

IDS 2935
EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE: A HUMANITIES PERSPECTIVE
UF Quest 1 – Identities
Writing Requirement 2000 words
Spring 2026
LITTLE HALL 0125
Monday-Wednesday-Friday | Period 3 (9:35 AM - 10:25 AM)

INSTRUCTOR: DR. CHRYSOSTOMOS KOSTOPOULOS,
DAUER 115A, 352-294-7146, CKOSTOPO@UFL.EDU

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY-WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY PERIODS 4 (10:40 – 11:30 AM)
AND TUESDAY, THURSDAY (PERIODS 3 9:35 – 10:25 AM And 4 10:40-11:30) OR BY
APPOINTMENT

COURSE CONTENT: The concept of “Europe(an)” has been delineated by the cultural achievements of the ancient European people, the domination of the Roman Empire and the spread of Christianity, the scientific and philosophical advances of the Renaissance and the political developments of the French revolution. For many centuries, European civilization dominated the world through empires that competed politically and economically but essentially represented a single cultural heritage and that heritage was regarded by many as the crucible of western civilization. In addition, scholars today acknowledge the existence of a variety of concepts of Europe, defined along territorial, cultural, political and ethnic lines and Europe is viewed as a continent of great cultural diversity.

The main goal of this course is to examine the complex nature of Europe, the independent European identities, and the common “European Identity”. More specifically, the course is designed to examine Europe from a broad variety of disciplines, approaches and perspectives. An important theme of the course is to discuss three core questions “What is Europe(an)?” “Where is Europe?” and “Whither Europe?” and to demonstrate the identity of Europe as a dynamic cultural environment.

While examining the above questions, the students will encounter the following major themes around which the course is organized: linguistic and ethnic identities, religious and intellectual traditions, the scientific and industrial revolution, urbanization and mass entertainment, Europe's “discovery” of the New World, socio-political developments from the Enlightenment and the French revolution, the major military conflicts of the 20th c., and European Union the first of a new Europe.

All topics will be covered objectively without endorsements of viewpoints, and will be observed from multiple perspectives.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will explore Europe critically through a variety of multi-disciplinary approaches based on the arts and the humanities (including literature, film, music, and linguistics.) Upon successful completion of the course the students will accomplish the following objectives:

Content Objectives:

- Students will describe movements in the history of Europe with reference to historical precedents, events, and figures.
- Students will identify and analyze key elements, biases, and influences in the history of Europe and European ideas.
- Students will examine the effects of Europe's global influence as well as how Europe has changed through contact with the rest of the world.

Communication Objectives:

- Students will communicate their knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral form through the class assignments.

Critical Thinking Objectives:

- Students will analyze opposite points of view and interpret and evaluate sources.
- Students will examine the idea of European identity as a dynamic cultural construct and will critically compare and contrast it with their own national identity.
- Students analyze the "Us" vs. "Them" dichotomy implicit in Europe across the centuries and evaluate the way that this dichotomy has created conflict and discrimination in Europe and outside Europe.

REQUIRED READINGS AND WORKS:

Textbook: Peter Rietbergen, Europe: A Cultural History (New York: Routledge, 2015).

(Required)

ISBN: 978-0415663618

Recommended Writing Manual: Strunk, W. (1999). The Elements of Style.

Additional readings and materials are available on the course site on canvas.

MATERIALS/SUPPLY FEES

There are no materials or supply fees for this course.

Assignments and Requirements

While General Education and Quest 1 Objectives are not exclusive to each assignment because they will overlap throughout the course, each assignment will meet the specific goals of these programs.

