

# HUM 2052: Civilization 2: Renaissance & Modern

## Some Topics Covered

Andrew Aberdein

Crawford S406

Office Hours: 3.30–4.45 pm Monday–Thursday  
my.fit.edu/~aberdein aberdein@fit.edu ☎ (321) 674 8368

April 25, 2006

- **Hunt:** Chp 14, Renaissance Europe, 1400–1500.
  - Recovery of classical learning, but also increased influences from outside Europe.
  - Humanism: a new curriculum emphasizing literary, ethical and historical studies over the logical and metaphysical core of medieval scholasticism. A training for laymen, rather than churchmen.
  - Christian humanism—North European humanist theology; precursor to the reformation.
- **Norton 1:** Erasmus: *The Praise of Folly*
  - Elaborate intellectual joke (Folly = Mora (Latin) = Sir Thomas More, in whose house the work was written, *etc.*)
  - But with serious intent: the Christian as (holy) fool, that is innocent and straightforward, an implicit indictment of the pre-Reformation church.
- **Norton 1:** Machiavelli: *The Prince* (Extracts: Chapters 7; 15; 16; 17; 18; 25; 26.)
  - The first great defense of political pragmatism (*Raison d'État*, *Realpolitik*).
  - ‘Fortune is a woman’? Did women have a renaissance?
  - Pessimism about human nature.
- **Norton 1:** Rabelais: *Gargantua & Pantagruel*
  - Optimism about human nature.
  - Bawdy satire on medieval learning, and implicit endorsement of humanism.
  - Proto-anarchism: ‘Do what thou will’.
- **Hunt:** Chp 15, The Struggle for Reformation Europe, 1500–1600.
  - Martin Luther. Initially attempted to reform the church from within, but his criticisms, especially of the doctrine of indulgences and associated financial corruption, led to a split.
    - Henry VIII. Broke with Rome, to divorce Catherine of Aragon, who had not given him a male heir. Confiscated enormous fortune in church property.
    - John Calvin. His *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1535, a systematic formulation of a novel, explicitly protestant theology.
- **Hunt:** Chp 16, A Century of Crisis, 1560–1648.
  - Elizabeth I. Her Act of Supremacy (1559) confirmed the Church of England as a compromise position between Protestant and Catholic practices, but retained her as its head.
  - French wars of religion.
  - Defeat of the Spanish Armada, 1588.
  - The English Civil War, 1642–9.
  - Cromwell, puritanism and the Commonwealth.
- **Norton 1:** Montaigne: *Essays* (‘Of the power of the imagination’; ‘Of cannibals’; ‘Of the inconsistency of our actions’.)
  - Tolerance, or ‘multiculturalism’, important to a Catholic with Protestant and Jewish relatives living through blood-thirsty wars of religion.
  - Pioneer of cultural relativism: skepticism about the authority of our own cultural norms in the face of very different societies (particularly those of the ‘New World’, *i.e.* the Americas).
  - First draft of the myth of the ‘noble savage’, elaborated by Rousseau, contradicted by Hobbes.
- **Norton 1:** Cervantes: *Don Quixote* (Extracts: Part I: Prologue and Chps 1–3 pp 1964–81; Part I: Chps 7 & 8 pp 1989–96; Part II: Chp 3 pp 2023–2028; Part II: Chp 74 pp 2068–2072.)
  - The first novel (but what does that mean?).
  - The conservatism of satire: Quixote’s adherence to out-dated chivalric practice is mocked, yet remains perversely admirable.

