

Reformers, Heretics, and Soldiers: European Wars of Religion



Course Description

Welcome to Reformers, Heretics, and Soldiers: European Wars of Religion! This course will be a journey into the excitement, division, chaos, and horror of religious reform and civil violence during the Wars of Religion in early modern Europe. The course will focus on cultural and social aspects of religious and civil conflict during the German Peasants' Revolt, Dutch Revolt, French Wars of Religion, Thirty Years' War, and English Civil Wars. Students will explore the religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the experiences of the people who lived through them.

Students will confront various faces of religious violence, from iconoclasm and book burning to executions of heretics and religious massacres. We will explore the motivations and explanations for religious violence in early modern Europe, as well as the problems of peacemaking during religious conflict. The course also offers students a chance to consider the difficult questions posed by religious violence outside the charged contexts of religious violence in contemporary societies like Bosnia, Kosovo, Algeria, Palestine, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Highlights of the course will include the German Peasants' War, Schmalkaldic War, Peace of Augsburg, "Spanish Fury", Flooding of the Netherlands, Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Blois Assassinations, Defenestration of Prague, Battle of White Mountain, Sack of Magdeburg, Peace of Westphalia, and beheading of king Charles I.

Finding Me

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Required Books

Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge University Press). ISBN 0521467012
Michael G. Baylor, *The German Reformation and the Peasants' War: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford St. Martin's). ISBN 978-0-312-43718-3
Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford University Press) ISBN 0-19-507013-5
Peter J. Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. ISBN 9780801474965
Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War: Europe's Tragedy* (Belknap Press). ISBN 978-0674062313
Charles Carlton, *Going to the Wars: The Experience of the British Civil Wars 1638-1651* (Routledge). ISBN 978-0-415-10391-6

Recommended Book

Richard Marius, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*

Reformers, Heretics, and Soldiers Website

Be sure to visit the course website. The Reformers, Heretics, and Soldiers website and Blackboard site will provide assignments, internet resources, a bibliography, and advice on doing historical research and writing.

Grading

Participation and Readings Responses (3 assessments)	30%
Document Analysis (4-5 pages)	20%
Historical Film Review	10%
Book Review (4-5 pages)	10%
Historiographical Paper (12-15 pages)	30%

Course Goals

Students will be challenged to confront the horrors and hatreds experienced in religious warfare. We will explore the history of the European Wars of Religion through a series of case studies examined within a chronological framework. Students will learn to analyze historical events and sources by confronting the interpretive nature of history. They will be challenged to develop their own opinions, analyses, and interpretations through rigorous engagement with historical sources. Critical reading and debating skills will be developed in discussions. Through argumentative and analytical writing assignments, students will work to develop writing skills that can be applied to their future lives and careers. This course will both familiarize you with historical practice and ask you to engage in that practice.

Practical Goals

History is a vital subject that provides students with a framework for understanding the complexities of human societies and cultures. The historical discipline also provides valuable skills that are essential for managing and evaluating information. I have structured this course to accomplish several goals which will make this course applicable to your future life—before and after graduation. Those practical goals are:

- to develop critical reading, thinking, and analytic skills
- to develop techniques for evaluating historical evidence, arguments, and claims
- to develop techniques of organizing and presenting information
- to improve expository and argumentative writing processes
- to develop an appreciation of European society, culture, history, and geography
- to examine religious violence as a category of historical analysis
- to learn aspects of European history vital for touring, studying, or working in the EU
- to become aware of the usages of the religious history in today's society in America

These specific aims should help you recognize the broader educational goals of this course.

Attendance and Absences

Attendance is vital for comprehension of the material and for discussion of the issues in this course. I will take attendance at the beginning of class. No points will be deducted for missing class, but attendance will obviously figure into students' participation grades.

Participation

History courses depend on active student participation to develop analysis, criticism, and debate of important ideas and issues. Your participation is therefore assessed on the basis of your written and oral communication with the instructor and with fellow students. I will use the following guidelines to assess participation grades based on 4 criteria: *attendance*, *willingness to participate*, *reading comprehension*, and *perceptiveness of comments*:

- A Student is attending class every time, volunteering information frequently, and willingly joining in the discussion. Student shows full comprehension of the readings and makes perceptive comments every class meeting.