Assignment	Assignment Description	Quest 1 SLOs Met	Grade
Discussion Activities	<p>a. Answer the question(s) posted in the weekly discussions. (100 points)</p> <p>b. Respond to at least two of your fellow students' original posts. (50 points)</p>	Identify, explain, and, describe theories and methodologies	100
Virtual Museum Visit – Experiential Learning	Visit the Harn Museum on campus. Then create a presentation of your experience using images and written narrative to describe what you enjoyed about your visit and to reflect on the meaning that you find in the exhibited artifacts. The deadline for submitting your presentation is Friday February, 27.	Connect course content to own lives	150
Analytical Essay Draft	Students will submit a 500-600 words draft of the analytical essay due on Friday, March 27. The essay prompt will ask you to examine a question or theme of a class text or a class topic. The proposal should include an introductory paragraph, an outline of the points that are being addressed and a draft bibliography of at least two sources. The instructor will provide feedback on the essay draft on content, punctuation, spelling, syntax, and diction.	Analyze and evaluate essential questions	50
Analytical Essay	A 2,000 words thesis driven essay on the already provided essay prompt due on Monday, April 27. The analytical essay will use the proposal as the main frame. The essay will be graded and marked for content, organization and coherence, argument and support, punctuation, spelling, syntax, and diction.	Analyze and evaluate essential questions	250
Examination	Two forty-five-minute Midterm Exams in lecture on Wednesday, March 6 and Wednesday April 22. The exams will be based on the	Identify, explain, and, describe theories and methodologies	150

	course material and the format will be as follows: a) 80 Multiple Choice Questions b) Five Key term short analysis		
Quizzes	There will be regular in class quizzes during the semester based on course readings and class discussion and lectures. The format will be a combination of short answers, multiple-choice, and fill in the blank questions. These will not be difficult but will be intended to test whether you have done the readings and are prepared for class.	Identify, explain, and, describe theories and methodologies	100
Reflection Activities	These activities will give you the opportunity to reflect and make connections between the concepts discussed in the class and your own personal experiences and histories, work experience, personal relations, family interactions, etc.	Connect course content to own lives	100
Attendance	Attendance in lecture		100
Total Points			1000

GRADING SCALE AND ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

Assignment Weights

Attendance: 100 points (10%)
Reflection Activities: 100 points (10%)
Discussion Activities 100 points (10%)
Adobe Express Story: 150 points (15%)
Analytical Essay 250 points (25%)
Analytical Essay Proposal 50 points (5%)
Quizzes 100 points (10%)
Mid-term Exams 150 points (15%)
Total: 1,000 points (100%)

Grading Scale

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
94.0 – 100.0	A	4.00
90.0 – 93.9	A-	3.67
87.0 – 89.9	B+	3.33
84.0 – 86.9	B	3.00
80.0 – 83.9	B-	2.67
77.0 – 79.9	C+	2.33
74.0 – 76.9	C	2.00
70.0 – 73.9	C-	1.67
67.0 – 69.9	D+	1.33
64.0 – 66.9	D	1.00
60.0 – 63.9	D-	0.67
0 – 59.9	E	0.00

*Because Canvas cannot round to whole numbers, the Grade Scale in Canvas has been adjusted to achieve the same effect (e.g., 92.5% = A, 89.5% = A-, 86.5% = B+, etc.).

More information on grades and grading policy is available in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#). See the current UF grading policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>) for more information.

Writing Requirement (WR 2,000)

For courses that confer WR credit, the course grades now have two components: To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of "C" or higher. You **must** turn in all papers totaling 2,000 words to receive credit for writing 2,000 words. The writing requirement ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

PLEASE NOTE: a grade of "C-" **will not** confer credit for the University Writing Requirement.

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Conferring credit for the University Writing Requirement, this course requires that papers conform to the following assessment rubric. More specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments may be delivered during the course of the semester.

Writing Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling,	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or

	punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	severely undermine the writer's credibility.
--	---	--

Quest 1: Description

Quest 1 courses are multidisciplinary explorations of truly challenging questions about the human condition that are not easy to answer, but also not easy to ignore: What makes life worth living? What makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world? To grapple with the kinds of open-ended and complex intellectual challenges they will face as critical, creative, and self-reflective adults navigating a complex and interconnected world, Quest 1 students use the humanities approaches present in the course to mine texts for evidence, create arguments, and articulate ideas. At the end of every Quest 1 course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes.

