

Western Civilization – Unit I – Greece

Essential Learnings:

- What are the legacies of the ancient Greeks?
- In what ways were the lives of the ancient Greeks similar to and different from the lives of modern Americans?
- **Element: Politics** – Trace the evolution of political organization from kings (Minoans and Mycenaeans) and tyrants (early poleis) to “democracy” (Athens) and “oligarchy” (Sparta), then compare the Athenian and Spartan systems to the U.S. system of government, especially as related to the separation of powers.
- **Element: Education** – Explore the role of education as it related to gender, social class, and the political organization of Greek life. Compare and contrast the role of education in ancient Greece and modern America.
- **Element: Culture** – Trace the evolution of Greek thought, from the technological advancements of the Minoans, through the epic poetry of the Mycenaeans, to the philosophical and intellectual traditions of the Ionian Greeks (especially as embodied by Socrates, Aristotle and Plato). Discuss the intellectual legacies of the ancient Greeks, especially in regard to their impact upon modern American education.
- **Element: Religion** – Explore the conflict between traditional Greek religious beliefs (polytheism and the personification of the deities) and the birth of modern intellectual thought. Discuss the modern conflict between religion and scientific thought.
- **Element: Other Legacies** – Compare and contrast the architectural, artistic and athletic traditions of ancient Greeks and modern Americans. Discuss the reasons for the “fall” of the Athenian empire, and the lessons that modern Americans can take from the Athenians’ demise.

Essay Questions:

- Describe and analyze a few of the legacies of the ancient Greeks.
- Describe and analyze a few of the similarities and differences between the lives of the ancient Greeks and the lives of modern Americans.

Western Civilization – Unit II (Part 1) – Alexander

Essential Learning:

- What are the legacies of Alexander’s empire and the Hellenistic era?
- **Element: Politics** – Discuss Philip II and Alexander’s approach to leadership and imperial politics, especially in regard to the incorporation of “conquered” peoples into an empire. Compare and contrast this with the U.S. approach to empire.
- **Element: Culture** – Discuss the Hellenistic mindset: a melding of ancient Greek and Persian cultures which resulted in a move away from idealism to realism (especially in the realms of philosophy, theater, art and architecture).
- **Element: Other Legacies** – Discuss the continuation of Hellenistic culture even in the wake of the political collapse of Alexander’s empire.

Western Civilization – Unit II (Part 2) – Rome

Essential Learnings:

- What are the legacies of the ancient Romans?
- In what ways were the lives of the ancient Romans similar to and different from the lives of modern Americans?
- **Element: Politics** – Examine the development and workings of the Roman Republic, focusing particularly upon the organization of executive and legislative power. Compare and contrast the Republic with the American system of government. Finally, explain how imperial goals destroyed the Republic, and contrast the Roman experience with that of the United States.
- **Element: Economics** – Discuss the class structure of Rome, focusing upon the division between plebeians and patricians, and the existence of a large slave class. Examine the rise and lifestyles of the “new middle class,” and compare the experiences of these Romans with modern Americans. Discuss the economic motivations behind Roman imperialism, and compare those motivations with those behind U.S. imperialism.
- **Element: Military** – Explain how imperialism demanded the development of a diverse, professional Roman army. Compare and contrast the Roman army with the modern U.S. military.
- **Element: Culture / Education** – Examine the ability of the Romans to adapt the ideas and innovations of other cultures to their own society, particularly in the realms of architecture, literature, athletics and spirituality. Compare the Roman ability to integrate diverse cultural elements into their society with that same ability in the United States.
- **Element: Religion** – Discuss the Roman adoption of Greek polytheism, provincial religious toleration, and the status of the Roman emperor as a deity. Then examine the rise of Christianity from its roots in Judaism, its survival of Roman persecution, and its eventual rise to prominence as the official religion of the Roman Empire.
- **Element: Other Legacies** – Discuss the impact of Roman legal traditions, road construction techniques, sanitation systems and the Latin language upon modern American life.

Essay Questions:

- Describe and analyze a few of the legacies of the ancient Romans.
- Describe and analyze a few of the similarities and differences between the lives of the ancient Romans and the lives of modern Americans.

