
PETERS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

COURSE SYLLABUS: ACADEMIC HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Course Overview and Essential Skills

The purpose of this overview course is to provide students with an understanding of the influence of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, and subsequent eras (the Renaissance, The Age of Absolutism and the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Modern Era from 1800-the present) upon the development of western civilization to this day, which includes the United States. Topics will include social, economic, and political issues and institutions, some of which have influenced the development of democracy, as well as important people, and cultural achievements, which have influenced western thought and practice to this day. Students will be able to trace the origins of democracy, and the struggle to reinstate its freedoms throughout the last two millennia. Students will be challenged to discover and analyze connections from past history to the world today. Students will review and analyze original source documents, evaluate and synthesize textbook material, engage in written and objective assessments which require extensive knowledge of the subject material and the ability to apply and evaluate learning, draw conclusions from the analysis of document-based questions, integrate technology for the creation of projects, research investigations, and tracking project requirements on the teacher website, predict outcomes and formulate generalizations based on past learning, synergize with group members to problem-solve or create a product.

Course Textbook and Required Materials

- *World History: Patterns of Interaction*, Beck, Black, Krieger, Naylor, Shabaka, c. 2005; ISBN: 0-618-18774-X
- Writing Utensils and Preferred Organizational Tools

Course Outline of Material Covered:

Unit or Topic	Concepts/Skills/Resources	Timeframe
Unit 1: The Foundation of Western Civilization (Ancient Greece and Rome)	Content Covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growth of city-states in Greece. • Democratic principles and classical culture flourished during Greece’s Golden Age. • Alexander the Great conquered Persia and Egypt • Hellenistic culture, a blend of Greek and other influences flourished throughout Greece, Egypt and Asia. • Greek achievements in culture, the arts, science and government influenced the development of Western Civilization. • The early Romans established a powerful republic. • The creation of the Roman Empire transformed Roman government, society, economy, and culture. • Christianity arose in Roman-held Judea and spread throughout the Roman Empire. • Internal social, economic, military and political problems led to the division and fall of the Roman Empire. • Roman achievements in culture, the arts, science and government influenced the development of Western Civilization. Skills Developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent reading and analysis of Primary Sources 	Three Weeks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notetaking and studying large amounts of historical information • Contextualization • Comparison • Periodization • Causation <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour or Athens Web quest • Steven Pressfield <i>Tribe vs. Citizen</i> • Primary Sources: <i>Crito</i> 	
<p><u>Unit 2: The Age of Change in Western Civilization (Renaissance, Reformation, and Exploration)</u></p>	<p>Content Covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feudalism declined in the later Middle Ages as agriculture, trade, finance, towns and universities developed, and Europe suffered due to the bubonic plague, and the Hundred Years' War. • The Italian Renaissance was a rebirth of learning that produced many great works of art, literature, and science. • Renaissance beliefs, such as the importance of the individual, increased secularism, and scientific methodology changed European culture. • Martin Luther's protest over abuses in the Catholic Church led to the founding of many Protestant churches that are present today; the Catholic Church also reformed. • The Reformation ended the Christian unity of medieval Europe, and with the power of churches declining, monarchs and states gained greater power. • The Reformation ideal of questioning authority and traditional beliefs. • Advances in sailing technology enable Europeans to explore other parts of the world, and exploration and colonization led to global interaction and wealth for Europeans. • Portugal and Spain led the movement to explore the New World; conquistadors enslaved the native populations and millions died from western diseases. • The Dutch, Spanish, English and French all competed to settle and control North America, with the English emerging victorious for the most part. <p>Skills Developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent reading and analysis of Primary Sources • Notetaking and studying large amounts of historical information • Contextualization • Comparison • Periodization • Causation <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBS <i>Driven to Defiance</i> • Disastrous 14th Century • Primary Sources: <i>The Prince, Song of Roland, Spanish Conquest of New Spain, The David, Mona Lisa, The Pieta, Pope Leo X, Utopia, Act of Supremacy, Treaty of Tordesillas</i> 	<p>Six Weeks</p>
<p><u>Unit 3: Age of Enlightenment and Revolution (Absolute</u></p>	<p>Content Covered:</p>	<p>Six Weeks</p>

Monarchy, Enlightenment, Revolution, Industrialization, and Nationalism)

