



DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

Making of the Modern Western World: The Renaissance to Pre-Industrial Revolution, Part 1 EDUO 9678

3-4 Graduate-Level Credits/Units

Instructor: [Jason Varni](#)

Welcome to **The Making of the Modern World, Part 1**, a course in a two-course series designed by Dominican University of California, Division of Continuing Education. The courses can be taken independently.

The Renaissance to the Pre-Industrial Revolution is a course designed for social studies teachers as well as for teachers seeking general professional development. This course covers the period often called the *Formative Modernity, or Pre-Industrial Revolution*, from approximately 1500 to 1800, when the institutions of the Western World were being formed.

The other course in the series, **The Making of the Modern Western World, Part 2: The Industrial Revolution to the Vietnam War, EDUO 9679** covers the period of time from approximately 1800 to 2000.

There are two levels of depth available. For teachers seeking professional development, the Read and Reflect course (Option I) will suffice. Students will read and summarize six short texts covering the major events of the period.

Social studies teachers can go further by completing both the Read and Reflect portion and then, the Plan and Implement portion (Option II), that requires creation of lesson plans, implementing the lessons in the classroom, and then reporting on the results.

- **Option I, Read and Reflect, for Professional Development - 3 units:** teachers will read and summarize six short texts covering the major events of the period. They will utilize the “How to Do History” framework provided.
- **Option II, Plan and Implement, for Social Studies Teachers - 1 additional unit:** teachers can go further in depth by completing both the Read and Reflect portion and the Plan and Execute portion. The Plan and Execute portion requires the creation of detailed lesson plans and the implementation of those plans in the classroom, then reflecting and reporting on results.

Course Context:

History is not about facts. It's not about dates. It's not about dead white males. In fact, it's not even about memorization, though all of those things have their place in the study of history. History is about ideas, specifically the conflict of ideas and how those conflicts played out in earlier times and what they can tell us about today.

Why did democracy emerge in the very specific time and locale of ancient Greece? Why did it lapse? How did the feudalism of the Middle Ages contend with the rise of capitalism? Why did Europe choose science over religion, as the system for organizing what man knows about the world? Should people have representation in government? Are people rational and can that be a basis for organizing governments? What does it mean to be a "Great Power?" Why do some powers rise while others fall?

These and a thousand other questions like them are the real interest of history. We study these questions—and the people and societies that fought over them—in order to understand our own times, for the questions and the interests they represent are universal. And we study history so we can (hopefully) make better decisions as citizens in our own country today. The famous historian George Santayana said it best: "Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them."

Invitation:

It is the hope of the instructor that while you are working on this course you will in some way be inspired, perhaps moved, to use what you have learned in this course to experiment with a new approach to teaching history, **To Do** history in a new way. For those who accept the invitation, I look forward to seeing your project come to life.

Course texts: The texts, or summary booklets, will provide the background needed for this course. Five are part of "**The Best One-Hour History Series**", by Robert Freeman. One text is by Margaret C. C. Jacob. All are readily available on Amazon.com in new and used condition. In addition to the texts there is a plethora of information on the Internet that can be used as well:

1. [The Best One-Hour History: The Renaissance](#) (ISBN 0989250261) 2. [The Best One-Hour History: The Reformation](#) (ISBN 0989250253)
3. [The Best One-Hour History: The Scientific Revolution](#) (ISBN 0989250202)
4. [The Best One-Hour History: The English Civil War](#) (ISBN 0989250296)
5. [The Enlightenment: A Brief History with Documents](#), by Margaret C. C. Jacob, Bedford Cultural Editions Series (ISBN 0312179979)
6. [The Best One-Hour History: The French Revolution](#) (ISBN 0989250210)

Grading Rubric

Exemplary, Above Graduate Level Standards Exceeds Expectations A+ to A-	Done to Graduate Level Standards Meets Expectations B+ to B-	Below Graduate Level Standards, Unacceptable Needs Improvement, Must be resubmitted.
Reflective, writings are detailed and in-depth ideas and comments relevant to the assignments. Clearly stated and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the major influential aspects of the specific period in history and how that understanding can enhance good teaching and learning.	Presents adequate and relevant ideas and understands the major influential aspects of the specific period in history, and adequately understands the connection to good teaching and learning are evident.	Few relevant ideas connected to the assignments with little to no connection to good teaching and learning.
Reflective writings cover broadbased thorough learning of the significant events and people that define the various periods in history and show a clear understanding their impact in that period.	Some facts and specific details of the text information were overlooked. Analysis show adequate understanding of the period in history.	Few or no specific details of the basic information presented in the text. Analysis shows little understanding of the impact of that period in history.
Free of spelling and grammatical errors. Assignments are wordprocessed using standard 12pt font. Presentation is neat with good use of white space and margins.	Contains some spelling or grammatical errors. Assignments are wordprocessed using standard 12pt font. Presentation is neat with good use of white space and margins.	Contains spelling or grammatical errors. Assignments are not wordprocessed or using standard 12pt font. Presentation is not neat and lacks good white space and margins.
Organized very well. Supporting material easy to locate, clearly labeled and related to the corresponding assignment.	Organized fairly well. Supporting material somewhat hard to locate and loosely related to corresponding assignment. Is generally organized and labeled.	Organized poorly . Supporting material difficult to locate or not present and/or not related to corresponding assignment. Shows little or no organization and assignments are poorly labeled.