Western Civilization – Unit III (Part 1) – Byzantines

Essential Learning:

- What are the legacies of the Byzantine Empire?
- **Element: Politics** – Discuss the shift of Roman power eastward to Constantinople, the economic reasons for the stability of the eastern empire, and the political impact of Justinian and Theodora on future European politics.
- **Element: Culture** – Examine the preservation and celebration of Greek, Hellenistic and Roman culture within Byzantine civilization. Compare this melding of cultures with the cultural diversity of the United States.
- **Element: Other Legacies** – Examine the Christian schism between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, and the impact of that schism upon modern Christianity. Discuss the continuing importance of Istanbul (not Constantinople).

Western Civilization – Unit III (Part 2) – Middle Ages

Essential Learnings:

- What are the legacies of the Middle Ages?
- In what ways were the lives of people of the Middle Ages similar to and different from the lives of modern Americans?
- **Element: Politics** – Examine the system of feudalism and the concept of decentralized power during the Early Middle Ages. Trace the gradual recentralization of power through the High and Late Middle Ages. Discuss how the process of decentralization to centralization of power during the Middle Ages compares to the growth of centralized power throughout American history.
- **Element: Economics** – Examine the system of manorialism and its relationship with feudalism during the Early Middle Ages. Discuss the transition from an agriculture-based economy to a trade-based economy during the High Middle Ages. Trace the gradual reemergence of cross-continental trade by the time of the Late Middle Ages. Examine the similarities between the economic transitions of the Middle Ages and American history.
- **Element: Culture / Education** – Discuss the decentralization of culture during the Early Middle Ages, and explore the revival of town life and formal education during the High Middle Ages period. Compare this with the development of a national “American identity.”
- **Element: Religion** – Discuss the role of Christianity as a unifying element of Middle Ages culture, and trace the expanding power and influence of the Catholic Church. Contrast this with modern America, in which religion can be unifying and divisive. Finally, examine the religious, political and economic motivations of the Church, especially as related to the Crusades and the Inquisition.
- **Element: Other Legacies** – Explore the continuing importance of the monastic movement, missionary work, Middle Ages literature and Gothic architecture.

Essay Questions:

- Describe and analyze a few of the legacies of the High Middle Ages.
- Describe and analyze a few of the similarities and differences between the lives of people of the High Middle Ages and the lives of modern Americans.

Western Civilization – Unit IV (Part 1) – Renaissance

Essential Learning:

- What are the legacies of the Renaissance?
- **Element: Politics** – Trace the emergence of Italian city-states such as Florence and Venice, and the role that they played in the rebirth of classicism. Discuss the legacy of Machiavelli on modern political thought and practice.
- **Element: Economics** – Explore the emergence of modern ideas surrounding international trade, finance and taxation.
- **Element: Culture / Education** – Discuss the transition from a theologically-based education system to liberal arts education, and the emergence of the concept of a “Renaissance man.” Explore the re-envisioning of art, which fused classical and humanist elements, and discuss Renaissance art’s functions as personal and political propaganda. Examine the rise of the vernacular and the role of the printing press and trade in the spread of Renaissance thought.
- **Element: Religion** – Explore the reasons for the continued decline of Church power, and the ways in which Catholic leaders attempted to reassert Church influence. Examine Christian humanism as an attempt to blend the traditions of the Catholic Church with humanist ideals.

Western Civilization – Unit IV (Part 2) – Reformation

Essential Learning:

- What are the legacies of the Reformation?
- **Element: Religion** – Examine how Catholic doctrine and Church abuses precipitated criticism. Discuss the role of Martin Luther in the emergence of Protestant thought, and the ways in which the Catholic Church countered the Protestant movement. Examine the branching growth of Protestant sects, and the ways in which they influenced the development of modern European and American religious life.
- **Element: Politics** – Examine the debate regarding the role of religion in government, and government in religion, particularly in Switzerland (Calvinism) and England (Church of England). Discuss the growth of religious identity as a factor superseding national identity, and the resulting impact on population movement. Trace the influence of the Anabaptist experience on the development of American political-religious thought.

Essay Questions:

- Describe and analyze a few of the legacies of the Renaissance and Reformation.
- Describe and analyze a few of the similarities and differences between the lives of the people of the Renaissance and the lives of modern Americans.