- The powers of the monarchies, absolutism, in Europe grew due to crises caused by economic, political, or religious strife.
- The theory of the Divine Right of
- Religious wars afflict Europe continually during this period, as only fleeting attempts towards religious toleration are enacted.
- The Reign of Louis XIV consolidates absolutism in France
- After a period of great turmoil, absolute monarchs ruled Austria and Prussia.
- The Prussian trend to a strong militaristic tradition led, in part, to World Wars in the 20th century.
- Peter the Great westernized Russia and brought it into the European sphere of influence.
- Many of the democratic government reforms in England contributed directly to the move towards American independence from England and the formation of the Constitution of the United States.
- In the mid-1500's scientists began to question accepted beliefs and make new theories about science and the universe based on experimentation. Theories based on experimentation led to the development of the scientific method, still in use today.
- An intellectual revolution profoundly changed Europe's view of government, society, and the arts.
- Many freedoms of democratic societies today, including those of the United States, were rooted in Enlightenment thinking.
- The Enlightenment spurred western man to aim for social progress, take a more secular outlook, and focus on individual reasoning.
- Enlightenment ideas helped inspire the American colonies to declare independence from England and become a new nation, and inspired other European colonies to try to do the same.
- The American Revolution created a republic, which became the model for many nations around the world, and also helped inspire the French Revolution.
- Economic, political, and social inequalities in the Old Regime caused the French Revolution.
- The revolutionary government of France made reforms but also used terror and violence to retain power.
- Military genius, Napoleon Bonaparte, seized power amidst the turmoil in France, and made himself dictator and emperor.
- After Napoleon was exiled, leaders of Europe met at the Congress of Vienna to restore order and monarchies, establish peace, and maintain a balance of power in Europe, foreshadowing international institutions such as the United Nations today.

Skills Developed:

- Independent reading and analysis of Primary Sources
- Notetaking and studying large amounts of historical information
- Contextualization

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison • Periodization • Causation <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The History Channels <i>Land of the Tsar: Peter the Great</i> • Primary Sources: <i>Leviathan, Two Treaties on Government, The Swing, Death of Socrates, Napoleonic Code, Declaration of Independence</i> 	
<p><u>Unit 4: Imperialism and World Wars (Imperialism, European Dominance, World War I and II)</u></p>	<p>Content Covered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive long-term effects of industrialization include job creation, an increase in the size of cities and of the middle and upper middle social classes, and the standard of living and life expectancy rose for those in industrialized nations. • Negative effects of industrialization were poor working conditions for labor regarding health and safety, hours, wages, and the lack of proper housing, food and water, and social services. Poor conditions led to the formation of unions and the struggles between employers and the working man to gain long-term improvements to these conditions. Reformers worked to correct conditions and abolish slavery. • The Industrial Revolution caused a wealth gap, and therefore a power gap, between industrialized and non-industrialized nations. • Many thinkers examined the effects of industrialization upon the masses and postulated various forms of governments and economies to deal with the current issues. These ideas varied widely in scope (capitalism, socialism and communism). • The causes of WWI were imperialism, nationalism, militarism, and the system of European alliances. • The Treaty of Versailles did not build a lasting peace in Europe after WWI. The treaty resulted in a legacy of bitterness on the part of Germany for its exclusion from the peace process and the unjust punishments it received, which gave rise to Hitler's platform within several decades. • 14 million Russians died during the Bolshevik Revolution and the civil war that followed. Violence and terror were used by the victorious Communist Party to control the masses. • The Great Depression exacerbated the poor economic conditions in Europe after WWI, as some nations had already experienced severe inflation, and many nations owed funds to the United States. High tariffs raised by the U.S. negatively impacted trade around the world. • Aggressive actions by fascist and militarist governments in Germany, Italy and Japan caused WWII. • Warfare was expanded as civilians, as well as armed forces, became the targets for destruction by genocide, conventional warfare, and the atomic bomb. In Europe, over 19 million soldiers died and 40 million civilians. <p>Skills Developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent reading and analysis of Primary Sources 	<p>Two Weeks</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notetaking and studying large amounts of historical information• Contextualization• Comparison• Periodization• Causation <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BBC: <i>Why the Industrial Revolution Happened Here</i>• PBS: <i>The Great War</i>• Primary Sources: <i>White Man's Burden, War Guilt Clause, Communist Manifesto, Mein Kampf, The Burden of Guilt</i>	
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****Depending on the needs of the class or changes in the school year, the course outline is subject to change.***