



Mr. Cohen
AP Euro
Summer homework 2026

Welcome to AP European History. For your summer homework, you will be responsible for five assignments:

- I. Read Chapter 12 on the Renaissance from our textbook.
- II. Read a few chapters from *The Prince* by Niccolò Machiavelli and answer some questions.
- III. Read a short article about some differences between the Middle Ages of Europe and the Renaissance.
- IV. Watch a short documentary about Florence, Italy.
- V. Complete a map of Europe as it was around 1500.

All summer homework is due **THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS**. **There will be a test on all parts of the summer homework EXCEPT *The Prince***. Questions from *The Prince* will be collected and we will revisit them later in the unit.

I. Chapter 12 - “Recovery and Rebirth: The Age of the Renaissance”

Use this link to access [Chapter 12](#). You should take notes and be prepared to use them on an open-note test within the first week of class.

Key Question: To what extent did life **change** from medieval times to the Renaissance?

Pay special attention to intellectual and artistic changes, changes in government, and the role/power of the Catholic Church.

As you read, take notes on what life was like in this time period and how/why some things changed and some things stayed the same. Some note taking tips:

1. Use headers and focus questions in your notes including key terms when appropriate.
2. Do not copy directly from the textbook—this is transcribing, not note taking. Use your own words and use phrases, not complete sentences.
3. Social history is not full of key terms—that does not mean you should skip paragraphs about women, family life, children, etc. This is a key concept in this course, and you need to be able to talk about what life was like, and how it changed or didn’t change.
4. When taking notes on a major event, be sure to note the causes and the effects of the event.

Key Terms: Incorporate these terms into your notes. Include the who, what, where, when, why, and significance for each term.

- Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*
- condottieri
- Cosimo de Medici
- Isabella d'Este
- Peace of Lodi
- 1527 sack of Rome
- Machiavelli's *The Prince*
- humanism, secularism, individualism
- civic humanism
- Petrarch
- Lorenzo Valla
- Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*
- liberal studies
- Gutenberg's printing press
- Masaccio
- Lorenzo the Magnificent
- Botticelli
- Donatello
- Brunelleschi's dome
- Leonardo da Vinci
- Raphael
- Michelangelo
- Northern Renaissance
- Jan van Eyck
- Albrecht Dürer
- New Monarchs
- the Habsburgs
- Constantinople and 1453
- John Wyclif and John Hus
- nepotism

II. *The Prince* - There may be a graded discussion within the first couple of weeks of class.

Machiavelli's *The Prince* is a major text in Western Civilization. I have assigned several chapters linked below in part (A). You should answer the questions in part (B) BY HAND in your own words. Below is an introduction¹ to *The Prince* to help you with this difficult but fascinating book:

"Readers have differed sharply in their assessments of *The Prince*, as well as the character of its author, Niccolò Machiavelli, since the book's publication in 1532. In his own time, Machiavelli was known as the author of histories, poems, and plays (including a widely produced popular comedy). Highly respected as a statesman, he represented Florence on foreign missions and wrote reports admired for their style and substance. But the Catholic Church censured Machiavelli for his criticism of Christianity and for the tone and content of the political counsel he offered, especially in *The Prince*. By the seventeenth century, the name Machiavelli had become synonymous with diabolical cunning, a meaning that it still carries today. Modern readers exhibit the same ambivalence about Machiavelli himself, alternately recognizing him as a precursor of the discipline of political science and recoiling from the ruthless principles he frequently articulates. Both views of Machiavelli, as innovative modernist and cynical politician, have their origins in *The Prince*.

"Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* in 1513, just after he was forced to leave Florence as a political exile. Dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, the book is Machiavelli's advice to the current ruler of Florence on how to stay in power. It was also his effort, though unsuccessful, to gain an advisory post in the

¹ Introduction to *The Prince* by Anthony Grafton from the Penguin Classics version (2003)

Medici government. *The Prince* was not published until five years after Machiavelli's death. Leaders as diverse as Oliver Cromwell, Frederick the Great, Louis XIV, Napoleon I, Otto von Bismarck, and John F. Kennedy have read, contemplated, and debated Machiavelli's ideas.

"Machiavelli's treatise makes a clear break from the Western tradition of political philosophy that preceded him. Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, the thinkers of this tradition were concerned with issues of justice and human happiness, and with the constitution of the ideal state. Until its final chapter, *The Prince* is a shockingly direct how-to manual for rulers who aim either to establish and retain control of a new state or to seize and control an existing one. Rather than basing his advice on ethical or philosophical principles, Machiavelli founds his political program on real-life examples. When explaining what a prince should or should not do in pursuit of his ambitions, Machiavelli cites the actions of well-known historical and contemporary leaders, both successful and unsuccessful. Throughout *The Prince*, Machiavelli explicitly aims to give an unsentimental analysis of actual human behavior and the uses of power. 'I have thought it proper,' Machiavelli writes of a prince's conduct toward his subjects, 'to represent things as they are in a real truth, rather than as they are imagined' (p. 49).

