

## HIST 4389 – Europe in the Age of Absolutism

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### Course Description

This course is a study of the European state system from the end of the Thirty Years' War to the outbreak of the French Revolution. The course will concentrate on the consolidation of absolute monarchies, the rise of colonial empires, enlightened despotism, and the proliferation of enlightenment ideas.

### Course objectives

- a. Become familiar with the major European figures and events that shaped the era.
- b. Know the most influential thinkers of the Enlightenment and understand their ideas.
- c. Appreciate the nature of divine-right monarchy.
- d. Comprehend the contribution that royal absolutism made to the development of the modern nation-state.
- e. Understand the social forces that undermined the Old Regime and provoked the French Revolution.
- f. Develop analytical and writing skills.

### Textbook

Raymond Birn, *Crisis, Absolutism, and Revolution: Europe and the World 1648-1789*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ed., Orchard Park: Broadview Press, 2005. ISBN 1551115611

### Recommended Textbook

Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E. B. *The elements of style* (any ed.). New York: McMillan, 1959.

—A student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore

## **Course Requirements**

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. The exams are half essay and half multiple choice/true-false. The Final Exam is not comprehensive. The essay portion concerns class lecture and the multiple-choice questions test knowledge of the text. Lectures and readings complement one another but do not follow exactly the same organization. You are expected to be familiar enough with the readings to apply the material to class discussions as well as to respond to written and oral questions based on the readings. We will not spend class time going over the book, *per se*. Readings and lectures for this course are complementary. Each exam will have two essay questions, students will choose one. The essays will cover material in lectures up to the date of the exam.

The written assignment is two book reviews, 3-5 pages in length and covering books from the approved list (see below). **Reviews of unapproved books will not be accepted.**

## **Grading Criteria for Essays**

The essay questions are structured to require students to demonstrate mastery of the major events and personalities we cover as they illustrate the major themes of our course. These themes are summarized in the course objectives. At the beginning of each lecture I write key terms on the board for that day, and will expect mastery of those terms if you write an essay on that topic. Grades for essays are based upon the demonstrated depth and breadth of understanding of those elements.

I will provide a study-guide for each exam with key terms, events, personalities from the chapters covered for that exam (See course schedule). Each multiple-choice/true-false question will involve key terms from the study guide.

## University Policies and Information

### Canvas Support

Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select “Chat with Canvas Support,” submit a support request through “Report a Problem,” or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

### Online Proctored Testing

A&M-Central Texas uses Proctorio for online identity verification and proctored testing. This service is provided at no direct cost to students. If the course requires identity verification or proctored testing, the technology requirements are: Any computer meeting the minimum computing requirements, plus web camera, speaker, and microphone (or headset). Proctorio also requires the Chrome web browser with their custom plug in.

### Other Technology Support

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Email: [helpdesk@tam.u.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tam.u.edu)

Phone: (254) 519-5466

Web Chat: [<http://hdc.tam.u.edu>]

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

### Academic Accommodations

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university’s programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations, please contact the Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you

provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information, please visit our Access & Inclusion Canvas page (log-in required)

[<https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717>]

### Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University-Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. All academic misconduct concerns will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

For more information regarding the student conduct process,

[<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html>].

If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may submit a referral,

[[https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout\\_id=0](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0)].

### Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete the Drop Request Dynamic

**Late Policy:**

Any assignment submitted after the due date/time will be subject to a penalty of **10 percent per 24 hour period late.**

**Attendance Policy:**

Full attendance and active participation are keys to having meaningful and productive class activities and discussions. Students are expected to attend every class and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the day.

**Make-up Work**

Make-up work may only be done for valid and verifiable reasons such as illness, death in the immediate family, legal proceedings, participation in University-sponsored activities, and military deployment. If possible, notification should be in advance and the make-up should be taken as close to the exam date as practical. Make-up exams may be in a different format, such as writing an extra essay. **No Make-up exams will be given during finals week.**

**Evaluation****Grading Criteria Rubric and Conversion:****Evaluation**

A. Course Requirements total 400.

Midterm Exam	100 points	25%
Final Exam	100 points	25%
Book Review One	100 points	25%
Book Review Two	100 points	25%

Total 400 points

Your final grade is based on a traditional letter- number system.

