

Part III – Rebirth and Reform
Unit VIII – The Northern Renaissance and Reformation

Assignments, Engagement, and Evaluation

Review the questions on this unit syllabus before reading each session’s materials. Those questions function to guide your understanding and to orient your note-taking; addressing them will deepen your comprehension and prepare you for written work, class discussions, and quizzes. Take notes if necessary, but annotate the primary sources in particular. They will often be central to our seminars. In general, however, do what you think will help bring clarity to the content.

For each session, you are expected to offer ideas; to present arguments; to ask and answer questions; and to respond to classmates’ comments. You will fully engage with others by listening critically and by finding your voice. To succeed, you must massage the text, looking for strengths and tensions in language, patterns and trends, tone and voice, and connections to historical moments we have covered.

Individual and collective evaluations will be determined by (1) class engagement, (2) in- and out-of-class writing assignments, and (3) other assessments.

Session 1 – The Northern Renaissance Overview and Art

Materials

- Beck, pp. 480-485
- In-Class Review of Northern Renaissance Art

As You Read

- According to Beck et al., what factors drove Renaissance to “migrate” north?
- Describe Durer, Holbein, van Eyck, and Bruegel’s contributions.
- How did northern humanists (Erasmus, More, Shakespeare) distinguish themselves from their Italian counterparts? What was their purpose in writing?
- How or in what way does Gutenberg’s press transform the European world?

Session 2 – The Printing Press Transforms the Western World

Materials

- In-Class Thesis Activity on the Printing Press

As You Read

- Create a thesis about how the printing press impacted or transformed Europe.

Session 3 – Religious and Political Thought (Erasmus)

Materials

- “In Praise of Folly” by Desiderius Erasmus

As We Discuss

- Why does Erasmus’s get away with writing about the Church’s failings?
- Your contributions and [open-ended] questions to discuss

Session 4 – Religious and Political Thought (More)

Materials

- Excerpts from *Utopia* by Sir Thomas More

As We Discuss

- Why do you think More puts pen-to-paper and writes about an ideal community?
- Your contributions and [open-ended] questions to discuss

Session 5 – The Seeds of Reform Sprout in Germany

Materials

- Beck et al., pp. 488-489 and an excerpt called “Beginning of Protestant Christianity”
- Excerpt from Martin Luther’s 95 Theses
- Excerpt from Martin Luther’s autobiographical writing – on “Justification by Faith”

As You Read

- According to Beck et al., what were the general causes of the Reformation? Who called for reforms earliest? Why were they less successful than Luther?
- What were Luther’s grievances with the Church?
- What does Luther mean by “justification by faith” and why might have the Church been threatened by this expression?

As We Discuss

- Why might it be dangerous if the Church meted out punishment toward Luther? Why might it be dangerous if the Church chose inaction?
- Your contributions and [open-ended] questions to discuss

Session 6 – Pleas for Reform Transform into Protest

Materials

- Beck et al., pp. 490-491
- “Luther’s Refusal at the Diet of Worms”

As You Read

- How does Pope Leo X respond to Luther’s grievances? Why does Charles V agree with Leo X? What did the Edict of Worms stipulate?
- What was Luther’s reaction about the German peasants’ revolt (of 1524)?
- Why does Lutheranism gain traction? How is the Protestant-Catholic unrest resolved in Germany?

As We Discuss

- How ought we to understand Luther’s legacy?
- Your contributions and [open-ended] questions to discuss

Session 7 – Protestantism Arrives in England

Materials

- “The Act of Supremacy” from *Age of Europe*
- Beck et al., pp. 492-494

As You Read

- How does the *Age of Europe* reading capture the emergence of Protestantism in England?
- What steps does Elizabeth I take to restore Protestantism in England?

Session 8 – Protestantism Arrive in France

Materials

- Beck et al., pp. 495-496
- Excerpt on Predestination from *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin

As You Read

- What (or who) influenced Calvin’s desire for reform in Switzerland and France?
- What distinguished Calvinism from Lutheranism and Anglicanism?
- How did Catholic-Huguenot unrest reach its climax?

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As We Discuss

- Who has a more palatable religious philosophy – Calvin or Luther?
- Your contributions and [open-ended] questions to discuss

Session 9 – The Catholic Church Counters (Ignatius of Loyola)

Materials

- Beck et al., pp. 498-500
- “Spiritual Exercises” by Ignatius Loyola

As You Read

- What were Ignatius of Loyola’s overall contributions to the Catholic Reformation?
- What were Popes Paul III and Paul IV’s contributions?
- What was the overall legacy of the Reformation?

As We Discuss

- How does Ignatius Loyola’s attitude toward spiritual authority differ from that of Calvin and Luther?
- Your contributions and [open-ended] questions to discuss

Session 10 – The Catholic Church Counters

Materials

- In-Class Image Analysis on Counter-Reformation Art