

**History 300: Religion and State in European History**  
**Spring Semester, 2020**  
**John Abbott**

**Office Hours: 10-10:50am M/W (or by appt.)**  
**Room 1015, University Hall**

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**Course description**

History 300 provides history majors a semester-length workshop in historical methods and writing. Our topical focus is the evolution of church-state relations, mostly in their European context and considered in their cultural, social and political dimensions. We will examine the interplay between religious doctrine and political theory, the clash and convergence of confessional and national identities, and the shifting relations between citizens, states, and religious authority. In investigating these matters, we will draw upon a handful of books, articles and primary source materials. The heart of this course however lies in ways in which students hone their interpretive and expository skills through an intensive schedule of assigned writings, discussion, revision, and class presentation.

**Assigned Readings**

John H. Arnold, *History, A Very Short Introduction*

Additional readings (lots of them!) available via Blackboard (see schedule below)

**Course Requirements**

a) Formal writing assignments include:

two short essays – “my favorite history book and why,” due Wednesday, January 22, and an autobiographical reflection, due February 5) – as well as a short documentary analysis (to be submitted online by February 26).

*Combined, these three papers count for 20 percent of your grade.*

b) Classroom participation and performance, including three entries to Discussion Board forums at Blackboard. Discussion forums will address selected class topics (e.g. drawing comparisons between religious doctrines). *Your combined participation score counts for another 20 percent of your final grade.*

c) A research proposal, including provisional bibliography, due March 18. *5 percent of grade.*

d) A short (ca. 10 minute) oral presentation, at semester’s end, of your research project. *Another 5 percent.*

e) Last but not least: a research paper (ca. 11-12 pp.), reflecting work in both primary and secondary source materials. The rough draft for this is due April 8; your revised version is due Wednesday of finals week (May 6). *Worth 50 percent of semester grade*

## Course Purpose and Ethics

This course focuses most of all on writing, the most solitary of activities. But historical writing is also a social transaction, by which we establish new pathways between past and present, connecting bygone eras with current-day audiences. There is both art and technique to this process, and much of this class will be devoted to mastering these. To this end, you will be asked to discuss and evaluate the work of your classmates, who will in turn comment on yours. In all this, collegiality and respect for one another's ideas and work are crucial.

## Course Policies

a) *No phones* out during class (not negotiable). In those cases where students use laptops for purposes unrelated to class, they will be asked (once only) to put these away.

b) *Plagiarism* in any form will be dealt with harshly. Recycling papers from the internet or elsewhere, copying other students' work, or cutting-and-pasting from other sources will be punished to the fullest extent of university policy. Count on this.

c) *Classroom citizenship*. Classroom behavior is one of many factors determining your final participation grade. Showing up prepared, answering or asking questions, taking notes and paying attention – these will be appreciated and duly noted. On the other side of the ledger: consistently showing up late, talking during class, using laptops for purposes other than note-taking and other disruptive behavior will also be duly noted. A special category in hell is reserved for those students who come to class, sign the attendance sheet, and then walk out. You really don't want to call that kind of attention to yourself.

d) *Religious holidays*. In those instances when classroom schedules conflict with religious holidays, students should provide me advance notification of their absence. I will in turn make every reasonable effort to honor these requests and make necessary accommodations.

e) *Disability accommodations*. We are committed to working with the Disability Resource Center in ensuring a barrier-free environment to all students at UIC. Please let me know as early as possible in the semester as to anticipated accommodations.

f) *Know your rights*. UIC is devoted to the principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. Freedom from discrimination for both students and employees is central to our academic mission. Students are encouraged to study UIC's policies and procedures pertaining to these issues, accessible at the web pages of the Office of Access and Equity (go to <http://oae.uic.edu/>).

