

Department of History & Political Science
College of Arts & Sciences
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, MI 49104

HIST118-001 (761). Civilizations & Ideas (3 hrs)
(Spring Semester 2017)

CLASS: MWF 9:30–10:20, Buller Hall 250
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MWF 10:30 –11:15 a.m. and MW 14:30-15:30
F 12:30 –14:00 p.m. (other times by appointment)

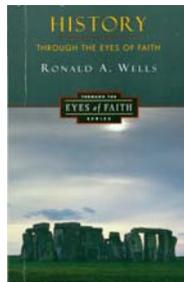
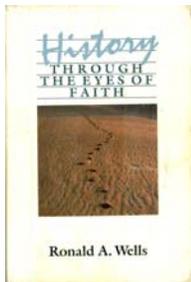
MOODLE

This syllabus and the Readings & Assignment Schedule is posted on the Learning Hub (aka Moodle). To access the course material go to <https://learninghub.andrews.edu>.

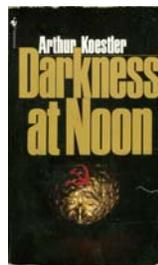
NOTE: If you have problems to access Moodle and need help, or, if username and password do not work, or you have any other question regarding the technology of Moodle, please, contact Marsha Beal at 471-6200 or email at dilit@andrews.edu.

TEXTBOOKS:

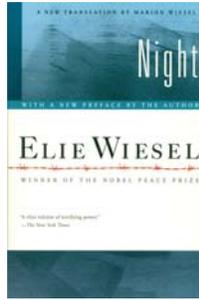
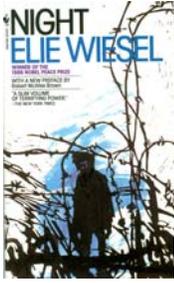
The following images and ISBN numbers are the texts we will use in this course. As the images show, the textbooks come with different covers. You can use both.



History Through the Eyes of Faith (1989), by Ronald A. Wells,
(ISBN 978-0-06-069296-4)



Darkness at Noon (1941, 1968), by Arthur Koestler
(ISBN 978-1-41-654026-7)



Night (1958, 1960, 2006), by Elie Wiesel
(ISBN 978-0-374-50001-6)

In addition to these three texts I will also post study guides, articles from newspapers or academic journals, selected book chapters, etc., on the Learning Hub (aka Moodle).

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE:

This is a history course; yet, to a degree it is also an interdisciplinary course as well. In point of fact, history is by nature an interdisciplinary academic pursuit. The course material often turns to philosophy, religious studies, sociology, anthropology, and other sources, all of it with a purpose to learn more about and to understand the human beings, what they believe and what they do. As a history course, the focus is on the existential aspect of humanity. Through selected readings we will survey the history of humanity and ideas starting with the Renaissance period (approx. 1400 A.D.). The topics covered are listed in the “Readings & Assignments Schedule” you can find below.

The coverage of the course material is both topical and chronological. The course work is clustered around a limited number of classic works and documents from the past, which you will read either in their entirety or partially (for example, this semester we will focus on, *On the nature of Things*, *Second Treatise of Government*, *Darkness at Noon*, and *Night*).

The name of this course (*Civilizations and Ideas*) tells you we are covering what the human beings since the ancient times believed and what they have achieved. Since this course starts with the Renaissance (approx. 1400 A.D.), I, the teacher, assume you are familiar with some minimal knowledge of human history prior to that period, and you familiar with the concept of worldview. Again, since a large number of you in this class have not taken HIST117, *Civilizations & Ideas I*, in which we cover those two areas, I will summarize those two during the first week of this semester.

Civilizations & Ideas involves a variety of teaching and learning methods: lectures, online material, video presentations, class discussions, and, if workable, guest-speakers, all of which should provide ample opportunity to discuss topics from various perspectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

By taking this course you should acquire *a body of knowledge (factual information)* of the past events, influential men and women, and major developments (such as, social, religious, intellectual and philosophical trends and movements), as to enable you to critically and intelligently analyze the events and developments of our contemporary world.

You should acquire and learn to appreciate the *historical context* of both, what the people in the past have done, and what problems and issues we today face—such as, respect for human life, civic responsibilities, expressions of antisemitism and racism, economic exploitation, and so forth.

You should develop *both analytical (critical thinking) skills and spiritual and philosophical discernment* that will enable you to make intelligent and wise choices in your life.

