**General Course Description**

This course treats economic, political, social, religious, and cultural developments affecting western civilization over the last 500 years in terms of a series of "revolutions." Approaching history in this way helps to underscore the profound nature of the changes that occurred during these centuries and to suggest the constancy of change in western civilization. Many of these "revolutions" have been driven by writings or sets of writings and, as part of our study, we will look closely at various representative texts to grasp the intellectual underpinnings of the "revolutions" of western civilization. We will also view and evaluate films related to several of the revolutions covered during the semester.

**Required Materials**

**Textbook**


**Films**

You will need to be able to locate/access these on your own because they are not provided for you online.

- ONE of the following Bond movies: *Tomorrow Never Dies, The World is Not Enough, or Die Another Day*
- ONE of the following: *Inherit the Wind or Planet of the Apes* (the original 1968 version)
- BOTH of the following: *Reds* and *Frida*

**Course Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the factors that gave rise to new social, religious, political, and intellectual revolutions in Western culture after the Middle Ages.
- Recognize the contingency of events and the role of human agency in shaping the past
- Identify common features underlying these changes in Western society.
- Develop awareness and sensitivity to ongoing, unfinished revolutions whose full story has yet to unfold.

**Course Activities**

The course offers a wealth of potential assignments, far more than is feasible for you to complete during a seven-week graduate course. The aim of presenting such a wide array is to give you some choice in
the assignments you complete. There are some common assignments that you will all complete, but in others you will be free to select what you wish to read and reflect on in your work. The general requirements are as follows.

**Complete six journal assignments of your choosing (unless otherwise indicated)** from six different units. This amounts to one journal submission every week or every two units.

A journal entry is essentially a short paper that only the professor will read and respond to. Journals need to be well-crafted essays of between 500 and 1000 words in length, that observe the rules of grammar, punctuation, and good organization. Remember that journal entries are formal academic assignments. We expect graduate level research, writing, analysis, and complete documentation of borrowed sources.

**Participate in Discussion Boards twice weekly.** Participation is defined as making one original post and responding to the posts of two other students.

**Final Project: Complete an academic research project in Unit 12**

Unit 12 houses the final research project. You are required to complete an academic research paper (3000 words maximum) on an “unfinished” revolution of your choosing. The value of the exercise is that each student will set the research agenda (that is, ask one major question or set of questions on the chosen area of study and determine a strategy for answering that question).

**Grading**

Assignments will be awarded points based on quality of writing and depth of analysis. For example, a journal entry will earn a maximum 5 points. A journal “essay” earning an A, up to 5 out of 5 points, should manifest a solid grasp of the readings and issues under discussion and demonstrate the kind of critical and analytical acumen that makes graduate education both rigorous and intellectually enjoyable. As a basic guideline, I expect an introduction that includes a thesis statement, a well developed body of several paragraphs, and a conclusion summarizing the information you provided.

**Discussion** participation is very important to success of the learning experience. Again, depth and quality of discussion contributions will be rewarded accordingly. The final paper will also be held to the same high standards and expectations for content and analysis.

The final grade will be distributed as follows:

- Journals = 5 points each or 30 points total (30%)
- Final Project = 40 points total (40%)
- Group Discussion = 30 points (5pts per week for each of 6 weeks) (30%)
Week One

Intro to Course/Consider the Present before the Past.

Movies: Watch any of the three and respond to them in the Discussion Boards:

Tomorrow Never Dies (1977)
The World Is Not Enough (1999)
Die Another Day (2002)

This unit is preliminary and probably partly remedial stuff—geography, political geography, forms of government, how we talk about social, economic, cultural matters. What are we talking about when we use the terms "western" and "civilization"? We will survey contemporary institutions, ideas, and conditions so we have some idea of what the past has led to so far.

1. Commercial Revolution

This chapter goes from late medieval trading patterns and practices through the rise of great commercial centers like Antwerp and enterprises like the Hanseatic League and the great expansion of commercial activity connected with the age of exploration. Special issues include the profit mentality, accounting practices, shipbuilding, and early capitalism.

Week Two

2. Protestant Revolution

Readings: Perry Ch. 10-12, available as pdf files in the learning area

This Unit covers the Reformation and the rise of religious pluralism. You will be able to contrast old/new belief systems. Implications for political thought and practice. Wars of religion through 1648.

3. Scientific Revolution

Reading: Ch. 17 in textbook

Covers the Copernican system, the Newtonian universe, Descartes and the boundaries of science. Biology, medicine, chemistry. The early Enlightenment.
**Week Three**

4. English Revolution

Reading: Perry, Ch 16


5. French Revolution

Reading: Perry, Ch 19, 22, 23

Examines absolutism in theory and practice; democratic theory; 1789–1799; Napoleon and the legacy of the revolution; epilogue: 1815–71, revolutions and constitutions.

**Week Four**

6. Industrial Revolution

Reading: Perry Ch. 20, 25, 26

Focuses on Industrialization; economic and social consequences; rise of the middle class, liberal economics; liberal politics; imperialism.

7. Darwinian Revolution

Reading: Perry Ch 23 (sections “Natural Selection,” “Darwinism and Christianity,” and “Marx”)

Movies: *Inherit the Wind* OR *Planet of the Apes*

Covers background of Romanticism (organic—growing and changing—favored over idea of rational absolutes); Darwin and natural selection; social Darwinism; belief in progress; urbanization and art (early impressionism); Marx.

Central texts: Darwin, *Origin of Species*; Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*
### Week Five

#### 8. Technological Revolution

Guns, ships, trains, banks, cinematography; WWI; beginning of American century; the individual out of control (Freud and the unconscious); reclaiming the subjective—modern art (cubism).

#### 9. Russian Revolution

**Movie: Reds**

Lenin and the dictatorship of the proletariat; 1917–1924; Stalin and the rise of the Soviet Union.

### Week Six

#### 10. Totalitarian Revolution

Rise of Fascism and Nazism; order vs. chaos; statism vs. egoism; nationalism and the problem of the "other"—prelude to Holocaust; WWII.

#### 11. Global Revolution

Decolonization and the legacy of the West; Cold War; post-Cold War world and western civilization.

FOLLOW PATTERN ESTABLISHED DURING FIRST TWO WEEKS FOR DISCUSSION AND JOURNALS

### Week Seven

#### 12. Unfinished Revolutions

**Movie: Frida**

A study of ongoing and newly unfolding sexual, intellectual, and religious disruptions that challenge and vex Western political, economic, and social institutions.

RESEARCH PAPER DUE