

Welcome to History 101 and 102, Western Civilization Part 1 and 2, offered by the Extended Learning Institute of Northern Virginia Community College. My name is Becky Linford (Rebecca R. Linford) and I am your instructor. I have taught history at a number of universities and colleges in the area, including Georgetown (where I obtained my Ph.D.), Marymount, McDaniel College, Lord Fairfax Community College, and now at NOVA. (I especially love teaching the Western Civilization series.) My area of expertise is early modern European history, and I have developed courses that focus on topics, people and events from that period, including the Renaissance and Reformation; the daily life of women and the family; European witchcraft; and crime & punishment.

I used to work for the federal government as a political analyst and am still very interested in current events such as global terrorism and U.S. politics. We tend to think that life has never been as frightening, dangerous, or difficult as it is today; however, history demonstrates that people through the millennia have had similar fears and challenges. One of my main goals for you in this course is to help you **identify the similarities AND differences between events of the past and the present**, and to see how the past has brought us to the world we live in today—in other words, to “connect the dots” if applicable.

I watch a LOT of news on TV, mostly CNN, the major networks, or FoxNews, but ALWAYS *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* on Comedy Central. In fact, I might assign you a project where you compare the coverage by FoxNews and *The Daily Show* of a major world event. Hopefully this will help you develop a critical eye and clearer judgment about how events are processed, interpreted and communicated.

On a personal note, I am married and have 2 grown kids—my son a recent graduate in Computer Science, Physics and Philosophy, and my daughter who’s working on a degree in Mass Communications. They worried I’d be lonely without them so they got me 2 golden retrievers, Duke & Casey, who currently dominate our household. My kids and I have Attention Deficit Disorder and so we understand some of the problems faced by people with learning challenges.

Online education is an imperfect animal that can be a blessing or a curse. When it works well it can be extremely rewarding. On the other hand, it can sometimes feel like you’re isolated out there in a virtual wasteland. There are many factors out of our control, such as access to Blackboard and the internet, and personal and professional emergencies that often arise at the worst possible moment. A lot depends on how consistent and persistent we are in following through with all the assignments and meeting deadlines. I tell you all this so you’ll know I’m sympathetic and willing to help you in any way I can to be successful in this class, and hopefully to get an A! PLEASE contact me as soon as possible if you have any questions or concerns about the course materials or about your ability to succeed.



In this course, we will review the general history of the West from about 3000 BCE (“Before the Common Era”—used to be BC, “Before Christ”) to 1600 CE (“Common Era”—used to be AD, or Anno Domini, literally translated as “Year of our Lord”). We will also learn about the academic discipline of history and why the study of history remains relevant and important today.

Some of the objectives of HIS 101 include:

- Define "the West" and identify the characteristics necessary for a successful civilization.
- Understand the general chronology and geography of Western history.
- Identify and describe the importance of key individuals and events in Western history.
- Understand the main forces at work in the development of Western civilization.
- Learn to analyze historical sources and reach conclusions based on that analysis.
- Write critical essays that explain the importance of certain historical events in the West.

*The **best way to succeed** in this class is pretty simple if you keep the following points in mind:

- Make sure that you know how long your course lasts (6, 8, 12 or 16 weeks).
- KEEP UP with the READING. You really do NEED TO READ in order to do well.
- TURN IN YOUR ASSIGNMENTS ON TIME.
- Get familiar with the **SYLLABUS** and the **Course Website** quickly!
- Be sure to **review the Grading, Withdrawals and Incompletes section**. This section includes information on assignment completion dates that will prevent you from being automatically withdrawn from this course.
- Click the ASSIGNMENTS button and begin working on the lessons.
- **Keep copies of all your coursework and graded assignments.**
- Feel free to contact me if you have questions or problems.

Good luck! I look forward to reading your work and getting to know each of you.

Becky Linford

Here's some of my contact information:

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(I answer text messages quickly. Remember to include your name & Course #.)