

***The European World* – Sample Module Outlines**

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Introduction and Objectives

The following outlines propose basic structures for early modern survey courses. Depending on specific contexts and requirements, the lecture and seminar topics could be complemented with elements like student presentations, group projects, staff/student debates, book reviews, film nights and written assignments. Full details of a ‘real’ *European World* module, taught at the University of Warwick, can be found here: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/europeanworld>.

The principal objective of these modules is to introduce students to the main structures and processes in European history between c. 1500 and 1800.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module, students should:

1. have further developed their study, writing and communication skills.
2. be able to assess critically and evaluate historical analysis and argument.
3. have developed a basic understanding of the major social, economic, political, and cultural changes that took place in early modern Europe.
4. be able to recognize and evaluate points of comparison between different national political, social, economic and cultural systems.
5. be able to employ, where appropriate, electronic resources in the gathering of historical evidence, and construction of an historical argument.

Curricula

- The materials are presented in a full-year (A) and semester/half-year (B) version.
- The final section (C) offers illustrative titles for assessed essays and sample questions for a written exam.

A. Full-year version

This proposal has been developed for a 20 week cycle. It assumes two lectures and one seminar a week.

Week	Lecture Topics	Seminar Titles and Tasks	European World Chapters
<i>Foundations: Europe in 1500</i>			
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational meeting 2. Europe in 1500: The Medieval Legacy 	<p style="text-align: center;">Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the basic features of European experience around 1500? • Where would you draw the boundaries between the medieval and early modern period? • Which states are the significant 'powers' in Europe c. 1500? 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Introduction</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Europe in 1500</i></p>
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Renaissance 2. Europe's Place in the Wider World 	<p style="text-align: center;">Starting-Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there a 'cultural awakening' around 1500? • To what extent were Europeans aware of the wider world? • Which cultures dominated in other parts of the world? 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Renaissance</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Beyond Europe c. 1500</i></p>
<i>Part I: Social and Economic Developments</i>			
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demography and Kinship 2. Gender Relations 	<p style="text-align: center;">Family and Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important were kinship bonds in preindustrial society? • Why do historians know more 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Gender and Family</i></p>

		<p>about early modern men than women?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Patriarchy was more secure on paper than in practice.’ Discuss. • What was the economic (OR: cultural) role of early modern women? 	
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural and Urban Society 2. Marginal Groups 	<p>Early Modern Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there a ‘crisis of the nobility’ in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe? • In which ways did peasants ‘matter’ in early modern Europe? • What was the structure and function of urban society? • Who was excluded from early modern society? 	<p><i>Rural Society</i></p> <p><i>Urban Society</i></p> <p><i>Marginals and Deviants</i></p> <p><i>Jews and Muslims</i></p>
5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture 2. Trade and (Proto-)Industry 	<p>The Early Modern Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did Europeans produce (and how)? • Why did some towns flourish in this period while others stagnated? • How important was (proto-) industry in this period • Was the early modern economy characterized by stagnation? 	<p><i>The Early Modern Economy</i></p> <p><i>Urban Society</i></p> <p><i>Rural Society</i></p>
<p><i>Part II: Religion</i></p>			

6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Church and Religion in 1500 2. Luther(anism) 	<p>The Challenge to the Medieval Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The threat to the authority of the Church around 1500 came from too much lay piety, rather than too little’. Discuss. • Did Christian humanism offer any coherent programme of reform? • Why did Luther’s ideas find such a receptive audience in Germany in the 1520s? • Assess the longer-term ‘success’ of the Lutheran Reformation. 	<p><i>Church and People at the Close of the Middle Ages</i></p> <p><i>The Long Reformation – Lutheran</i></p>
7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Calvin(ism) 2. The Radical Reformation 	<p>The Reformed Confessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How completely did Calvin dominate religious and political life in Geneva? • Why was Calvinism the most successful brand of ‘Reformed’ Protestantism in later sixteenth century Europe? • Did Anabaptism present a serious threat to established authority in the sixteenth century? • What was ‘radical’ about the Radical Reformation? 	<p><i>The Long Reformation – Reformed</i></p> <p><i>Religious Culture in Early Modern Europe</i></p>
8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council of Trent and Reform in Europe 2. Catholicism in the Wider 	<p>The Catholic Reformation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the aims and methods of the ‘Counter-Reformation papacy’. 	<p><i>The Long Reformation – Catholic</i></p>