- **Norton 1:** Shakespeare: *Hamlet*
  - The ‘invention of the human’: deep studies of emotion and character.
  - Richness of language: vast vocabulary, prodigious terms of reference and multiple layers of allusion.
  - Political & historical context?
- The scientific revolution (see **Hunt** pp. 610 ff.)
  - Groundbreaking developments in many areas, including anatomy (Harvey, Vesalius), cosmology (Copernicus through Galileo).
  - Conflict with established authority, esp. the Catholic Church.
  - Origins of scientific method: Bacon, Descartes.
  - Innovative scientific communication and cooperation: societies (*e.g.* The Royal Society), journals.
  - Newton.
- **Hunt:** Chp 19, The Promise of the Enlightenment, 1740–1789.
  - An international movement, but particularly active in certain countries *e.g.* France, Scotland.
  - Strong emphasis on the power of human reason. However, not to the exclusion of the emotions (‘sentiments’)—despite what over-simplifying romantic critics said.
  - Fascination with the new discoveries of science. But Enlightenment thinkers on both sides in the ‘ancients’ *vs.* ‘moderns’ dispute.
- **Norton 2:** Swift: *A Modest Proposal*
  - Biting satire, lamenting the condition of the poor of Ireland, concealing a serious (mercantilist) proposal.
  - Also an attack on the fatuous proposals of other pamphleteers.
  - Problem of the ‘conservatism’ of satire, the tendency of satirists to (inadvertently) prop up the *status quo*,
    - \* by criticizing it in a way that makes positive alternatives hard to articulate, and
    - \* by acting as a comedic safety valve for discontent that might otherwise turn dangerous.
- **Online:** Bernard Mandeville: *The Grumbling Hive*
  - Private vice leads to public virtue.
- **Lualdi:** Adam Smith: *Wealth of Nations*
  - Critique of ‘mercantilism’ (a term coined by Smith).
- The ‘Invisible Hand’: a more sophisticated defense of Mandeville’s insight.
- Father of economics, with lasting political influence, perhaps especially in the US.
- **Norton 2:** Voltaire: *Candide*
  - Satire on philosophical optimism, lampooned as Pangloss’s (*i.e.* Leibniz’s) motto: “Everything for the best in the best of all possible worlds”.
  - Positive view of state of nature—Eldorado, and Candide’s garden—*cf.* Hobbes.
- **Norton 2:** Rousseau: *Confessions, Émile*.
  - Pioneer of romanticism (see below): preference for sentiment (*i.e.* emotion) over reason, and for country over town.
  - Psychological autobiography
- **Hunt:** Chp 20–21, The cataclysm of revolution, 1789–1800; Napoleon & the revolutionary legacy, 1800–30.
  - The French Revolution has far-reaching consequences for all aspects of European culture.
  - Divisible into several distinct stages, each with a very different political character:
    - July 1789–August 1792** Failure of absolutist government; institution of a populist National Assembly and a constitutional monarchy.
    - August 1792–July 1794** Rise to power of Jacobins, including Robespierre; execution of the King & Queen; the Terror; foreign conflicts, largely decided in France’s favor.
    - 1794–9: The Directory** Overthrow of Jacobins; more conservative constitution: five member Directory in charge.
    - 1799–1815: Napoleon** Brilliant young general; rules France, first as “Temporary Consul” (*cf.* Julius Caesar), then as Emperor; sequence of conquests across Europe; eventually defeated by coalition of Britain, Prussia & Russia.
- **Norton 2:** William Blake *Songs of Innocence & Experience, &c.*
  - Self-taught poet from poor background; trained as an engraver.
  - Deep but unconventional religious faith; conservative & mystical; contemptuous of Enlightenment rationalism;
  - Use of popular forms, *e.g.* ballads, rather than those of high culture.
- **Norton 2:** Coleridge
  - Wrote prose as well as verse; influenced by German thinkers, such as Kant.