- B Student is attending class every time, volunteering regularly, and joining the discussion if called upon. Student shows some comprehension of the readings and makes perceptive comments most class meetings.
- C Student is attending class most of the time and joins the discussion occasionally, but rarely volunteers. Student does not always show comprehension of the readings, but does make some comments.
- D Student is attending class some of the time, but refuses to join the discussion. Student rarely shows comprehension of the readings and makes few comments.
- F Student is attending class rarely and refuses to join the discussion. Student does not show comprehension of the readings and does not actively participate.

Written Work

Since this course is emphasizing historical writing, the grades are based heavily on written work, including a research project, film review, book review, and assignments using different modes of historical writing. Richard Marius's *A Short Guide to Writing About History* has been assigned to help you develop the writing skills necessary for this course. Please note the due dates in the Lecture/Discussion Topics and Assignments section. **Late papers will be accepted, but will incur a penalty.** Further guidelines on the papers and paper topics will be handed out later and posted on the Assignments page of the Blackboard website for the course.

Reading Responses

Students will write a short 1-page single-spaced typed Reading Response for the main reading assignments. Label each Reading Response with the given week and class (i.e., Week 2-1 for the second week's first class). Bring a copy of your Reading Response to class to use during discussions. Reading Responses will be collected at the end of class and will not be accepted late. Use the following format for each main reading (all readings from the required monographs, as well as certain additional readings and online sources indicated in **bold** type on Lecture/Discussion Topics and Assignments sheet):

Argument: Quote the sentence(s) that best articulates the main argument(s) of the reading.

Issues and Analysis: Identify key themes in the reading and quote 2-3 key sentences.

Criticism: Pose 2-3 critical questions about the author's assertions, methods, conclusions.

Historiographical Paper

Students will concentrate their efforts on a historiographical paper project based on extensive historical research. All students are encouraged to meet individually with the professor to discuss their research projects. Students will define their own research projects through a proposal and outline. Students' paper process in developing and researching their papers will be assessed. The professor will provide guidance and input at each stage of the writing process, but students will have to provide their own ideas and initiative. For more information, see the Assignments page of the Reformers, Heretics, and Soldiers website.

Classroom Guidelines

- Come to class! I will conduct class as a free flowing mixture of lecture and discussion most days. Discussions of readings and peer reviews of writing can only work if you attend class regularly. Your participation grade is based on your in-class discussions and Reading Responses.
- If you know you are going to miss class, please let me know *ahead* of time by e-mail so that we can prevent you from getting behind on your assignments.
- There may be a short 5-minute writing assignment or project at the beginning of class some days. If you arrive after the project or writing assignment is completed, you will not be allowed to make up that grade. These short assignments may not be announced in advance.
- Read and prepare to discuss the readings that I assign. Take notes on each assignment. Read each assignment *before* the class period listed.
- Bring paper, a printed copy of your Reading Response, your notes, and relevant readings to class in addition to your normal materials. You will turn in a copy of your Reading Response at the end of class so that I can see what you are getting out of the readings.
- Think about the lectures and readings. Ask any questions that you have during discussions, if possible, so that your professor and peers can benefit from your ideas.
- All major assignments (papers) must be turned in to receive a grade in the course.
- Show consideration for your professor, TA, and fellow students in the classroom space. Shut off and put away any cell phones, iPods, MP3s, iPads, laptops, or other electronic devices, unless the professor has approved a specific request to use the device in class. Also, put away newspapers, magazines, and reading materials unrelated to the course. Always demonstrate respect for class members in discussions, even if you strongly disagree with their ideas.

General Information

I will follow Northern Illinois University's policies on plagiarism and cheating as indicated in the "Academic Integrity" section of the Undergraduate Catalog. Cheating amounts to copying or stealing answers or information. Plagiarism involves a person using another author's or student's written work and ideas without proper credit and citation. The penalty for academic dishonesty at Northern Illinois University is an F grade for the course, and the professor may seek an even more severe punishment.

Note that this syllabus may be altered later if necessary.

Also, note that this class is a 400-level class, a designation which means that it is a specialized upper-division undergraduate lecture course. The 400-level history courses cover specific periods or issues in great detail, so you will have to confront unfamiliar material and learn many unfamiliar names, places, and events. Upper-division history courses require students to learn terminology, theory, and methodology related to the subject. Be prepared for these difficulties.

