

Introduction Letter
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Hello – I'm Pete Rothenhoefer, your professor and guide for this section of ELI's Western Civilization I course. HIS101 is a well-designed experience, and I look forward to working through the materials with you. The best way to contact me is using your student email.

My academic background includes a BA in history from Gettysburg College and a PhD in American Studies from The George Washington University. Doctoral programs are divided into specialties, and mine included material culture studies, museum administration, folk life studies, and 17th/18th century Anglo-American architecture and history.

Professionally, I taught ancient through modern history as well as English for 30 years in the Frederick County (MD) system, along with sections of US History at GWU. Recently I've been teaching history and English for Frederick Community College. I love teaching – as a profession it simply improves with time – and am happy to be part of NVCC's ELI program.

I'm a native of Frederick, MD and absorbed history by osmosis. Schools and parents shuttled us to museums, galleries, battlefields, and even graveyards. When you grow up in an area where everything is associated with personal narratives, you soon learn to analyze your surroundings from genealogical and cultural as well as historical perspectives. Reading history for pleasure and visiting historic sites evolved into concentrating on the field in college, taking the "historical grand tour," then practicing the discipline as a public historian: teaching, reenacting, serving as a board member for a museum, identifying and awarding plaques to historic buildings, and eventually returning to teach in community colleges.

Each of you will bring your own narratives and perspectives to our course. NVCC has a wonderfully diverse student body. Perhaps some of you will have cultural associations with the material we study and will share your unique points of view with us. Instead of approaching the material strictly from an antiquarian's posture ("OK, *Gilgamesh* read, check that off the list"), it would be interesting to read a post discussing *Gilgamesh* as taught and understood by someone familiar with modern Iraqi culture. But regardless of your background, each of us will bring valuable academic insights to the goal of understanding our common global past ("So this is what *Gilgamesh* meant then, and this explains its contemporary importance"). An online course is still a community of scholars – prepare to share.

A few recommendations for getting the most out of this course:

- Before you get started, read the entire course outline and familiarize yourself with the format.
- List the course deadlines on your daily calendar so you know when assignments are due.
- Stay current with the weekly readings and assignments.
- Keep copies of all coursework, graded assignments, and emails that you send.
- Contact the instructor if you anticipate difficulties meeting the requirements or the deadlines.
- Make frequent use of the materials in [Charlie's History Writing Center](#). This site contains materials Dr. Evans graciously makes available not only to his own students but also to you and me.
- Refer to the course schedule often.

Thanks for signing up for HIS101. I look forward to working with you.

Pete Rothenhoefer