	World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the religion practised by the Catholic laity change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? • Are the Reformation and Counter-Reformation better seen as competing or complementary forces? • Did the Catholic church become a world church? • How did Catholicism fare in Asia? 	<i>Expanding Horizons</i>
<i>Part III: Culture</i>			
9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Print Revolution 2. Natural Philosophy 	<p>Cultural Revolutions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the spread of printing draw elite and popular culture closer together, or drive them further apart? • How difficult was it to change traditional perceptions of the shape and working of the physical world in this period? • To what extent was intellectual change dependent on social and economic developments in the period? 	<p><i>From Script to Print</i></p> <p><i>The Scientific Revolution</i></p>
10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Popular Cultures 2. Witchcraft 	<p>Popular World-Views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the European witch hunts primarily a war against women? • Are there regional patterns in 	<p><i>Popular Culture(s)</i></p> <p><i>Witchcraft and Magic</i></p>

		<p>the persecution of witches, and if so, why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did the legal pursuit of witches seem to make less sense in 1720 than in 1500? • How can we define ‘popular culture’? • Was popular culture conservative or subversive? 	
11	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Americas 2. Asia and Africa 	<p>European Expansion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did increased contact with extra-European peoples reinforce or undermine the fundamental cultural assumptions of Europeans? • Assess the political implications of European expansion in the early modern period. • What was the impact of overseas expansion on European society at large? 	<p><i>Expanding Horizons</i></p> <p><i>Beyond Europe c. 1800</i></p>
12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Age of Reason? 2. Enlightenment and Public Sphere. 	<p>The Enlightenment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the intellectual foundations of the Enlightenment? • Assess the relationship between Enlightenment and religion. • Was the Enlightenment critical of the established regime? • Who was excluded from the 	<p><i>The Enlightenment</i></p>

		Enlightenment?	
<i>Part IV: Politics</i>			
13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Imperial Models: The Habsburgs 2. Imperial Models: The Ottomans 	<p>Empires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were Philip II's imperial aspirations more or less realistic than his father's? • What were the advantages and disadvantages for sixteenth century monarchs in ruling over multiple territories? • Was the Ottoman Empire 'fundamentally different' than that of the Habsburgs? • How important was European expansion to the rulers of the Ottoman Empire? 	<p><i>The Political Landscape</i></p> <p><i>Dynastic Politics</i></p> <p><i>Jews and Muslims</i></p>
14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finance, Justice and 'Good Police' 2. Tudors and Valois 	<p>State Formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the driving forces and main instruments of European state formation? • Was the kingdom of France more effectively centralized by 1559 than by 1600? • Had England become a 'nation state' by 1603? 	<p><i>The Political Landscape</i></p> <p><i>State Building</i></p>
15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Princely Court 2. Absolutism in Theory and Practice 	<p>Elite Political Cultures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the culture of early modern courts more concerned with the pursuit of leisure, or the exercise of power? • In which ways did Versailles 	<p><i>Locales – Courts and Centres</i></p> <p><i>State Building</i></p> <p><i>Arts and Society</i></p>

		<p>‘reflect the spirit of the time’?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was absolutism really a ‘myth’? 	
16	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Local Government 4. Riot and Rebellion 	<p>Popular Political Cultures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who ruled early modern villages and towns? • ‘The people had no role to play in politics.’ Discuss. • What were the ‘points of contact’ between rulers and ruled in the sixteenth century? 	<p><i>Locales – Centre and Periphery</i></p> <p><i>Rebels and Revolutionaries</i></p>
17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Armies, Navies, and State Building 2. Towards a Balance of Power 	<p>The Impact of War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the ‘military revolution’ cause or consequence of a more sophisticated state apparatus? • How deeply did warfare disrupt the lives of early modern Europeans? • Who had the best army in early modern Europe? • Did the Peace of Westphalia create a new European state system? 	<p><i>State Building</i></p> <p><i>European Politics</i></p>
<p><i>Conclusion:</i> <i>Europe Transformed?</i></p>			
18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Politics 2. Society and Culture 	<p>Europe in 1800</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was life for most Europeans better or worse in 1800 than it had been in 1500? • What was the single most significant change in European 	<p><i>Europe in 1800</i></p>

		<p>politics or society in this period?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How 'modern' was early modern Europe? 	
19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Europe and the World in 1800 2. Panel Discussion: Early Modern Europe 	<p>Wider Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the legacy of European expansion? • Which cultures dominated the world beyond Europe? • What characterizes early modern Europe as a historical period? 	<p><i>Beyond Europe c. 1800</i></p> <p><i>Epilogue</i></p>
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Review • Revision Classes 		

B. Semester version

This semester / half-year schedule assumes a 13-week cycle with two lectures and one seminar per week.