Finally, come see me in office hours if you have problems or if you just want to talk about the history of the religious wars. If you cannot see me during my office hours, talk to me after class to set up a time to meet.

Discussion Topics and Assignments

Part I. Religious Reform and Social Conflict

- Week 1**
15 January **An Age of Spiritual Crisis**
Introduction to Religious Warfare in Early Modern Europe
We will define the goals, contents, and assignments for the course, in addition to going over basic terminology and the course structure. A discussion of historical approaches to religious violence will follow.
- 17 January **Awaiting the Apocalypse**
Discussion will open on the spiritual crisis in late 15th and early 16th-century Europe and the religious controversies that provoked the outbreak of reformation movements and religious conflicts. We will consider the Christian concept of the Apocalypse in the context of early modern culture.
Readings: Cunningham, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, chapter 1
- Week 2**
22 January **Radical Reformation and Peasant Protest in Germany**
Corruption, Reform, and the Coming of the Antichrist
Today, we will explore the conceptions of reform in sixteenth-century Europe through the imagery of the White Horse. What did contemporaries mean by 'reform'? How did reformers such as Luther, Hoffman, and Bullinger use the idea of reform?
Readings: Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, chapter 2
- 24 January **Popular Responses to the Spread of Protestantism**
Our discussions will consider how reformers used printing and preaching to disseminate attacks on the papacy and institutions of the Christian church. How did concern with the Gospel and reform affect popular religious belief and the growth of peasant protest in Germany?
Documents: Baylor, *The German Reformation and the Peasants' War*, chapters 1-2
Readings: Baylor, *The German Reformation and the Peasants' War*, Introduction
- Week 3**
29 January **German Peasants' War and the Diffusion of Protestantism**
Peasant Rebellion and Radicalization
We will examine the participants in the rural violence of the German Peasants' War. Who were the leaders of the peasant bands and what were their understandings of the conflict?
Documents: Baylor, *The German Reformation and the Peasants' War*, Introduction, chapter 3
- Writing: Document Analysis due*

Week 3, cont. German Peasants' War and the Diffusion of Protestantism

31 January

The Church Divided: Confessionalization and Conflict

We will question why peasant rebellion failed in Germany and how the German Peasants' War impacted European societies. We will discuss the process of confessionalization and the ultimate division of the Latin Christian church into distinct confessions in the 1530s and 1540s.

Documents: Baylor, *The German Reformation and the Peasants' War*, Introduction, chapter 4

Readings: Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 92-151

Writing: Historiographical Paper Declaration due

Part II. French Wars of Religion

Week 4

5 February

Collapse of Authority and Early Religious Conflicts in France

Reformation Paris and the Collapse of Authority in France

We will examine the spread of Calvinism in France during the mid-sixteenth century and the fear of heresy the new confession provoked in the kingdom. Discussion will center around the institutional weakness of the French monarchy and the diversity of social and political interests that shaped the civil wars that grew up in this power vacuum.

Documents: Vassy documents*

Readings: Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, chapters 1-3

7 February

Paris between Religious Warfare and Nervous Peace

Today, we will discuss the growing religious tensions in Paris as the countryside plunged deeper and deeper into civil warfare and chaos. Conflict and peace-making proceeded, but only a nervous, temporary peace held sway as Paris became the scene of a major show of religious compromise.

Document: Edict of Saint-Germain*

Readings: Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, chapters 4-5

Week 5

12 February

Atrocities and the Motivations for Religious Violence

The Making of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre

The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre is one of the best-known and most violent events of the period of the religious wars. The suspense, ambiguity, and mystery surrounding the event have produced widely differing views on this key event. We will attempt to come to grips with the development of the event and its historiography.

Readings: Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, chapter 6-7

Week 5, cont. Atrocities and the Motivations for Religious Violence

14 February

Confronting Atrocities: Popular Culture, Religious Violence

The form that violent actions take are often related to the feelings and attitudes of individual participants and to group behavior. Several examinations of 'crowd action' have shed light on the motivations of violence and the religious meaning of conflict for contemporary men and women. We will discuss these group dynamics and the methods used by the scholars who attempt to decipher them. Who was responsible for the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre?