- Co-wrote (with Wordsworth) the influential *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798.
- **Norton 2:** Shelley
  - Atheist.
  - Politically radical: anticipating an English revolution.
  - ‘Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world’.
- **Online\*:** Wallace
  - \* <http://www.wku.edu/~smithch/wallace/S043.htm>
  - Independently discovered natural selection from Darwin.
  - Focus on group, rather than individual, selection.
  - Discovered ‘Wallace Line’.
- **Norton 2:** Darwin
  - Discovered natural selection before Wallace, but published simultaneously.
  - Work based on many previous intellectual and empirical discoveries, including some (such as animal husbandry) ignored by Wallace.
  - Controversial extension of evolution to include Man.
  - His work one of the sources of late 19th century religious doubt.
- **Norton 2:** Lord Tennyson: *In Memoriam A. H. H.*
  - Integration of Tennyson’s private grief into a meditation on many issues of contemporary concern;
  - Victorian forthrightness about death and taboo of sex: have we inverted these fixations?
  - Discussion of science, especially population dynamics and geology, important sources for Darwin.
- **Norton 2:** Frederick Douglass: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*
  - Written while slavery was still in place, and as an argument for its abolition;
  - Impressive use of autobiography to make broader ethical points;
  - Subtle engagement with (and destruction of) pro-slavery arguments.
- **Norton 2/Lualdi:** Marx & Engels
  - Pioneers of communist theory, although there were earlier communists.
  - Influence of *laissez faire* economics, although different conclusions drawn.
- Deterministic theory of history: Feudalism → Capitalism → Communism.
- ‘False consciousness’: the proletariat do not perceive their own exploitation. Clever idea, but makes it difficult to argue with a Marxist.
- **Norton 2:** Sigmund Freud
  - Founding father of psychoanalysis, and much of modern psychiatric practice;
  - Introduced influential concepts: unconscious mind; ego/id/superego; oral/anal/genital phases of development; Oedipus complex; penis envy;
  - Many of his patients under treatment for hysteria, a now discredited classification of nervous disorders believed characteristic of women;
  - Freudian analysis only one of a enormous variety of new methods in medicine developed in this period, many of which now seem preposterous, but some of which have become indispensable—which of these best describes Freud’s work?
  - Freud’s case studies read like literature, and have had a huge literary influence;
  - He also describes a lost world of middle class Jewish Vienna, which was to be destroyed by WW1 and the holocaust.
- **Norton 2:** William Butler Yeats
  - One of the most expressive poets of his age;
  - Fascination with mysticism, and an idiosyncratic theory of history;
  - “Gyres” = spirals, specifically cultural movements waxing and waning across millennia.
- **Norton 2:** Franz Kafka: *Metamorphosis*
  - Gregor Samsa becomes a beetle: a metaphor with several possible readings:
    - \* the alienation of modern life;
    - \* an existentialist fable, dramatizing Samsa’s “bad faith”;
    - \* a psychological case study (*cf.* Freud);
    - \* an absurdist black comedy.
- **Hunt:** Chp 26, War, revolution and reconstruction, 1914–1929.
  - Complex network of pre-War alliances and treaties (some secret) made wholesale war all but inevitable;
  - Prolonged deadlock of trench warfare, producing unprecedented casualties;
  - Eventual defeat of the Central Powers led to a hostile peace: heavy reparations on Germany; Austria dismembered;

- “Stab in the back” myth;
  - Widespread economic problems, especially in the former Central Powers, but spreading across Europe and America;
  - Rise of Fascism in Italy, and later Germany and Spain;
  - Consolidation of Communism in Russia, with increasingly brutal consequences.
- **Norton 2:** Virginia Woolf: *A Room of One’s Own*
    - A witty, but forthrightly feminist, explanation of the lack of women in the literary canon;
    - Deeply influential: a foundational text for Women’s Studies.
  - **Norton 2:** Jorge Luis Borges: *The Garden of Forking Paths*
    - Ostensibly a spy story, but develops into a much richer and stranger experimental work;
    - Like most of Borges’s tales, a meditation on a philosophical theme, specifically the theories of branching time and possible worlds.
  - **Norton 2:** Albert Camus: *The Guest*
    - An existentialist fable, but also an incisive commentary on the transition to post-colonialism;
    - Several questions can be answered in multiple ways:
      - \* Who is the guest?
      - \* Why does the Arab not escape when given the chance?
  - **Norton 2:** Calvino: *Invisible Cities*
    - Wildly experimental: influence of OuLiPo;
    - Fantastical, but grounded in atmospheric descriptive writing;
    - Problematizes the concept of knowledge.