Learning is student’s responsibility, and each student is expected to do her/his home work consisted or reading, writing essays, and being ready and willing to participate constructively in the class discussion.

In the current worldwide/web of information, where your peers, unscrupulous media, politicians, preachers, and others, contend for your attention and the control of your mind, this course should empower you to recognize truth from falsehood. History tells of many individuals and societies who ignored the lessons of history, as well as the wisdom offered to humanity in the Word of God, only to end up being duped into following lies, bigotry, variety of destructive isms, and so forth.

THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Complete the readings (see Readings & Assignment Schedule) assigned by me—**on time**. The readings are assigned from the above listed textbooks and the material I post on the Learning Hub (aka Moodle). The assigned reading for the day will be discussed in the class. At the beginning of each class period, the assigned reading will be subject to quizzing. You should always be prepared to discuss the material, and to successfully answer the quiz questions.

QUIZZES (40% of the course grade)

Quizzes are unannounced, always at the beginning of the class period. Each quiz is based on the assigned reading for the day. Each quiz is worth 10 points. Quizzes are mostly multiple-choice answers; at times, matching items, true-false statements, fill in the blank, or a simple question you are asked to answer with a paragraph or two. The purpose of quizzing is, 1) to make sure you read the material on time and with care; 2) to test the comprehension of your daily reading and learning; and 3) for me to keep a record of your attendance. **Take quizzes seriously.** I do. Since I drop 5 lowest-scored quizzes, **I do not allow anyone for any reason to make-up missed quizzes.**

EXAMS (60% of the course grade)

There will be three (3) exams, all sectional, each worth 100 points. Exams are a combination of multiple-choice answers, matching, true-false statements, fill-in the blanks, and short answers.

You are allowed to make-up only one (1) exam during the semester. You are allowed to make up the exam **only** because of an illness, a field trip with another class, death in the family, or if some other form of misfortune hits you. In all cases, a written statement from the doctor, the teacher, or your advisor is required. A note from your friend, pastor, parent, or a relative, is not accepted. **Take each test seriously. I do.**

ATTENDANCE:

Students are expected to attend the classes regularly, and to be **on time**. Learning is an active process, and you must be present to participate in it. If you were employed, your employer would not tolerate tardiness and absence from work. Occasionally, you may be late, and in such a case, please come in, but take one of the empty seats near the two entrances. I would rather you come in and attend the class than miss the class discussion altogether.

I don't like to worry about your attendance, and prefer instead to teach, assuming that students paying for a class will have common sense to prepare, attend and participate. Nationwide research and experience shows that absences are a growing problem, and students who skip classes earn lower grades. My objective and desire is that all of you learn the material and earn high grades. Absences and tardiness may definitely affect your final grade up to one full letter grade. If you miss 10 percent of class appointments, your grade will be reduced by one letter grade (for example: from A- to B-); and if you miss 20 percent of class appointments, you are advised to drop the class, or receive F for the course. Exception to this rule are prolonged illness, in which case I, the instructor, will decide the appropriate remedy.

YOUR PERSONAL GOALS:

Personal goals of each student are beyond the course objectives. They are precious stones or nuggets we as individuals find along and at the end of this intellectual journey. For them we have to continually keep working toward, so as to develop the habit of learning and thinking analytically — for it is the learners who learn from the mistakes of the past, whether those be their own or the mistakes of others. You as a student ought to identify and set your own goals in this course. I, as a teacher, cannot make those choices for you, though I can help you in reaching them. I expect you to develop a healthy attitude and set high goals. I expect from you to excel in this class.

ATMOSPHERE IN THE CLASSROOM:

A productive and open discussion involves personal exposure, meaning you or other students are taking a risk when make a comment or an observation. Your ideas may not be in accord with those of the others, but your point—as long as it is honest, supported, and sensible—need to be respected by all in the class. The same applies to each of you toward other students. Questions, discussion, humor, cheer, and laughter are a part of the class, but scoffing, jeer, or any other form of contempt for the opinions of others is not.

Bad manners (foul language, disrespect of classmates, whispering, derogatory remarks reflecting disrespect of other ethnic and cultural groups, etc.) will not be tolerated.