A = 90-100% (360-400 points)

B = 80-89% (320-359 points)

C = 70-79% (280-319 points)

D = 60-69% (240-279 points)

F = 59-0% (240-0 points)

**Class Schedule**

Aug 29	Introduction
Aug 31	The Medieval states of Europe
Sept 5	Commerce and Mercantilism
Sept 7	Reformation
Sept 12	The Thirty Year's War

Sept 14	The Thirty Year's War
Sept 19	Foundations of the English state
Sept 21	The Stuarts and the origins of modern Britain
Sept 26	Restoration
Sept 28	Glorious Revolution
Oct 3	Louis XIV and the Fronde
Oct 5	Muscovy and Alexis
Oct 10	Peter the Great
Oct 12	The Great Northern War
Oct 17	Midterm Exam, Review 1 is due at 11:59:59
Oct 19	Wars of Louis XIV
Oct 24	The Hapsburg Empire
Oct 26	The rise of Prussia
Oct 31	Frederick the Great
Nov 2	Catherine the Great
Nov 7	Seven Years War
Nov 9	Empires won and lost
Nov 14	The Enlightenment
Nov 16	The Enlightenment
Nov 21	Open study
Nov 23	Thanksgiving
Nov 28	Louis XV, XVI
Nov 30	French Revolution
Dec 5	Open study
Dec 7	Review
Dec 12	Final Exam, Review 2 is due at 11:59:59

### **Book Review Guidelines**

Reviews should be three to five pages in length and conform to the style of academic reviews. There is no cover page. Heading is the bibliographical information of the book. Text is double-spaced with **one-inch margins and 12-point type**, usually the default on your word processor. There should be no sub-headings. Your name and "Texas A&M Central Texas" should be at the end of your review.

**Good style and grammar are expected.** Papers should follow the standards in Strunk and White *Elements of Style*.

The objective of the review is critical analysis of the merits of the book. Description of the scope of the book should occupy no more than a paragraph. You should produce an academic review rather than a book report. Reading reviews in historical journals will give you some idea of the


format and questions you should address, but it is not a good idea to read reviews of the same *book you are reviewing to ensure you draw your own conclusions.*

You must address the basic questions of author's thesis, purpose, and objectivity. Be specific and support your conclusions. If the book was a good read explain what made it that way. Appraise the author's style and extent of research, including an evaluation of sources. Examples or illustrations from the book should be brief paraphrases. As a rule avoid quotes, especially lengthy ones. You need not cite elements from the book with a note. The only occasion for references is if you introduce some other academic review. You should compare your review with another's work, if at all, only after you have arrived at your own conclusions. Caution is

advised in this regard. Plagiarism results in a failing grade and perhaps further action. Refer to the policy on academic honesty on page 117 of the student handbook.

Papers must be submitted in **Microsoft Word as an email attachment in Canvas.**

How to Write a Book Review:  
A Guide for Students  
HUGH B. HAMMETT

**From *The Social Studies* (November 1974):263-65**

**Sooner or later most students who take history courses will be required to write a critical book review. The assignment is especially popular with harassed instructors who have too many students to require full-scale term papers but who would feel guilt without asking their students for some kind of written exercise outside of class. Book reviews are not particularly popular with students, however, because the average person has very little idea how to proceed with such a project. The enterprising student cannot find much help in sources like the *New York Times Book Review* or the *New York Review of Books* (since essays in these publications usually reveal far more about the reviewer than about the work under discussion. Nor should historians deceive themselves that journals like the *American Historical Review* or the *Journal of American History* offer more reliable guides. Unfortunately, most scholarly reviews are written solely for scholars (i.e., specialists) and all too frequently the only point that is made is that the reviewer knows more about the subject, or thinks he does, than the author of the volume under discussion.**

