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HSTR 103.80: Western Civilization I - Honors

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HISTORY 103: HONORS COURSE, EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION TO 1648

History 103 is open to students seeking a more reading and writing intensive experience than is normally available in the standard 101 survey. Welcome! I look forward to working with each of you this semester. Let me call your attention to the following variations from the main course syllabus.

Course Requirements. In addition to attending lectures and discussion sections and completing the 101 textbook and packet readings, students in 103 will write two **1500 word essays**, the first to be written on Bart Ehrman's Misquoting Jesus and handed in Friday 26 September (and redrafted and resubmitted 10 October, but more on that later), and the second on Roger Ekirch's At Day's Close, due on Tuesday 25 November. Both books are available for purchase in the University Center Bookstore. Each of these essays will count toward 15% of the final grade, as will the **midterms**. The **final** will count 20%. Attendance at and participation in section will count for 10%, as will the **reading responses** given in section (300 words for 103).

Discussions. Sections will be taken up with discussing the primary documents from the course packet. In addition to the focus questions, here are a few general questions we will use to approach each of these sources: Why did this document come into existence? What is the document meant to accomplish? What information does the document reveal (intentionally and unintentionally) about the culture or society in which it was produced? What issues does the document address that still have relevance to us today? What issues does it treat, on the other hand, that are completely removed from our experience? These are only a few examples, but will be useful to guide your reading.

Written Work. If the lectures and textbook are intended to give you a grasp of what happened, or what historians think happened, over the course of four millenia, the writing assignments in this course are intended to acquaint you with how historians actually work. The weekly readings, and your responses to them, expose you to the raw materials of history -- what we call primary sources -- and to the questions that historians ask of them. In addition, the two longer essays will ask you to analyze the ways that two particular scholars have used and interpreted historical sources.

I have encountered very little academic dishonesty in 103, which is fortunate as the consequences are potentially dire. All of the warnings on the main 101 syllabus apply as well to 103, with the addition that plagiarism on essays, even if incidental and inadvertent, will result in a failing grade on the essay. If a case can be made that plagiarism was in any instance deliberate, failure in the course will ensue, with the possibility of more serious penalties under the student conduct

code.

In closing, let me encourage all of you to be active participants in your own education. Remember that you will teach each other as much as I teach you -- and you may even teach me a thing or two.

Your first essay, a review of Bart Ehrman's Misquoting Jesus, is due in class on **Friday 26 September** (late papers will not be accepted). It is to be 1500 words in length. *Your name should appear on a separate title page, and only there.*

The basic principle is that most of your review should be addressed *not to me, but to other students*. Assume that your readers may never actually read the book themselves, but need to know what it is about, and have to know enough about it to be able to talk about it.

First of all, in a 300 word synopsis, tell your reader what the book is about.

Then relate the book to the material you have studied or are studying in this class. How does it complement ("gel" with) or supplement (add to) the material you've studied? Did you read anything that surprised you, or that you had trouble understanding?

Next, ask these questions: How do we know that Ehrman knows what he is talking about? Where is he getting his evidence? What is he doing with this evidence? Should we let him get away with it? This is the place for any important criticisms you have.

What aspects of this book appeal to someone of your age and background? What aspects of this book can you relate to your own experience?

Your last remarks *will* be directed to me. Should I assign this book the next time I teach this class? Why or why not?

Important: *you will be turning this essay in twice.* The first essay will be revised in response to comments and corrections, and re-submitted by **Friday October 10**; your grade for the essay will be the average of the grades for the first and second draft.

Citations: For this essay, you should not have very many, if any, citations to sources other than the Ehrman book and your course textbook. For references to the former, you may simply indicate the page number(s) of the passage you are quoting or paraphrasing; if you paraphrase, you should somehow indicate where Ehrman's idea *begins*, by saying, for example, "Ehrman asserts that. . . ." or

something to that effect. Citations of the textbook should include the abbreviation "TWE" along with the page number(s).