Quest SLOs

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Content).
- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Communication).
- Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Critical Thinking).
- Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Critical Thinking).

UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES

For a complete list of UF policies and resources, please visit:
<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES AND RESOURCES

1. **Make-up Policies.** All readings, written assignments and exams must be completed by or on the date indicated on the syllabus and will not be rescheduled or accepted late unless you meet UF's excused absence policy.

(<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>).

2. **Class attendance is required for this course and constitutes 10% of your grade.**
We will regularly circulate an attendance sheet, which you should sign. Signing for others is considered academic dishonesty. You will be allowed two unexcused absences with no penalty. After this, your attendance total score will be dropped by 5% for each additional unexcused absence. Repeated absences may affect your performance on the exam and quizzes since they will be based on the class lectures.

According to the Office of the University Registrar, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). For all planned absences, a student in a situation that allows an excused absence from a class, or any required class activity must inform the instructor as early as possible prior to the class. For all unplanned absences because of accidents or emergency situations, students should contact their instructor as soon as conditions permit.

For further information about the University of Florida's attendance policy, please see the current Undergraduate Catalogue (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>).

3. **Common Courtesy:** Cell phones and other electronic devices must be set to vibrate mode during class. Students who receive or make calls or text messages during class will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day. This does not apply to emergencies. The instructors may ask a student engaging in disruptive behavior, including but not limited to whispering or snoring, to leave the class, and the student will be marked absent for the day.

Weekly Schedule

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Week 1: THE EVOLUTION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF EUROPE

Orientation – Course Introduction

- The Notion of Europe as a “Geographical Area.”
- Ancient and Modern Conceptions of Europe: From Homeric Geography and Herodotus to Modern Nation-States.
- Fluidity of Geographical Borders: Greece (Ancient Aegean World → Modern Nation-State) and Poland as Case Studies.

Quiz 1 (20 points)

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, Prologue (pp. xvii–xxiii).
- Norman Davies, *Europe: A History*, “Europe’s Cultural Circles” (excerpt).
- Special Eurobarometer 278 – European Cultural Values.

Weeks 2-3: LANGUAGES AND LINKAGES - CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

- Historical and Linguistic Overview:
- Indo-European Languages; Ancient Greek and Latin as a Foundational Cultural and Intellectual Languages of Europe; Finno-Ugric Languages.
- Language and Identity in Antiquity and Modernity:
Ancient Greek Dialects (Ionic, Doric, Attic) and Cultural Identity
- European Minority Languages Today (ECRML).
- Language Extinction and Preservation: From Ancient Greek Dialects to Modern Endangered Languages.
- English as a Lingua Franca Compared with Koine Greek in the Hellenistic World.

Quiz 2 (20 points) – Friday of Week 2

Reflection Activity 1 (20 points): *Languages and Me*

Due Friday of Week 3 by 11:59 PM.

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, “Invasion, Conquest and Change: The First Wave” (pp. 13–15).
- Harald Haarmann, “Europe’s Mosaic of Languages.”
- European Day of Languages Report (2015).

Week 4: THE MYTH OF EUROPA - TRACING EUROPE FROM MYTH TO REALITY

- The Myth of Europa and the Greek Origins of the Idea of Europe.
- Ancient Greek Geography, Myth, and Identity.
- The Three Pillars of European Identity: Greek Philosophy, Greek Political Thought, and Greek Cultural Models.
- The Concept of the Polis as a Political Environment. Athens and the Birth of Democracy: Ideals, Practices, and Exclusions.

Reflection Activity 2 (20 points): *The Meaning of Democracy*
Due Friday by 11:59 PM.

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, “A ‘Marginal’ Culture: Democracy and Its Limitations in Greece” (pp. 24–33).
- Sheldon Wolin, “Democracy: Electoral and Athenian.”
- Norman Davies, *Europe: A History*, “The Minoan Civilization.”
- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.34–2.46 (Pericles’ Funeral Oration).