Western Civilization – Units V & VI – Monarchy and Revolution
(focus on England, France, Spain, Russia and Austria-Hungary during 1st semester, and on England
and France during 2nd semester)

Essential Learnings:

- What are the legacies of the Europeans' monarchial systems and their anti-monarchial revolutions?
- In what ways were the European revolutions similar to and different from the American Revolution?

- **Element: Politics** – Trace the development and recognize the characteristics of absolute versus constitutional monarchy.
- **Element: Culture** – Examine the role of monarchy within the cultural identity of various European peoples.
- **Element: Religion** – Discuss the role of religion in the maintenance of monarchy, and in the anti-monarchial revolutions. Examine the growth of the debate between faith and reason that was fostered by the Enlightenment.
- **Element: Economics** – Examine the role of the economically privileged as leaders of anti-monarchial movements.
- **Element: Other Legacies** – Compare the motivations (especially the Enlightenment) behind the European and American revolutions, and the relative successes and failures of those revolutions.

Essay Questions:

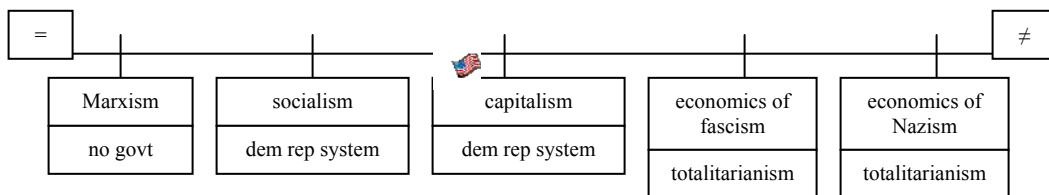
- Compare and contrast constitutional and absolute monarchy.
- Why did Europeans generally support the development of absolute monarchies in nations like France and England? Reference particular actions taken by French and English monarchs in this essay.

- Compare and contrast the French and American Revolutions.
- Compare the motivations behind the English, French and American revolutions, and the relative successes and failures of those revolutions.

Western Civilization – Unit VII – ISMs

Essential Learning:

- What are the legacies of the political, economic and cultural movements of the 1800s and beyond?
- **Element: Politics** – Revisit the evolution of liberalism and nationalism as alternative political ideologies to absolutism.
- **Element: Economics** – Reexamine the development of European industrialism and imperialism, and discuss the role of those ISMs in the evolution of capitalistic economic thought. Trace the socialistic and Marxist reactions to capitalism. Differentiate between Marxist and Soviet-style “communism.”
- **Element: Politics** – Examine the economic spectrum of equality versus inequality, and the connections between economic and political ideologies.



- **Element: Culture** – Examine the ways in which artistic movements such as realism, romanticism and impressionism influenced and were influenced by contemporary society during the 1800s and 1900s. Compare and contrast ISMs such as radical and mainstream feminism.

Essay Questions:

- Explain the elements of capitalism, and discuss how socialism and Marxism are responses to capitalism.
- Discuss the development of industrialism and imperialism, and the role of these ISMs on the evolution of capitalistic economic thought.
- Discuss the evolution of liberalism and nationalism as alternative political ideologies to absolutism.
- Explain the economic spectrum’s continuum between equality and inequality, and explain the connections between the spectrum’s economic ideologies and their connected political ideologies.

Western Civilization – Unit VIII – 20th Century

Essential Learning:

- What are the legacies of the 20th century's military / political conflicts (Great War; WWII; Cold War; post-Cold War)?

Framework: causes of conflicts, warfare, genocide, geography, results of conflicts

- **Element: Politics** – Examine the shifting European alliances of the 20th century, and how the nations involved in those alliances approached each conflict with a shared understanding of how they should fight those conflicts. Explain the political ramifications of each conflict's conclusion.
- **Element: Military** – Examine the weapons and techniques used in 20th century conflicts.
- **Element: Culture / Religion** – Examine European understandings of national and religious identity throughout the century.
- **Element: Economics** – Examine the elimination of national economic independence and the growth of supra-national economic policies in Europe.

Essay Questions:

- Compare and contrast the root causes of the 20th century's military conflicts.
- Discuss the ramifications of the 20th century's military conflicts.
- Discuss the roles that nationalistic and religious identities have played in the 20th century's genocides.