## Course Schedule

### Week 1            Why History?

- a) Course themes and mechanics
- b) Discussion: does history have a future? Reading: Thucydides excerpts (Blackboard)

### Week 2            How History?

- a) Story-telling and the discipline of proof. Reading: Arnold, Chapter 1 -2 (pp. 1-34);
- b) Writing workshop & quiz (in preparation, please review style sheet at Blackboard)
- c) Sources, archives, methods. Arnold, Chapters 3 – 4 (35-79)  
**First writing assignment due** (your favorite historical book & why)

### Week 3            Religious Imaginations

- a) Historiography concluded. Arnold, pp. 80 - 123
- b) Mortality, mores and morality. Readings: Gilgamesh & Code of Hammurabi Code (excerpts at Blackboard)
- c) Introducing monotheism: Hebrew law and religion. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus & Deuteronomy excerpts (Blackboard)

### Week 4            Rendering unto Caesar

- a) Early Christianity. Reading: Gospels of Mark, Matthew (Blackboard)
- b) The church's triumph in a fallen world. Reading: Clement of Alexandria, Peter Brown on sex & slavery in late antiquity, Theodosian Code excerpts (Blackboard)
- c) Digging in for the long haul. Reading: Augustine's *City of God* (excerpts on Blackboard)  
**Second writing assignment due** ("good stories happen to those who can tell them")

### Week 5            New Worlds Stirring

- a) Byzantium and the Eastern Church; Rome and the origins of Europe. Procopius on Hagia Sophia, Gregory on Papal Power (Blackboard)
- b) A new civilization & power: Islam. Excerpts from Qur'an & Hadith of Nawawi (Blackboard). Also: Islam and "Judeo-Christian" identity politics. Reading: Kevin Schultz, "Arguing in Bad Faith," available at <https://newrepublic.com/article/153867/arguing-bad-faith>
- c) *Library excursion*

### Weeks 6 & 7 Individual Meetings

Individual meetings held in my office (ca. 30 minutes each). Schedules tbd.

**Third writing assignment due (short documentary analysis, submitted via Blackboard by Feb. 26)**

### Week 8            Caesar v. Christ, redux

- a) The Crusades. Urban II speech and lecture notes (at Blackboard)
- b) Collaboration and contention: the West's splintered sovereignty. Lecture & discussion
- c) *Library excursion*

**Week 9      Cross-wiring Religion and Politics**

- a) Reformation between State and Rabble. Martin Luther, “The Large Catechism”; Peasants War (Twelve Articles) excerpts (Blackboard)
- b) Catholic Reformation. Ignatius Loyola, “Spiritual Exercises”; Decrees of the Council of Trent, excerpts (Blackboard)
- c) Formatting your citations (exercises, examples and discussion)

**Week 10      Disentangling Church and State**

- a) Whose Sovereignty? Bodin, Bossuet, Hobbes (Blackboard)
- b) Reason, Toleration and Public Authority. Voltaire, Rousseau & Kant (Blackboard)
- c) Christians and Jews in the Eighteenth Century. Dohm, Mendelssohn (Blackboard)

**Project proposals due**

**Week 11      Spring Break!**

**Week 12      The Church(es) in an Age of Revolution**

- a) French Revolution and the Church. Debates over religious freedom and toleration (Readings at Blackboard)
- b) Napoleon, Church and Papacy. Napoleon, Concordat readings (Blackboard)
- c) Religious Resilience and Redefinition (lecture & discussion)

**Week 13      Religion in an Age of Capitalism and Industrialization**

- a) Church-state conflicts in France and Germany. Lecture & discussion
- b) Social questions and Christian ethics. The working classes and religion. Readings at Blackboard. **First drafts of semester projects due!**

**Week 14      From Mass Politics to the Age of Dictators**

- a) Leo XIII and Social Catholicism. *Rerum Novarum* (excerpts, at Blackboard)
- b) The Papacy and Fascist Italy. The Concordat with Hitler’s Germany. Lecture and discussion
- c) “How many divisions does the pope have?” Religion, nationalism and self-interest in the Second World. Reading at Blackboard.

**Week 15      Student Presentations**

**Oral presentations of students’ projects (15 minutes – max! – each)**

**Week 16      Student Presentations, cont.**

***Final versions of papers due Wednesday of Finals Week (May 6)***