Assignments Option I

Part A: Introduction and Building Understanding

1. Read: Read about each of the major periods in history in the course texts (or other resources) that define the period of time from ***The Renaissance to the Pre-Industrial Revolution*** (The Renaissance, The Reformation, The Scientific Revolution, The English Civil War, The Enlightenment, and The French Revolution).
2. Reflect: Write a description of your understanding of the major events that occurred in each period of time. Include what you believe helped define each period in history.

Part B: Demonstrating Understanding

1. Read the **Background** information.
2. Summarize each period of time within the ***Renaissance to Pre-Industrial Revolution*** timeframe by using the Ten “C’s” framework. Answer the questions presented and use the examples given each as a guide for your responses. Draw from the texts readings and your personal knowledge - be specific and thorough.
3. Create a summary overview of the entire period using the same framework as a guide. This can be in narrative or other format as long as you include the concepts outlined in the Ten “C’s”.

Background:

This paper presents a simple but powerful framework we can use to guide our study of history. It starts from the premise that history is not random and so its study should not be random. In fact, we can be quite systematic about how we approach, understand, and learn from history. Specifically, the paper proposes a framework of ten orienting guidelines that, when addressed, can provide a sound and compelling understanding of major historical periods and events. They are called “The 10 C’s of Historical Understanding” (by Robert Freeman ©2008):

1. Conflict
2. Context
3. Cause
4. Characters
5. Course
6. Conclusion
7. Consequences
8. Comparison
9. Comprehensiveness
10. Coherence

Every major period of history, every major conflict, every major transformation in human society can be analyzed through the prism of this framework. Doubtless, there are other questions that might be asked as well to further enrich our understanding, but these ten questions provide a powerful, simple, easy to remember, and easy to use starting point for historical analysis. Below is an explanation of each of these “Ten C’s” together with examples from different periods of history showing how they can be used to deepen our understanding of history, and therefore our effectiveness as citizens of our world.

This section (Part B) presents a simple but powerful framework that can be used to guide the study of history, which we call “The Ten ‘C’s’ of Historical Understanding.” It starts from the premise that history is not random, and so its study should not be random. In fact, we can be quite systematic about how we approach, understand, and learn from history. Specifically, the paper proposes a framework of ten orienting guidelines that, when addressed, can provide a sound and compelling understanding of major historical periods and events.

Every major period of history, every major conflict, every major transformation in human society can be analyzed through the prism of this framework. Doubtless, there are other questions that might be asked as well to further enrich our understanding, but these ten questions provide a powerful, simple, easy to remember, and easy to use starting point for historical analysis.

Below is an explanation of each of these Ten “C’s” together with examples from different periods of history showing how they can be used to deepen our understanding of history, and therefore our effectiveness not only as teachers, but as citizens of our world:

1. Conflict:

What was the conflict itself? What forces opposed each other that led to the clashes that make any period or event worthy of our study? Note that conflicts may be ideas or originate in ideas but play themselves out with armies.

For example, the rise of democracy in ancient Greece involved the conflict of two big ideas. On the one hand was the idea that men could be trusted to be free, that they could govern themselves without the need for a slave-driver overlord. On the other side was the historical belief (and practice) that men were not ready for freedom, that they could only be slaves. This conflict of ideas played out in the epic Battles of Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis between the Greeks (on the side of freedom) and Persia (on the side of slavery).

2. Context

What was going on in a setting that colored the way a given conflict emerged? What were the underlying political, economic, military, cultural, social and intellectual forces at work that gave rise to the conflict, that defined the roles contestants played, and that constrained the possibilities of resolution?

For example, the Italian Renaissance occurred in the context of a gradual breakdown of feudal relations and the decline in the authority of the Catholic Church. Italian merchant families were producing fabulous wealth from trade and manufacturing. Political conflicts were occurring between the major Italian city-states and between those states and the larger forces from what

is today France and Spain. Over prior centuries, tens of thousands of people had traveled to and returned from the Middle East in the Crusades. A surge of classical scholars from the recently overthrown city of Constantinople was another contextual factor in the Renaissance as was the recent invention of printing in 1453.

3. Cause

What was the cause of the conflict? What events triggered it, i.e., were the “proximate” or immediate causes? And what were the deeper causes?

For example, World War I was triggered by the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in June 1914. But this is only a “proximate” cause, the match that lit a keg of gunpowder that was ready to go off. Deeper causes would involve explanations of nationalism, militarism, and imperialism. Still deeper causes would point to the rise of Germany as a leading European power and the threat this posed to England. Still deeper yet, we might look at the way industrialization and German unification undermined the “balance of power” system that had been put in place at the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

4. Characters

Who were the main characters in the conflict? What interests did they represent and what roles did they play? What was it about their specific characters and backgrounds that affected how they acted? Note that not all “characters” are necessarily people. They may be organizations or institutions, for example the Union Army in the American Civil War or the Catholic Church and the Franciscan order in the settlement of the “New World.”