ELECTRONICS:

Turn off cell phones. Also, please remove all electronic devices from around your neck or out of your ears. The use of electronic devices are not allowed during the class period, except the laptops and tablets when used to retrieve the reading material. Even in such cases, it is preferable that you print out the reading material and bring to class the hard copies. In regard to notes taking, learn to take notes by hand. It is more beneficial and conducive to learning.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

You are welcome to study with friends and even proofread each other's work. You are not allowed to turn in *someone else's work* as yours. Share your knowledge, but guard your work. Cheating does not take you far in life. Both cheating and cooperation with cheating are subject to punishment with an F for the course, accompanied with a letter to the Registrar and the Vice-president for Academic Affairs.

DISABILITIES:

If you qualify for accommodations under The American Disabilities Act, please see Carletta Witzel, at the Office of Student Success (Nethery Hall 100), as soon as possible for referral and assistance in arranging such accommodations. The Office of Student Success will inform me of your situation.

INVOLVEMENT:

As a good Andrews student, you are expected to be involved in the classroom discussion. You should inquire, ask questions, explore alternative explanations for humanity's creative and destructive impulses, and when necessary challenge the existing notions. You should also be aware that some questions may be out of place and inappropriate, or impossible to answer. Some questions may lead us into a dead-end path. Some questions may produce unpleasant answers about our ancestors and about ourselves; whereas others may encourage respect. Together we may come to accept that some of our questions may never be answered, or that some of our previously held

assumptions are not worth holding. I hope this journey through *Civilizations & Ideas* will be exciting and full of surprises.

GRADING SCALE:

Letter grades for the course will be based on the total number of points earned for the entire semester, and will be calculated on the basis of the following percentage intervals.

A	93%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	73%
C-	70%
D	60%
F	below 60%

The weight of the assignments (subject to adjustments at the teacher's discretion) toward the final grade for the course is:

60%	the three (3) exams
40%	quizzes

CUTTING CLASSES:

Students cut class for two general reasons. They have things to do that **appear** more important than the class, or they wish to avoid what they fear will be painful consequences if they attend. In regard to the first, nursing a serious illness or attending the funeral of a close relative are good—or should I say, legitimate—excuses for missing a class. But other excuses—the demands of your job, social engagements (including recovering from the night before), completing assignments for other courses—are, at best, questionable.

The other general reason is more disturbing and perhaps less recognized. When asked what they most dislike about the way the course is taught, students answer—“**Anything that produces sustained tension or anxiety.**” We believe cutting is a result of that aversion. The response of students to feelings of personal inadequacy, **fear** of humiliation, or a threatening professorial personality or teaching style, is often to avoid class. This response feeds on itself, as frequent absences make attending even more threatening.

But what accounts for frequent cutting where the teachers try to make the material interesting, know the students by name, and approach them with respect, care, help, and affability? We take that question as one you and we cannot answer. We simply tell our students: Attend our classes regularly or drop the course.

UNDERSTANDING HISTORY: HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW?

Only a part of what was observed in the past was remembered by those who observed it;
only a part of what was remembered was recorded;
only a part of what was recorded has survived;
only a part of what has survived has come to the attention of a historian;
only a part of what has come to his attention is credible;
only a part of what is credible has been grasped; and
only a part of what has been grasped can be expounded or narrated by the historian.

Louis Gottschalk, *Understanding History* (1950)

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

There are undoubtedly significant differences among various peoples and nations of the world (in terms of outlook and “general characteristics”), but these are nearly always the result of accumulated historical traditions, not biological (genetic) differences.

The possibilities for manipulating the human mind, in order to get people to believe what you want them to believe, are tremendous and must never be underestimated.

WHAT IS HISTORY? WHY STUDY HISTORY?

Why study history has become an important issue for many. The simple and true answer is that the study of history makes people more discernable, more intelligent. Since history is an investigation of *what* and *why* events happen; without history we would end up losing our orientation. Without history we would lose our collective memory—similar to the loss of personal memory. On an intellectual level, it helps people intelligently analyze the causes and forces behind events, and on the practical level, it helps people know what is going on around them. Without knowing what happened in the past, and how and why it happened, people in various contexts have been duped by unscrupulous politicians into destructive and even suicidal behavior—the Nazis, the Bolsheviks, racists, religious bigots, and so on. History enables people to formulate their thoughts, to analyze the developments and social affairs, and to provide context for policy decisions in whatever problematic context they find themselves in. In other words, human life depends on the past experiences to give itself coherence and meaning. Yet, no matter how carefully we study history, it is not a sufficient guide. But it is all we have—except the special revelation—and even as such, it is still fascinating. History is a living discipline.