**The following suggestions are addressed to the student who wants to know how to go about reviewing a book. These suggestions assume that the review will be written for submission in class; but it will be well to observe that the good student will think through all of following areas as he reads, even if no written assignment is involved:**

**I. Publication Information Should Be Complete. This information will be important if anyone later wants to procure a copy of the volume; also, certain publishers specialize in books on particular subjects or with special political ideas. You should**

give the *author's full name*, the *complete title* of the book, and the *place, publisher and date* of publication. For example:

Thomas Bailey, *The Art of Diplomacy: the American Experience*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968.

If you use a revised edition, be sure to make a note of it since revisions often incorporate new or different material.

## II. The Author's Background Is Important to a Thorough Analysis of Any Book.

Would you pay attention to an unsigned letter? What difference is there in reviewing a book by an author of whom you know nothing? What if the author is a Communist, teaching in an East German university? Or what if he is an Eastern European émigré to the United States and a virulent anti-communist? Would it be to your advantage in reading a book about race relations to know that the author is white and has spent his entire life in Mississippi? Would it be well to know that a scholar writing about United States-Canadian relations was born and educated in Canada? Or might a diplomatic historian trained in a Latin American university possibly have a different attitude toward the Monroe Doctrine than a professor educated in the United States? If a man has studied and written about the medieval frontier for all of his scholarly career, would you wisely be cautious if he suddenly published a monograph about Internal politics in Vietnam?

## III. There Are Certain Things That Every Book Review Should Contain.

Without this basic information your reader cannot tell whether the book would be valuable for his own use. What is the *purpose* of the book? Usually in the preface or the first chapter of a monograph (works on special topics in history are "monographs," not novels), meet that need. You should keep the stated purpose in mind as you read. If the author does not do what he said he would, then his book has failed one important test.

What is the scope of the book? What period of time does it cover? What kind of history does it include: political, economic, social, diplomatic, intellectual?

Are there *major themes* that are essential to understanding the book? Identify them. More important, is there a particular *thesis* (or original idea, a new contribution) that the author is trying to prove? You should determine whether or not the author offers evidence to support his thesis.

Are there *basic flaws* in the book? Point them out. Are there *sections that are exceptionally well done*? Commend them.

Is the book especially *relevant* in the light of contemporary events? Does it make any *overall contribution* to our knowledge of history that characterizes the book as a distinguished volume?

**IV. Sources Must Also Be Considered. No assessment of a book is complete without some comment on the scholarly evidence from which the author draws. Are there footnotes? Is there an extensive bibliography? Does the author use *primary source material* (documents, diaries, letters, newspapers, journals) or does he confine himself to *secondary materials* (books written by other authorities on the same subject)? Usually, more scholarly works will heavily employ original research in primary sources. "Popularized," "derivative," or "synthesized" works draw principally on the books of others.**

**V. Reviews Must Be Specific As Well As General. For every generalization that you make about the book, you should offer one or two specific examples clearly illustrating what you mean. If for no other reason, your specific illustrations will show your instructor that you have conscientiously read the book and that you have attained a certain mastery of basic factual material.**

**One word of caution is necessary about the use of extensive quotations. Merely to string sections of quoted material throughout your paper does not make your work scholarly. Each quotation that you use should be clearly linked to the material you are discussing. The quotation must be introduced by an appropriate comment that shows its relationship to the subject at hand. Do not fall into the use of quotations out of laziness. Never borrow directly unless the quotation is so eloquent, witty, or precise that you could not possibly express the same idea in a better way yourself.**

**VI. Reviews Must Be Both Descriptive And Analytical. Would you believe that many reviews which are submitted might be written by the average bright student who has read only the table of contents and thumbed through the volume? You should communicate a few of the author's significant ideas. *Why* are they important? What disagreements or reservations would you have? If a book is "good," *why*? If a book is "boring," *why*? (Oh yes, any book over one hundred pages is not automatically boring.)**