"The accuracy of Machiavelli's view of human nature and the social world is debatable. Is Machiavelli simply being clear-sighted and objective, or is he providing spurious justifications for the worst impulses of those who seek power? In *The Prince*, the results of actions are what matter. Murder, the incitement of quarrels among citizens, the purchase of temporary loyalties, and betrayal: all are permissible—indeed, recommended—if they advance the prince's goal of attaining and securing power. In Machiavelli's view, the preservation of the state warrants such actions, since the state is necessary to ensure security, peace, and order for the people. He sets the ambitions of the prince and the need of the people for order side by side, seeing the two as complementary. Perhaps they are, or perhaps this equation is merely a self-serving way for those who crave power to defend injustices. To what extent the means that Machiavelli promotes in *The Prince* are justified by the ends, and whether the means actually bring about the ends, remain open questions.

"Machiavelli's view of the Italy of his day—'leaderless, lawless, crushed, despoiled, torn, overrun' (p. 83)—underwrites the advice he gives in *The Prince*. It also leads him to end his treatise with an 'Exhortation to liberate Italy from the barbarians.' Machiavelli calls for 'a new prince...to introduce a new order' (p. 82) that would bring unity and stability to the often warring city-states of the Italian peninsula. In this portion of *The Prince* and in some of his other writings, Machiavelli appears more idealistic and friendly toward a form of government that would give citizens a say. In his *Discourses*, Machiavelli portrays the ideal government as a republic that allows groups with differing opinions to speak openly.

"Machiavelli thus sets the stage for an enduring discussion among his readers. Is he best understood as a seeker of unity and peace, concerned to make his advice practical and effective? Is he an opportunist offering aid and comfort to would-be tyrants? Do the moral and political goals he outlines in the final chapter of *The Prince* justify the actions he advocates in the preceding chapters? These questions seem destined to remain with us as long as Machiavelli's book continues to occupy a central place in modern political thought."

(A) Assigned readings from *The Prince*:

[Dedication](#)
[Chapter 14](#)
[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)
[Chapter 17](#)
[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

(B) Questions: After reading and reflecting on *The Prince*, answer the following questions BY HAND in complete sentences. Answers should be well organized and utilize evidence from the source.

1. To whom did Machiavelli dedicate *The Prince*? Why? (*see* Dedication)
2. How do you think Machiavelli viewed human nature? Which chapters did you find examples to support your answer? Do you agree with his opinions of human nature?
3. Does Machiavelli argue that it is better for a prince to be loved or feared? Why?
4. In the chapter “Concerning The Way In Which Princes Should Keep Faith”, Machiavelli advises that a ruler ought to be both the lion and the fox. What exactly does Machiavelli mean by this advice? How does it fit into the argument of this chapter, and how does it influence your overall understanding of *The Prince*?
5. Does Machiavelli believe that moral and ethical values have a role to play in the conduct of a prince? Explain.
6. What is Machiavelli’s view of religion? Does religion serve any purpose according to Machiavelli?
7. Explain how these chapters from *The Prince* help you understand politics in Machiavelli’s time.
8. Are the ideas from *The Prince* applicable to politics in our own society today? Why or why not?

III. Comparing the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

Our class begins with the Renaissance. However, it is helpful to know a little bit about the period that precedes it called the Middle Ages (or Medieval history). In order to “contextualize” the Renaissance with some information about the Middle Ages, please read the article linked [here](#). I know, I know - it is an article about the Renaissance festival in Ohio! I believe it does the trick.

You should be able to identify some similarities and differences between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in areas of fashion, religion, and art when you show up for class on Day 1.

IV. Map of Europe

I have included a [link](#) for a blank Map of Europe around 1500. Please print and complete the map using whatever means you find helpful. You should label the following and be prepared to turn in your completed map on Day 1. You should include the following on your map:

Empires (depict with thickly drawn borders)

- Holy Roman Empire
- Ottoman Empire

Countries/States:

- Austria
- Bohemia
- Denmark
- England
- France
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Muscovy
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Prussia
- Scotland
- Spain
- Sweden

Italian City-States

- Republic of Florence
- Republic of Genoa
- Duchy of Milan
- Kingdom of Naples
- Papal States
- Republic of Venice

Cities:

- Amsterdam
- Brussels
- Florence
- Geneva
- Genoa
- London
- Madrid
- Moscow
- Nantes
- Naples
- Paris
- Prague
- Rome
- Trent
- Vienna
- Wittenberg
- Worms

Mountain Ranges:

- The Alps
- The Pyrenees

Bodies of Water

- Atlantic Ocean
- Adriatic Sea
- Aegean Sea
- Baltic Sea
- Black Sea
- Mediterranean Sea