- 1453** — Fall of Constantinople to Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II; end of the Hundred Years War between England and France.
- 1478** — Establishment of Spanish Inquisition.
- 1492** — Columbus’s first voyage to Americas; conquest of Granada and expulsion of the Moors from Spain by Ferdinand & Isabella; death of Lorenzo de’ Medici.
- 1494** — Establishment of Florentine Republic
- 1498** — Da Gama reaches India.
- 1500** — Cabral lands in Brazil.
- 1504** — Michelangelo’s *David* completed.
- 1505** — Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*.
- 1509** — Accession of King Henry VIII.
- 1511** — Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*.
- 1512** — Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel ceiling completed; restoration of Medici rule in Florence.
- 1513** — Cortes lands in Mexico; Portuguese capture Hormuz; Machiavelli writes *The Prince*.
- 1514** — Portuguese reach China.
- 1517** — Martin Luther’s 95 theses.
- 1521** — Diet of Worms; Magellan reaches Pacific.
- 1527** — Sack of Rome by army of Emperor Charles V.
- 1529** — Raising of Ottoman siege of Vienna.
- 1533** — Henry VIII splits from Rome.
- 1535** — John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.
- 1541** — François Rabelais, *Gargantua & Pantagruel*
- 1543** — Portuguese reach Japan; Copernicus, *De revolutionibus*; Vesalius, *Fabrica*.
- 1550** — Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*.
- 1558** — Accession of Elizabeth I.
- 1569** — Mercator’s world map.
- 1570** — Excommunication of Elizabeth I.
- 1571** — Defeat of Ottoman navy at Battle of Lepanto.
- 1572** — St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre.
- 1580** — Montaigne, *Essays*.
- 1582** — Introduction of Gregorian calendar.
- 1588** — Defeat of the Spanish Armada.
- 1598** — Edict of Nantes.

## Chronology

**Important:** Intended as an aid to your understanding, **not** as something to be memorized.

**1397** — Medici Bank established in Florence.

**1420** — Portuguese colonize Madeira.

**1434** — Cosimo de’ Medici assumes power in Florence.

**1440** — Frederick II becomes Holy Roman Emperor; exposure of *Donation of Constantine* as a forgery (an early triumph for humanist textual analysis).

