

AP European History Summer Reading

Welcome to AP European History!

In order to cover the content of this course in a timely fashion, there must be summer reading. This work entails reading Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*. This work was referenced, but not studied in detail, in your Freshman World History course. I realize that this might be a foggy memory, so we get to read it in full this year. Please allow yourself adequate time to read this source.

You will write a reflection essay on this reading fairly early on in the year. This essay is primarily designed for me to gauge where you are at in terms of thinking about and writing history. It is not intended to be a "gotcha assignment," or an onerous task that does not relate to our work in the course. The essay will give me a good sense of what analytical and writing skills we will need to work on over the course of the year. The essay assignment is not due until 9/9/23 (Saturday at midnight) so that we can answer any lingering questions about the readings you may have before writing the essay. Machiavelli is a somewhat difficult read because he references the political situation of his own time, and you will likely not be familiar with all of his references. Still, his thesis is an important one.

The Prince: Read main text and selected readings. There will be two options for reading this text:
Skinner/Price, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought

I prefer the translation made by Skinner/Price, while the additional interpretational essays in the Norton edition are really quite good. Thus you should read:

- The text of *The Prince* from the Skinner/Price edition, and
- I have included some additional sources about *The Prince*, that you might find helpful. Read these as you see fit.

J.R. Hale, *The Setting of the Prince: 1513-1514*

Felix Gilbert, *Fortune, Necessity, Virtue*

Ernst Cassirer, *Implications of the New Theory of the State*

Sheldon Wolin, *The Economy of Violence*

Federico Chabod, *Machiavelli's Method and Style*

OPTIONAL: Read the following in the textbook (Spielvogel):

1. **SKIM Chapter 11: The Later Middle Ages: Crisis and Disintegration in the Fourteenth Century**
(this should be a refresher from World History, so don't obsess over it. Only read what catches your eye or you think might be helpful for the essay question below.)
2. **Chapter 12: Recovery and Rebirth: The Age of the Renaissance**

ALL MATERIALS CAN BE FOUND ON MY SUMMER CANVAS CLASS. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO IT, PLEASE EMAIL ME ASAP.

Thank you and enjoy the summer!

SUMMER READING ESSAY

Based on Machiavelli's *The Prince*, answer the following question in three to five pages:

To what extent does Machiavelli represent the ideals of Renaissance Humanism?

As you consider this question, you should think about what it means to be modern and how this contrasts with the traditional ideologies of the medieval world. Is there something distinctive or new about what they are saying? Are there continuities with past that they articulate? Please remember that in an essay which asks "to what extent..." you should be presenting a somewhat nuanced treatment of the texts.

Your essay should demonstrate your ability to construct a strong, specific, yet comprehensive thesis. Furthermore you should argue that thesis with specific and appropriate evidence from the texts.