For example, an understanding of the English Civil Wars and the Glorious Revolution must describe the actions of Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, James II, and William of Orange. Obviously, it might well include many other people. It would need to account as well for other “characters” such as the English gentry and nobility, the Anglican Church, Parliament, and the Puritans. Importantly, these are not individual human characters but they represent institutions whose interests and actions affected the outcomes of the Wars.

5. Course

What was the sequence of events that a conflict followed and that led to its final resolution—assuming there was one? What evidence do we have of this sequence? Is there “a logic” to the unfolding of events that can help us understand how and why the conflict proceeded and ultimately got resolved?

For example, the Cold War might actually have roots in Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812 and in the White Counter-Revolution where the West invaded Russia again in 1921. It surely began in earnest in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Some of its major events included, in order, the Berlin Blockade, the Korean War, Sputnik, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam, and Afghanistan. There is an inescapable logic to the sequence of these events and how they affected each other. This sequence or Course is central to a proper understanding of the War and its significance to the twentieth century.

6. Conclusion

What conclusion was ultimately reached that settled (at least for the time being) the conflict at hand? And what special features of the conclusion are important in helping us understand subsequent events and periods?

For example, World War II was concluded when the Allied powers defeated Germany in Europe and Japan in Asia. Both defeated countries signed statements of unconditional surrender. Both agreed to indefinite periods of occupation by the victors. The terms of the occupation of Germany are of particular interest because they were a factor in the subsequent “Cold War” between the U.S. and the Soviet Union that dominated global affairs for most of the rest of the 20th century. Also of interest in the settlement of the War are the institutions put in place for managing future global interactions: the United Nations; the International Monetary Fund; the World Bank; etc.

7. Consequences

So what? So what happened as a result of the way the event was settled? Most major conflicts are resolved in ways that affect societies for years, sometimes decades or even centuries to come. What were the major consequences of a given conflict that have had broad, deep, or enduring effects?

For example, historians frequently cite the French Revolution and Napoleonic Period as the beginning of the modern western world. The reason is the way they gave substance to nationalism, the modern administrative state, how secularism eclipsed clericalism, and the official end to feudalism, etc. Other immediate consequences would include the imposition of a reactionary dynastic authoritarianism as a European system of governance and the rise of Romanticism as an intellectual force to counter the perceived failures of Enlightenment rationalism.

8. Comparison

How does one major historical event compare with other major historical events with similar but different contexts, courses, characters, etc. What patterns can we find in different events that can inform our understanding of our world today?

For example, what features, actions, events, and outcomes can we find in common between the fall of the Spanish Empire in the 1600s and the fall of France as the leading European power in the 1700s? England replaced France as the leading European power but was itself eclipsed by the United States in the 1900s. What are the similarities and differences in each of these cases? What might England’s demise—or France’s, or Spain’s—tell us about the conflict between the United States, the current leading world power, and China, its upstart competitor?

9. Comprehensiveness

Any competent treatment of any major historical event should cover those factors that had a major bearing on the event’s unfolding or outcome. Otherwise, the scholar’s understanding of the event will be only partial and, therefore, flawed. Of course, comprehensiveness must be balanced with the space available for the analysis.

For example, any competent treatment of the Scientific Revolution would have to include mention of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton as its primary Characters. It may not have space to mention Torricelli, Mersenne, Napier, or other lesser lights. Similarly, in discussing the Conflicts involved, it would almost certainly have to discuss the way in which the scientific method conflicted with the approach of Aristotle, which it replaced. It would almost surely want to highlight the inherent Conflict between the approach to knowledge of science and that of the Catholic Church. Space limitations may not, however, allow the student to discuss Conflicts between different approaches to science, for example, between Theory, Experimentation, and Measurement, or between different practitioners of these approaches, for example, Descartes, Bacon, and Newton.

10. Coherence

Does the analysis hold together as a comprehensible whole? Are there explanations in one area that contradict explanations from other areas? If so, then the treatment is flawed and unfinished. This does not mean that there cannot be alternative theories presented about a particular event, but an explanation must be given as to why they exist and how the historical discipline has attempted to reconcile them.

For example, explanations of the founding of America might include economic, religious, and political motives. These might be entirely complementary to each other or they might actually conflict. But they should not be presented in a way that states that more than one of them was the primary motive. Similarly, economic motives might include desire for land, desire for vocational mobility, and desire for free commerce. These are different motives that co-existed among different classes of people and so should not be presented.

Assignments Option II

Part A: Plan and Implement, for Social Studies Teachers (1 additional unit):

1. Complete Option 1.
2. Create a lesson plan for each subject using the “Ten C’s” framework
3. Implement each lesson plan and report on its effectiveness. Whenever possible, show examples of student work that reflects student understanding of the events that shaped the period in history covered.