**c. 1450** — Gutenberg invents movable type.

- 1600 — (British) East India Company founded.
- 1601 — Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.
- 1603 — Death of Elizabeth I; accession of James VI & I.
- 1605 — Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Part One.
- 1607 — Establishment of Jamestown colony.
- 1610 — Galileo, *The Starry Messenger*.
- 1615 — Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Part Two.
- 1618 — Outbreak of Thirty Years War.
- 1620 — *Mayflower* lands; Bacon, *Novum Organum*.
- 1637 — Descartes, *Discourse on Method*.
- 1642 — Beginning of the English Civil War.
- 1644 — Milton, *Areopagitica*.
- 1648 — Peace of Westphalia.
- 1649 — Charles I executed; Commonwealth established.
- 1651 — Hobbes, *Leviathan*; Louis XIV comes of age.
- 1653 — *Instrument of Government*; Cromwell becomes Lord Protector.
- 1660 — Restoration of Charles II; Royal Society founded.
- 1667 — Milton, *Paradise Lost*.
- 1687 — Newton, *Principia Mathematica*.
- 1688 — Glorious Revolution.
- 1689 — Accession of Peter the Great
- 1690 — Locke, *Treatise of Civil Government*.
- 1694 — Bank of England established.
- 1705 — Bernard Mandeville, *The Grumbling Hive*.
- 1707 — Act of Union between England & Scotland.
- 1715 — Death of Louis XIV; First Jacobite Rebellion.
- 1726 — Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*.
- 1729 — Swift, *A Modest Proposal*.
- 1733 — Pope, *Essay on Man*.
- 1745 — Second Jacobite Rebellion.
- 1751 — Diderot & d'Alembert, *Encyclopedia*: publication, begun—final volume in 1772.
- 1759 — Voltaire, *Candide*.
- 1762 — Rousseau, *Émile*; Catherine the Great assumes power in Russia.
- 1764 — Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*.
- 1769 — James Watt's improved steam engine.
- 1774 — Louis XVI becomes King of France.
- 1776 — US Declaration of Independence; Adam Smith, *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*.
- 1777 — Hume's essays 'Of Miracles' & 'Of Suicide' published posthumously.
- 1779 — Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.
- 1781 — Rousseau, *Confessions* (posthumous publication begun); Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*.
- 1789 — Outbreak of French Revolution.
- 1790 — Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.
- 1791 — Paine, *Rights of Man*.
- 1792 — Execution of Louis XVI.
- 1794 — Blake, *Songs of Innocence & Experience*.
- 1798 — Wordsworth & Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*; Malthus, *An essay on the principle of population*.
- 1799 — Napoleon becomes temporary consul.
- 1803 — Louisiana Purchase.
- 1804 — Coronation of Napoleon I, Emperor of France; Haiti becomes first independent Caribbean nation.
- 1812 — Napoleon's Russian campaign.
- 1813 — Grimm's *Fairy Tales*.
- 1815 — Battle of Waterloo; Restoration of Bourbon monarchy in France.
- 1819 — Peterloo massacre.
- 1822 — Death of Shelley.
- 1832 — Great Reform Act.
- 1834 — Abolition of slavery in British Empire.
- 1844 — Chambers: *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*.
- 1845 — Douglass: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*.
- 1848 — Marx & Engels: *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.
- 1850 — Tennyson: *In Memoriam A. H. H.*
- 1858 — Wallace & Darwin's Linnaean Society papers.
- 1859 — Darwin: *The Origin of Species*.

- 1861** — Outbreak of American Civil War.
- 1864** — End of Civil War and abolition of slavery in U.S.
- 1867** — Marx: *Capital*, Vol. 1.
- 1870** — Franco-Prussian War: collapse of French Second Empire.
- 1871** — Darwin: *The Descent of Man*.
- 1883** — Death of Marx.
- 1899** — Freud: *Interpretation of Dreams*.
- 1905** — First Russian Revolution; Freud: *Dora*.
- 1914** — Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and outbreak of World War One.
- 1916** — Easter Rising in Ireland.
- 1915** — Kafka: *Metamorphosis*.
- 1917** — Second Russian Revolution: death of Tsar Nicholas II.
- 1918** — Armistice in World War One.
- 1922** — Mussolini's March on Rome; Partition of Ireland.
- 1924** — Death of Lenin.
- 1929** — Wall Street Crash; Woolf: *A Room of One's Own*.
- 1933** — Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.
- 1939** — End of Spanish Civil War (began 1936); Germany invades Poland: beginning of World War Two; Death of W. B. Yeats.
- 1940** — Fall of France; Battle of Britain.
- 1941** — Pearl Harbor; Hitler attacks USSR; Borges: *The Garden of Forking Paths*.
- 1945** — Use of atom bomb; Defeat of Germany and Japan; Start of Cold War.
- 1947** — Indian independence.
- 1948** — Israel established; Berlin airlift begins.
- 1953** — Death of Joseph Stalin; structure of DNA discovered.
- 1957** — Launch of *Sputnik*; Camus: *The Guest*.
- 1962** — End of Algerian War (began 1954); Cuban Missile Crisis.
- 1972** — Calvino: *Invisible Cities*.