Readings: Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, chapters 8-10, Conclusion

Article: Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence"*

Film option 1

Film: *La Princesse de Montpensier*

Week 6

19 February

Religious Warfare and Peacemaking

Piety and Militancy during the Wars of the Catholic League

We will discuss the Catholic revival in France and the spread of the Counter-Reformation movement into France. Consider confraternities, Henri III, Capuchins, Jesuits, the Catholic League, the Day of the Barricades, the Estates-General of Blois, and the Blois assassinations.

Readings: Cunningham, and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, chapter 4

Articles: Carroll*; Wilkinson*

Participation: Reading Response due

Writing: ***La Princesse de Montpensier* Film Review option due**

21 February

Edict of Nantes and the Question of Toleration

Consider whether or not the Edict of Nantes represented an edict of toleration. What did "toleration" mean in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries? What were the prospects for coexistence in the period of the religious wars? I will also present some of my own recent research on noble participation in the religious wars after the Edict of Nantes.

Articles: Roberts*; Sandberg*

Document: Edict of Nantes*

Writing: **Historiographical Paper Proposal and Bibliography due**

Part III. Dutch Revolt

- Week 7**
26 February **Outbreak of the Dutch Revolt**
Localism and Identities in the Netherlands
The Dutch Revolt provides an excellent example of the localized character of the religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We will delve into the issues of particularism, loyalties, and regional politics by examining the conflict in the northern and southern Netherlands.
Readings: Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots*, Introduction and chapters 1-2; Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 151-154
- 28 February **Iconoclasm and Heresy in the Netherlands**
Today we will investigate the destructive nature of reform and the process of ‘othering’ during the reformation. Discussion will focus on iconoclastic attacks and definitions of ‘heresy’ in the Netherlands during the early stages of the Dutch Revolt. Why did many religious images and symbols appear offensive to reformed communities? We will then turn to consider the responses of the Spanish monarchy to the disorder in the Netherlands.
Readings: Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots*, chapters 3-4
- Week 9**
12 March **Spring Break**
Hit the Beach!
Readings: *How to Surf a Pipeline and Live*
Methodological Goals: Surfing form
- 14 March **Grilled Shrimp and Blackened Redfish**
Readings: *Texas Mesquite Grilling*
Methodological Goals: Beachcombing and relaxation skills
- Week 10**
19 March **The Eighty Years’ War**
The Habsburg Empire and the Strategies of Religious Warfare
Today, we will examine the Habsburg empire’s strategic approaches to religious warfare in the Netherlands. How did the fledgling Dutch Republic and the Habsburg empire finance such a long war? Consider the political theories of government and society that emerged from this conflict.
Readings: Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots*, chapters 5-6; Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 151-169
- 21 March **Dutch Patriotism and the Birth of the United Provinces**
We will explore William of Orange’s emergence as leader of the patriotic Dutch cause. What role did Calvinism play in the creation of the United Provinces? Did the Dutch patriotic movement become a nationalist revolution?
Readings: Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots*, chapters 7-8 and Epilogue

Part IV. Thirty Years' War

Week 11

26 March

The Coming of the Thirty Years' War

Confessional Divisions and Disorder in the Holy Roman Empire

Today, we will examine the Habsburg imperial dynasty and the complex nature of the Holy Roman Empire. Consider the confessional divisions and competing jurisdictions within the Empire. How did Ottoman expansion and rivalry with the Habsburgs affect politics in Germany?

Readings: Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War*, chapters 1-4

28 March

Religious Tensions and Political Intrigue in Germany

We will explore the international politics that fueled religious tensions within the Holy Roman Empire. Consider the role of the Spanish, Dutch, Danish, Swedes, and Poles in the crises in Germany in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Was religious warfare in Germany inevitable?

Readings: Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War*, chapter 5-8

Week 12

2 April

From Bohemian Revolt to European Conflict

Defenestration of Prague and the Bohemian Revolt

Today, we will examine the outbreak of the Bohemian Revolt. Why did warfare erupt in this part of the Habsburg domains? Why did the Bohemian Revolt threaten to produce a much larger struggle in the Holy Roman Empire?

