

Dr. Thomas Behr  
Western Civilization, Part I

University of Houston, Fall 2006

\*\*\*\* SYLLABUS \*\*\*\*

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Office Hours: T and Th, 3:00-4:00 p.m. and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The class will cover the people, ideas, events and major trends – economic, social, political, and cultural – in Western Civilization from pre-history up to approximately 1500. We will analyze and seek to understand the great movements in Western society, reflecting on the nexus of inter-relationships between various factors (see “Course Objectives”). Our study will always be aimed at linking up experience of the past to critical issues of interest to us today.

**COURSE CONCEPTUALIZATION and LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The course has a double objective: one is to acquire substantive knowledge about the history of the Western cultural tradition, the other is to develop the intellectual virtues (reading, critical thinking, speaking and writing) and the practical virtues of right reasoning, dialoguing and acting responsibly in the world, i.e. the “skills” for an engaged and rewarding life. History as a discipline stands between the social sciences and the liberal arts. The past may well dictate various socio-political, economic and cultural horizons, but human beings still have to choose what they think most likely to lead them to happiness: knowledge of the human experience recorded in history and good habits of thinking and acting are useful in that endeavor. In conditions not of their own choosing, free and responsible people make their own history.

We are using “Course Compass” for quizzes and course management, and “Turn It In” for the Mid-Term and Final. Students must register immediately for both services.

- *The Course Compass website access is <http://www.coursecompass.com/>*

Our Course ID is: **behr15681** with Passwords TBD

- *The Turn It In website is <http://www.turnitin.com>*

Our Course ID is: **1571735** and the Password is: **AQUINAS** (all caps)

Once you register for these services you will have your own passwords.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

King, *Western Civilization, A Social and Cultural History, Vol. I: to 1750, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.*

Behr, T., *Western Civilization, Part I. Course Companion.*

Behr, T., *History Notes. Western Civilization by Margaret King, A Study Guide.*

Auden, W.H., ed., *Portable Greek Reader*

Lucretius, (Humphries, trans.), *The Nature of Things*

Augustine of Hippo, *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*

Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Writings.* Ralph McInerny, trans.

### GRADING: (see details below)

1) Textbook Quizzes (Course Compass)	20%
2) Primary Reading Quizzes (In-Class)	30%
4) Mid-Term Essay (Turn It In)	20%
5) Final Essay (Turn It In)	30%
6) Bonus Culture Credit points	up to 5%

1) Multiple choice quizzes on the King textbook will be on Course Compass, closing before the class on that chapter. Check the syllabus schedule to note when quizzes will be opened and closed -- do not wait for them to "appear" on the quiz page to prepare for them. Once you open a quiz you will have one-hour to complete it; you cannot open and close the quiz to come back later.

2) There will be a quiz on each set of primary readings in the class in which we are scheduled to discuss those readings.

3) The Mid-Term and Final Exams, on Turn it In, will require integrating textbook, primary reading, and lecture materials. Once the exam questions are posted on Course Compass, communication between students concerning course topics is forbidden.

**Plagiarism or other cheating on the exams and or quizzes will be reported and penalized. For further information about Academic Honesty, the Academic Calendar, Religious Holy Days, and Disabilities, refer to:**

**[http://www.uh.edu/provost/stu/stu\\_syllabsuppl.html](http://www.uh.edu/provost/stu/stu_syllabsuppl.html)**

## Schedule -- check Course Compass for changes

- 8/21 - Introductions: the Uses and Abuses of History  
8/23 - Realist Historical Theory: read Course Companion, Introduction and pp. i-xx  
8/28 - Civilization (and its discontents?): read King Ch.1 (quiz closes)  
8/30 - cont.  
8/31 - Religion and the City: read King Ch.2 (quiz closes, etc.)  
9/6 - Emergence and Evolution of the *Polis*: King Ch. 3  
9/11 - Greek Reader, pp. 52-82; 202-241; 339-373 (in-class quiz)  
9/13 - cont.  
9/18 - Greek Reader, pp. 374-392; 406-430; 476-485; 639ff  
9/20 - cont.  
9/25 - The Greek Age of Absolutism: read King Ch. 4  
9/27 - Greek Reader, pp. 435-464; 477-485; 534-558  
10/2 - From Urbs to Orbis: read King Ch. 5  
10/4 - Lucretius, Books I – III and, Bk IV, lines 1038-1191  
10/9 - From Republic to Empire: read King Ch. 6  
10/11 - cont. \*\*\*MID-TERM QUESTION POSTED\*\*\*  
10/15 - MID-TERM DUE ON TURN-IT-IN BY MIDNIGHT  
10/16 - Religion and Empire: read King Ch. 7  
10/18 - Augustine, Secs. I – XVIII, XXIII – XXVI, LXX – LXXIII, CXVII - CXXII  
10/23 - The "Fall" of Rome: read King Ch. 8  
10/25 - cont.  
10/30 - The Invention of Europe: read King Chs. 9 AND 10  
11/1 - cont.  
11/3 - Political and Economic Take-off of Europe: read King Ch. 11  
11/8 - Crucible of European Civilization: read King Ch. 12  
11/10 - Aquinas, Sels. 6, 11, 19,  
11/15 - Aquinas, Sels. 12, 23, 24  
11/20 - Crisis and Modernity: read King Ch. 13  
11/27 - cont.  
11/29 - Conclusions  
12/1 \*\*\* FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS POSTED BY MIDNIGHT\*\*\*  
12/7 - FINAL EXAM DUE ON TURN-IT-IN BY MIDNIGHT