Week	Lecture Topics	Seminar Questions	<i>European World Chapters</i>
<i>Foundations: Europe in 1500</i>			
1	1. Organizational meeting 2. Europe in 1500	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the basic features of European experience around 1500? • Where would you draw the boundaries between the medieval and early modern period? • Who ruled the world in 1500? 	<i>Introduction</i> <i>Europe in 1500</i> <i>Beyond Europe c. 1500</i>
<i>Part I: Society and Economy</i>			
2	1. Family and Gender 2. Town and Country	Early Modern Society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important were kinship bonds in preindustrial society? • ‘Patriarchy was more secure on paper than in practice.’ Discuss. • Was there a ‘crisis of the nobility’ in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe? • In which ways did peasants ‘matter’ in early modern Europe? 	<i>Gender and Family</i> <i>Rural Society</i> <i>Urban Society</i> <i>Marginals and Deviants</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the structure and function of urban society? • Who was excluded from early modern society? 	
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture 2. Trade and (Proto-)Industry 	<p>The Early Modern Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did Europeans produce in this period? • Who were the winners and losers in the early modern economy? • Was the early modern economy characterized by stagnation? 	<i>The Early Modern Economy</i>
<i>Part II: Religion</i>			
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Church and Religion around 1500 2. Luther's Challenge 	<p>Challenges to the Medieval Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The threat to the authority of the Church around 1500 came from too much lay piety, rather than too little'. Discuss. • Did Christian humanism offer any coherent programme of reform? • Why did Luther's ideas find such a receptive audience in Germany in the 1520s? • Assess the longer-term 'success' of the Lutheran Reformation. 	<p><i>Church and People at the Close of the Middle Ages</i></p> <p><i>The Long Reformation – Lutheran</i></p>
5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reformed Confessions 2. The Catholic Reformation 	<p>Confessionalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was Calvinism the most successful brand of 'Reformed'? 	<i>The Long Reformation – Reformed</i>

		<p>Protestantism in later sixteenth century Europe?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was ‘radical’ about the Radical Reformation? • Counter-Reformation, Catholic Reformation, Early Modern Catholicism – Which of these phrases captures the essence of the post-Tridentine Church? • Did the Catholic church become a world church? • Are the Reformation and Counter-Reformation better seen as competing or complementary forces? 	<p><i>The Catholic Reformation</i></p> <p><i>Religious Culture in Early Modern Europe</i></p>
<p><i>Part III: Culture</i></p>			
6	<p>1. The Renaissance 2. Revolutions in knowledge? Print and Natural Philosophy</p>	<p>Cultural Revolutions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the Renaissance be seen as a distinct historical era? • Did the spread of printing draw elite and popular culture closer together, or drive them further apart? • How difficult was it to change traditional perceptions of the shape and working of the physical world in this period? • To what extent was intellectual change dependent on social and economic developments in the period? 	<p><i>The Renaissance</i></p> <p><i>From Script to Print</i></p> <p><i>The Scientific Revolution</i></p>

7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Popular Cultures 2. Witchcraft 	<p style="text-align: center;">Beyond the Elites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the European witch hunts primarily a war against women? • Are there regional patterns in the persecution of witches, and if so, why? • How can we define 'popular culture'? • Was popular culture radical or conservative? 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Witchcraft and Magic</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Popular Culture(s)</i></p>
8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. European Expansion 2. Enlightenment 	<p style="text-align: center;">New Horizons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did increased contact with extra-European peoples reinforce or undermine the fundamental cultural assumptions of Europeans? • What was the impact of overseas expansion on European society at large? • Did the Enlightenment oppose the established order? • What was 'new' in the Enlightenment? 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Expanding Horizons</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Enlightenment</i></p>
<p><i>Part IV:</i> <i>Politics</i></p>			
9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sixteenth-Century Empires 2. State Formation 	<p style="text-align: center;">Empires and States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the advantages and disadvantages for sixteenth century monarchs in ruling over multiple territories? • Was the Ottoman Empire 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Political Landscape</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Jews and Muslims</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>State Formation</i></p>