Readings: Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War*, chapters 9-10; Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 169-172

4 April

Habsburg Victories and the Internationalization of Conflict

While all religious wars in our period included foreign intervention and confessional politics, the Thirty Years' War is remembered for its escalation from a localized civil war into an enormous European-wide conflict. Discussion will focus on the dynamics of foreign intervention in religious strife. Was religion key in the development and prolongation of the war?

Readings: Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War*, chapters 11-13; Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 172-184

Film option 2

Film: *The Last Valley or Potop (The Deluge)*

Week 13

9 April

Early Modern Total Warfare

Military Cultures and the Shape of Conflict

Group behavior and group violence leads us to some of the most well-defined and powerful groups of participants in the religious wars—soldiers and their officers. Cultures developed around military patrons and personnel, shaping their identities and power relations. Discussion will center on the nature of warfare and on the relationships between soldiers and society. Consider the Swedish army, military entrepreneurs, military culture, and mercenaries.

Readings: Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War*, chapters 14-15; Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 184-196

Article: Langer*

Writing: Last Valley or Potop (The Deluge) Film Review option due

Week 13, cont. Early Modern Total Warfare

11 April

Stalemate and Interminable War

The Thirty Years War ground into a bloody stalemate and leaders began to look for a way out of the conflict. Creating peace proved much more difficult than expanding warfare. Today, we will discuss one of the most powerful literary responses to early modern religious warfare, Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus*. Consider how this early novel mixed adventure and social commentary.

Document: Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*, excerpts*

Readings: Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War*, chapters 16-18; Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 196-199

Week 14

16 April

Impact of the Thirty Years' War on Europe

The Westphalian Settlement

Consider the peace processes, Westphalia agreements, and prospects of lasting peace. How had all of the warfare changed Germany and Europe by 1648? What changes did peace bring?

Readings: Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War*, chapters 19-21

18 April

Devastation of Germany during the Thirty Years' War

Today, we will assess the long-term impact of the Thirty Years' War on German and European society and culture.

Readings: Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War*, chapters 22-23; Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, chapter 5

Part V. English Civil Wars

Week 15

23 April

Practices of Civil Warfare in the British Isles

Royalists, Parliamentarians, and Religious Radicals

Today, we will examine the political and military actors in the English Civil Wars and the related conflicts across the British Isles. Consider the experiences of ordinary soldiers who joined armies and fought in the Civil Wars. What were soldiers' motivations and aims in the civil violence?

Readings: Carlton, *Going to the Wars*, chapters 1-5

Film option 3

25 April

Film: *Cromwell*

Siege Warfare and Destruction in the English Civil Wars

We will analyze the practices of raiding and siege warfare during the English Civil Wars, focusing particularly on the dramatic siege of Colchester. Who organized the violence of the Civil Wars and how did they manage civil conflict? We will consider contributions, destruction, and military attrition during the Civil Wars in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Readings: Carlton, *Going to the Wars*, chapters 6-11 and Conclusion

Writing: *Cromwell* Film Review option due

TBA

Proofing Party

A paper proofing party will be held at a local coffee shop. This highly recommended (but voluntary) event will allow students to receive comments and critiques on their papers, as well as providing a chance to bounce ideas off the professor one last time.

Part VI. Legacies of the Wars of Religion

Week 16

30 April

Purging the Demons: An End to Religious Conflict?

Religious Peaces and the Secularization Debate

We will examine the end of the Civil Wars in the British Isles. We will also consider whether or not the Peace of Westphalia and the Stuart Restoration really ended religious conflict in Europe. We will question the secularization thesis that argues that early modern European society became increasingly tolerant and granted religious freedom. Consider what religious toleration really meant to Europeans in the early modern period?

Readings: Carlton, *Going to the Wars*, chapters 12-14; Cunningham and Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, chapter 6

2 May

Religious Violence in Today's World

We will conclude the course with a discussion of the effects of sixteenth and seventeenth-century religious conflicts on European culture and world history. We will explore the issues of myth and memory in history by looking at the shaping of perceptions of these religious conflicts. We will also examine the persistence of confessional historiography in writings on the religious wars. Consider how our understanding of early modern religious warfare helps us comprehend religious conflict and sectarian violence in our world.

Articles: photocopies*

Finals Week

4 - 10 May

No Classes

6 May

***Writing:* Historiographical Paper due**

Note: * indicates article or document available for download on Blackboard site in the Articles folder.