

# WESTERN EXPERIENCE 1

## HIST 0101

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Our class will survey the history of Western Civilization from the Neolithic Revolution (*ca.* 8000 B.C.) to the Reformation (1600). Over the course of the semester, we will explore a number of related subjects. We will explore the origins of the Western intellectual tradition, the political orientation of Western society, the fundamentals of the Western economy and the religious outlook of the West. Specifically, students will learn about the indispensable Hebrew contribution to the development of Western monotheism, the vital contribution of the Classical Greeks to the formation of Western thought, the role of Rome in the emergence of a Western legal tradition, the emergence of representative political institutions in medieval Europe and the rise of capitalism in the early modern period. Most importantly, we will attempt to situate these Western developments in the broader context of world history. At points in the course, we will note how other civilizations have developed differently from the West in certain respects and I will invite you to think about these differences. In this regard, special attention will be paid to how both the Hebrews and the Greeks broke away from the cultural norms of the Near East in the fields of religion and intellectual thought respectively. The primary source readings are very important to this course. Therefore, make it a priority to stay on top of these readings. Discussion of these sources will also be very important. Read them carefully and feel free to ask any questions about them. Together we will learn a great deal about the origins and characteristics of Western Civilization.