		<p>‘fundamentally different’ than that of the Habsburgs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the driving forces and main instruments of European state formation? • Was the kingdom of France more effectively centralized by 1559 than by 1600? 	
10	<p>1. Absolute Princes? 2. Popular Politics</p>	<p>Political Cultures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the culture of early modern courts more concerned with the pursuit of leisure, or the exercise of power? • Assess the powers of early modern rulers. • What were the ‘points of contact’ between rulers and ruled? • Which norms and values characterized popular politics in the period? • What drove peasants and burghers to rebel? 	<p><i>Courts and Centres</i></p> <p><i>Arts and Society</i></p> <p><i>Centre and Periphery</i></p> <p><i>Rebels and Revolutionaries</i></p>
11	<p>1. War and Society 2. International Relations</p>	<p>Diplomacy and War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How deeply did warfare disrupt the lives of early modern Europeans? • How ‘revolutionary’ were the military changes in this period? • Which powers dominated European politics after the Peace of Westphalia? 	<p><i>State Formation</i></p> <p><i>European Politics</i></p>

<i>Conclusion: Europe Transformed?</i>			
12	1. Europe in 1800 2. The Wider World in 1800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was life for most Europeans better or worse in 1800 than it had been in 1500? • What was the single most significant change in European politics or society in this period? • How 'modern' was early modern Europe? • Did Europe 'rule the world' in 1800? 	<i>Europe in 1800</i> <i>Beyond Europe c. 1800</i> <i>Epilogue</i>
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Review • Revision Classes 		

C. Sample essay and exam questions

Illustrative titles for assessed essays (c. 5,000 words)

Society and Economy

Account for variations in household size in early modern Europe.

Did conditions for European women worsen or improve over the course of the sixteenth century?

‘Noble status emerged from the vicissitudes of the early modern period surprisingly unscathed.’ Discuss.

Why did Amsterdam [OR: London] become such an important economic centre in the early modern period?

‘Early modern society became less and less inclusive.’ Do you agree?

Did the early modern period witness the beginning of a ‘global economy’?

Religion

‘The late medieval Church enjoyed the support of the people.’ Discuss.

How essential was Luther to the outbreak of the German Reformation?

Assess the contribution of Huldrych Zwingli [OR: Jean Calvin] to the European Reformation.

Why did Anabaptists arouse such hostility in sixteenth-century Europe?

Was the Council of Trent ‘a triumph for papal authority’?

‘The Reformation put Europe on the road to toleration.’ Discuss.

Culture

Why did the Renaissance start in Italy?

Can printing be regarded as a 'revolutionary' force in early modern Europe?

To what extent did the 'Scientific Revolution' lead to the erosion of religious belief?

Why was witch-hunting so intense in certain parts of Central Europe?

'Early modern art was entirely a-political.' Discuss.

Why does the French *Encyclopédie* play such an important part in the historiography of the Enlightenment?

Politics

'Not a medieval Emperor, but a European visionary.' Discuss this view of Charles V.

How great a threat did the Ottoman empire pose to sixteenth-century Europe?

To what extent did government change over the course of the Tudor period?

Can the Peace of Westphalia be seen as a watershed in European history?

Which European power benefited most from colonial expansion?

What were the principal characteristics of warfare in the eighteenth century?

Model exam paper (1 hour per question)

1. Did the decades around 1500 mark a 'new beginning' for Europeans?
2. How far was women's subordinate position determined by economic dependency?
3. Account for the changing balance of power in early modern rural society.
4. 'Christian Humanism was a highly unstable compound.' Discuss.
5. To what extent was the German Reformation 'an urban event'?
6. What attracted people to Calvinism?
7. Why did Catholicism fare better in America than in Asia?
8. 'A series of unrelated developments.' Discuss this view of the 'Scientific Revolution'.
9. 'Elite culture supported the social order, while popular culture sought to subvert it.' Discuss.
10. Did the discovery of the Americas destabilize the European economy?

11. Did the Ottomans or Habsburgs have the stronger claim to be fighting for the cause of religion?
12. Why did Valois monarchs face more serious internal opposition than the Tudors?
13. Where did real power lie in the early modern princely court?
14. When and why did European elites lose their belief in witchcraft?
15. Who defended the political interests of the people before the French Revolution?
16. 'Early modern navies tell us more about state formation than early modern armies.' Discuss.
17. Was Louis XIV's power 'nothing more than an ingenious deception'?
18. How 'enlightened' was eighteenth-century Europe?
19. 'In spite of many crises and conflicts, nothing fundamental changed in Europe between the early sixteenth and the early eighteenth century.' Discuss.