**Above all, do not be afraid to give your own opinion. Too often student papers are cop-outs--exercises in trying to say as little as possible. Avoid the use of the passive voice:**

**"Jefferson was said to....(*Who* said it? The author?  
You? Jefferson's friends? His enemies?)**

**"It is believed...."**

**"England is shown...."**

**Also avoid weasel words:**

**"The author appears to say...." (Does he say it or not?)**

**"The book seems to say...."**



**"It may or may not be true...."**

**Be direct about what the author says and about what you think. Clearly distinguish between your ideas and those of the author.**

**Your instructors are aware that you are not an authority on the material you are studying. But they also know that you are a bright, intelligent person and are capable of forming critical judgments. Do not be intimidated by an author. Be decisive and forceful—even if it is only to state your approval of what you have read. For the purposes of learning, most teachers believe that it is better for you to attempt a critical judgment that may turn out to be unfounded than to make no judgment at all.**

**If you would like to see what other authorities have said about a book, check the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* in the reference section at the library. It will direct you to journals where reviews have been published.**

**VII. Work Hard on Your Writing. Painful as it is to be so blunt, the writing in the majority of student papers runs from barely adequate to abominable. Too many papers are mechanically sloppy. You should understand that correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, choice of word, and syntax are not important merely because they are traditional or because English has "always been done that way." They are important because they make your writing clear. They enable you to say exactly what you mean.**

**Without the ability to write clearly and correctly, you will be an intellectual cripple all of your life. In spite of the onslaught by television, the printed word is still the most common means of communication among highly educated people. It does not matter how brilliant or how noble your intentions. Without the ability to write forcefully and clearly, your gifts will be wasted. How far do you think Thomas Jefferson would have gotten had he written, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men is created equal..."?"**

**A final suggestion may help. If you type your paper or have someone else do it (all instructors appreciate typed work, and some may require it), be sure to proofread your work before turning it in. Even after one typing, re-write your paper if necessary. Teachers have considerable sympathy for those students who try but who have never learned to write well: but they have little patience and show little mercy in awarding grades for those who are too careless to use their dictionaries or are too lazy to read their own papers before submitting them.**

**Historians as a rule pride themselves on a fine sense of the language. Moreover, history is one of the few disciplines left that offers the average educated person a clear and readable body of knowledge unencumbered by jargon and complicated by**

**special vocabulary. Your papers will be most successful and your grades will be noticeably higher if your writing is in this tradition.**

### **Book List**

Massie	Peter the Great (Counts as two)
Churchill	Marlborough
Troyat	Catherine the Great
Hanlon	Early Modern Italy
Black	Eighteenth Century Europe
Gregg	Queen Ann
Lynn	Wars of Louis XIV
Chandler	The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough
Wolfe	The Emergence of the Great Powers
Duffy	The Army of Frederick the Great
Duffy	Frederick the Great
Ritter	Frederick the Great
Lewis	Splendid Century: France of Louis XIV
Levi	Cardinal Richelieu
Dunlop	Louis XIV
Durrant	Age of Louis XIV
Hibbert	George III
Wolff	Political Thought
Voltaire	Charles XII
Fraser	Frederick the Great
Royle	British Civil War
Turner	Pitt the Younger
Cracraft	Revolution of Peter the Great
Asch	Thirty Years War
Belk	Louis XIV and Absolutism
Levin	Elizabeth I
Jacob	The Enlightenment
McDermott	England and the Spanish Armada
Cruse	Memoirs of Catherine the Great
Ashley	Stuarts
Hammer	Elizabeth's Wars
Kishlansky	A Monarchy Transformed
Chrimes	Henry VII
Royle	British Civil War
Miller	The Stuarts

**Note: Although it is unlikely, the instructor may make modifications to this syllabus at any**

**time**