many forms from the early modern period to the end of the nineteenth century. In the process, we will read primary sources that show Europeans formulating—and contesting—ideas of progress that would reach their peak in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Because progress was intertwined with the highest ideals of modern Europe and its most grotesque crimes, progress remains a controversial idea, and discourse about the “crisis of progress” has been a perpetual screen onto which Europeans project their self-definitions and anxieties about a host of issues. Thus, we will study the history of early modern Europe's rise in the larger context of world history and with an eye toward how this history is stylized and deployed in our own time, and come away with robust critical arsenal for thinking about our future.

## Course objectives

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- Students will learn to interpret primary sources documents and to place them in larger historical processes; in particular, they will develop a sharper understanding of the relationship between ideas and structural historical forces
- Students will explain change over time, assessing the strength of historical narratives and constructing their own narratives of historical change.
- Students will, by the end of this course, be able to critically apply their historical knowledge to problems and controversies that shape their world in the present; to this end, we will encounter very contemporary expressions (i.e., written within the last 5 years) of the problems and themes addressed in the course.

## Canvas

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Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more - all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, click [here](#).

## Books

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*Required for purchase (available in the BC bookstore)*

- Isaac Kramnick, ed, *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* (Penguin)
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Verso)

*Recommended for supplementary reading (not required)*

- John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe* (available online)
- Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*

The majority of our readings will be available through Canvas, and should be printed to use in class. (You can print from computers in O'Neill Library, or set up your own computer to print [here](#).) Both of the required books, as well as the Merriman textbook, are available on Course Reserve at O'Neill Library (as at the circulation desk to check it out). The library also has additional copies you can check out.

## Grading

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The undergraduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:

A (4.00) A- (3.67)  
B+ (3.33) B (3.00) B- (2.67)  
C+ (2.33) C (2.00) C- (1.67)  
D+ (1.33) D (1.00) D- (.67)  
F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Transcripts are available through the Office of Student Services.

## **Assignments**

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Primary Source Readings and Participation (30%)

5 Text Analyses (20%)

Midterm Exam (25%)

Final Exam (25%)

## **Expected out-of-class time**

- Primary source readings: 2 hours per class period (4 hours/week)
- Text analyses: maximum 3 hours per assignment

## **Text Analyses**

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Text analyses are short, written responses to texts to be submitted via Canvas. You will read a argument by a contemporary historian—usually a book chapter or an academic article—and summarize its argument in 250 words (roughly one page). Your goal is to **1) read the text carefully** and understand the argument, and **2) summarize** it as clearly as possible. You do not need to analyze it, comment on it, or offer any kind of original interpretation—though you may add a few sentences of analysis at the end if you like.

The goal of text analyses is to introduce you to the kind of analysis historians do and the kinds of arguments they make. More practically, they will give you an opportunity to practice critical reading, information-processing, and writing, important skills in all modern professions.

Because we will only spent approximately 2 hours in class each session, text analyses will make up the other 1:15 of class time for each session, which means you should spend 2.5 hours per week on your text analysis. They are designed to be approximately that much work—an hour and a half of reading, and an hour or less of writing.

## **Accommodation and Accessibility**

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Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodation in Summer Session courses. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office is required to facilitate this process. There are two separate offices at BC that coordinate services for students with disabilities:

The Connors Family Learning Center (CFLC) coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD.

The Disabilities Services Office (DSO) coordinates services for all other disabilities. Find out more about BC's commitment to accessibility at [www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility](http://www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility).

## Scholarship and Academic Integrity

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Students in Summer Session courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student's work. Please see the Boston College policy on academic integrity for more information

## Course Schedule

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Tues, May 14 – The Medieval World, Empire, and the Origins of Capitalism, 1500-1750

**Onboarding Assignment (Text Analysis 1) Due by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas:**  
What Does Progress Mean in 2019?

Thurs, May 16 – The Enlightenment: Reason, Sentiment, Progress

Primary Source Readings:

- Turgot, “On Progress” (1750) - *Enlightenment Reader*, pp. 361-363
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “A Critique of Progress” (1751) - ER, pp. 363-369
- Adam Smith, “Four-Stage Theory of Development” (1762) - ER, pp. 378-380
- Adam Ferguson, “The Progressive Character of Human Nature” (1792) - ER, pp. 380-382
- Immanuel Kant, “Idea of a Universal History” (1784) – Canvas

Sun. May 19

**Text Analysis 2, due by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas:** Dan Edelstein, *Enlightenment: A Genealogy*, pp. 1-23.

Tues, May 21 – Enlightenment and Europe's Others: Empire, Race, and Civilization

Primary Source Readings

- Hume, “Negroes, Naturally Inferior to Whites” (1742) - ER, p. 629
- Diderot, *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville* (1772) - ER, 640-644
- Paine, “African Slavery in America” (1775) - ER, p. 645-649
- Gibbon, “Of Empires and Savages” (1776) - ER, p. 649-657
- Encyclopedia Britannica, “Negro” (1798) - ER, p. 669

Thurs, May 23 – The Industrial Revolution

Primary Source Readings

- Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (1776) - ER, pp. 505-515
- Andrew Ure, *Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835) - Canvas
- Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844) – Canvas
- Thomas Carlyle, *Signs of the Times* (1829) – Canvas

Sun, May 26

**Text Analysis 3, due by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas:** Jan de Vries, “Industrial Revolution and Industrious Revolutions,” *Journal of Economic History*, 1994.

Tues, May 28 – The French Revolution and the Rights of Man

Primary Source Readings

- Abbé Sieyès, Marquis de Lafayette, Thomas Jefferson, “Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen” (1789) - Canvas
- Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen” (1791) - Canvas
- Maximilien Robespierre, *On the Moral and Political Principles of Domestic Policy* (1794) - Canvas
- Toussaint L’Ouverture, “Haitian Constitution of 1801” - Canvas

Thurs, May 30 – Midterm Exam

Tues, June 4 – Liberalism, Socialism, and the 1848 Revolutions

Primary Source Readings

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1847), pp. 33-77
  - *Note: the introduction is not required, but is very helpful!*
- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1860) – “Introductory,” pp. 6-18 – Canvas
- John Stuart Mill, “The Condition of Ireland” (1846) - Canvas

Thurs, June 6 – Philosophies of Progress and Scientific Discoveries

Primary Source Readings

G.W.H. Hegel, *Philosophy of History* (Canvas)  
 August Comte, *Course on Positive Philosophy* (Canvas)  
 Charles Darwin, *Descent of Man* (Canvas)

Sun, June 10

**Text Analysis 4, due by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas:** Christopher Clark, “Why Should We Think About the 1848 Revolutions Now?”, *London Review of Books* (Canvas)

Tues, June 11 – State-Building and Nationalism

Readings TBD

Thurs, June 13 – The ‘Second’ Industrial Revolution and the New Imperialism

Readings TBD

Sun, June 16

**Text Analysis 5, due by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas:** Alice Conklin, *In the Museum of Man* (selection TBD) – Canvas

Tues, June 18 – The Crisis of Progress and the Shadow of War

Readings TBD

Thurs, June 20 – Final Exam