

Course Outline and Proposal

Title - Western Civilization: From the Ancient Greeks until the Present.

Sub title: Who we are!

Proposed Audience – Local and Regional Residents, members of the Civic Society, Northallerton and District Local History Society, Rural Arts Associates, U3A, Cambridge Society, Open University Alumni. The sessions will run only if demand is expressed and viable numbers participate.

Mode of delivery: forty one sessions divided into five week blocks each for 8 periods (e.g. The Greeks; The Romans; Medieval; Renaissance and Reformation; Early Modern, Modern; Post-Modern) see **Course Contents** below.

Lecturer – Dr John R Gibbins (Wolfson College, Cambridge), BSc Hons. (London); MA (Dunelm); PhD (Newcastle upon Tyne); FBA 1989-1992.

Time – Monday afternoons 14.00-16.00 on a rolling basis from 31st January 2011

Location –Catholic Hall, Sacred Heart Church, Thirsk Road, Northallerton, DL6 1PJ

Charge of £4.00 per session with a 20% reduction (£16) for a block booking of 5 sessions

Teaching Aids – Lectures, Power point presentations and group seminar discussions. Aids will be available online under **Networks** within **www.johnrgibbins.co.uk**

Selected reading – a Set Book will accompany each block expected to be an available paperback that will be ordered at Cover to Cover, Garthway Arcade in Northallerton and the White Rose Bookshop Thirsk.

Study Skills – Advice will be staged to ensure that the audience experience is maximised. The skills to be developed will include note taking, listening and reading to best effect, how to do research, the nature of enquiry and explanation, planning and writing your research, getting published.

Learning Aids – brief notes for each session will be circulated at each session. Other aids will be located under the **Networks** section of the website www.johnrgibbins.co.uk. with links made to online sources of reading, archives, galleries, encyclopaedia's and dictionaries. Local Libraries have several relevant sources in stock and can acquire others from related regional libraries and from the inter-library loan facility. Handouts for each lecture will be available for purchase at a small charge at each session.

Audit and Review – a weekly feedback form will be circulated to allow participants to identify both learning issues and to raise issues and topics for future inclusion.

Course content

- 1) The Greeks (5 weeks) beginning 31st January 2011
- 2) The Romans (5 weeks)
- 3) The Medieval World (5 weeks)

- 4) The Renaissance and Reformation (5 weeks)
 - 5) Early Modern Europe (C16th- C17th) (5 weeks)
 - 6) The Enlightenment (C18th) (5 weeks)
 - 7) The Nineteenth Century and Victorian Britain (C19th) (5 weeks)
 - 8) The Twentieth Century (C20th) (5 weeks)
- Conclusions - The World we are in: Where are we today? (1 week)

Course Contents for the Greeks

- The Greek People and Polis: From Exile to Civilization

An introduction to the geographical, economic and political context for the emergence of the Greek Polis from -10BC to -5BC. Regional wars and migrations. The building of new cities and ways of life opposed to barbarianism. Early forms of government, law and culture. Architecture, the arts and culture. The Greek View of Life.

- Before Socrates: From Myth to Heroic History – Homer, Hesiod to Herodotus

The role of myths in the foundation of the Greek world: The Gods, Giants and Men. The nature form and structure of imagery: myths, parables and analogies. The oral tradition and its embodiment in writing in Homer. The rise of the religious view of the world. From Euripides to Ovid. Gender and Sexuality in Ancient Greece.

- The Genius of C4-C5th Athens: From Geometry and Science to Philosophy and History (Pythagoras, Euclid, Socrates, Thucydides)

Ionian science and the challenge to religion before Socrates. Heracleitus, Democritus and atomic theory. Architecture and the creation of the new geometry in Pythagoras. Socrates and the redirection of thought from the heavens and nature into man and the mind. Socrates on the Athenian condition. Thucydides histories of the period.

- After Socrates: Plato, Aristotle, Persian and Peloponnesian Wars and the decline of the Polis

Change and identity in Athenian thought in Plato and Aristotle. Platonic dialogues, with a focus on 'The Republic'. Schools of thought and the challenge of Aristotle in Greek thinking. Aristotle, 'The Politics', and the education of Alexander the Great. The great wars, Sparta and the decline of Athens

- Greece, the Cosmo-Polis and Hellenism: Sceptics, Cynics, Epicureans and Stoics

The Macedonian empires of Philippe and Alexander, Ptolomy, Alexandria and the invention of Hellenism. Euclid, Archimedes, and the new sciences. Philosophies for a new Cosmo-politan age: Diogenes and Cynicism; Protagoras, Pyrrho and Scepticism; Zeno and Stoicism; Epicurius and Epicurianism. 'Greece is dead, Long live the Greeks' – the spread and triumph of Hellenism – the Greek Legacy. The Greek view of life we live today.

Set Books in bold

Boardman, J., et.al. eds The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World, Oxford University Press, 2001 (£6.00)

Kitto, H D F., *The Greeks*, Pelican, 2ne ed., £6.94

Cornford, F M *Before and After Socrates*, Cambridge University Press £5.99

Also

Lloyd-Jones, H., *The Greek World*, Pelican, 1956

Lowes- Dickinson, G. *The Greek View of Life*, Methuen, 1896

Irwin, T., *Classical Thought*, Opus, 1989, £11

The Romans

Boardman, J., et.al. eds *The Oxford History of the Roman World*, Oxford UP., 2001, £6.00

Barrow, R H., *The Romans*, Pelican, £5.99

Beard, M & Henderson, J., *Classics: A very short introduction*, Opus, 2000, £5.00

Course Methods - Both the methods and the theory utilized in the course will be interdisciplinary, effectively combining approaches from anthropology, history, philosophy, classics and art history. Both textual and contextual approaches will be used.

Western Civilization will be explored through the ideas and artefacts made by successive generations of humans located within their cultural context.

The course celebrates 40 years of teaching Western Intellectual History that began in 1970 while a doctoral student at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Lecturer - Dr John R Gibbins BSc; MA; PhD; Wolfson College, Cambridge. Contact on 01845527944 or john@jgibbins.vispa.com

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