PART II: WHERE IS EUROPE

Week 5: SHIFTING CENTERS OF EUROPE – FROM ANTIQUITY TO COLONIALISM

- Ancient Greek Colonization of the Mediterranean as a Precedent.
- Roman Expansion and the Reconfiguration of Greek Culture.
- Modern European Colonialism in Comparative Perspective.
- Christianity and the Transformation of the Classical World.
Eurasia, Empire, and Neo-Colonialism.

Quiz 3 (20 points)

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, “Europe and the Other Worlds” (pp. 446–452).
- Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden.”
- Hans Kohn, “Some Reflections on Colonialism.”

Weeks 6–7: MIGRATION, DIASPORA, AND THE SPREAD OF EUROPE

- Ancient Migration and Colonization as Early Models of Diaspora.
- 19th-Century Economic Migration: Italian, Irish, Greek, and Polish Emigration.
- Religious Exiles: From Early Christian Persecution in the Roman Empire to Modern Europe. Intolerance, Identity, and Belonging.

Reflection Activity 3 (20 points): *The Melting Pot and Me*

Due Friday by 11:59 PM.

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, “Church and State” (pp. 242–247).
- Roger Daniels, *Coming to America*, pp. 185–212.
- Bertolt Brecht, “To Those Who Follow in Our Wake.”

PART III: WHAT IS EUROPE(AN)?

Week 8: EUROPE FROM WITHIN – EUROPEANISM AND SELF-DEFINITION

- From Ancient Greek Self-Definition (*Hellenes vs. Barbarians*) to Modern European Identity.
- Old and New Europe: Who Counts as European?
- Religion, Art, and Identity: From Classical Temples to Christian Cathedrals. Defining the “Other” from Antiquity to Modernity.

Quiz 4 (20 points)

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, “From Humanism to Enlightenment” (pp. 355–382).
- Immanuel Kant, “What Is Enlightenment?”
- Martin Luther, *Ninety-Five Theses*.

Week 9: EUROPE FROM WITHOUT – EXTERNAL VIEWS OF EUROPE

- Views of the “Outside World” in early Europe.
Modern American Perspectives on Europe.
- Europe in Literature: Henry James, Hemingway, and Classical Inheritance.

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, “Europe and America” (pp. 455–457).
- Henry James, *An International Episode* (Part 1).

Review Lecture – Examination

Week 10: THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF EUROPE

- Industrialization and Urbanization in the 19th Century.
- Contrasts with Pre-Industrial Europe: Economy, Labor, and Time in Early Europe.

Reflection Activity 4 (20 points): *Our Industrial World*

Due Friday by 11:59 PM.

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, “Urban, Industrial Culture” (pp. 407–411).
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

PART IV: WHITHER EUROPE?

Weeks 11–12: EUROPE DIVIDED – IDEOLOGIES AND CONFLICT

- Ancient Political Thought and Its Modern Reinterpretations. Democracy, Tyranny, Fascism, and Communism in Comparative Perspective.
- World Wars, the Holocaust, and the Crisis of European Ideals.

Quiz 5 (20 points) – Week 12

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, “Towards a New Europe?” (pp. 503–510).
- Mussolini, “The Doctrine of Fascism.”
- Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (pp. 14–21).
- Picasso, *Guernica* (1939).

Analytical Essay Workshop I-II

Week 13: EUROPE UNITED - THE EUROPEAN UNION Part I

- From Ancient Panhellenism to Modern Pan-Europeanism.
- Cold War Europe and the Road to Unity.
- How does the European Union Work?

Reflection Activity 5 (20 points): *The Significance of Unity*

Due Friday by 11:59 PM.

Readings:

- Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, pp. 510–516, 540–546.
- Winston Churchill, “The Sinews of Peace.”
- *How the European Union Works*.

Week 14: EUROPE UNITED - PART II

- Is There A Future In European Union?

Analytical Essay Workshop III

Thanksgiving Week

Week 15: CONCLUSION

- Borders, Identity, and the Legacy of Europe.
- Brexit as a Modern Case Study.
- Migration, Nationalism, and the Future of Europe.

Final Review - Examination

Analytical Essay Due