

**Summer Assignment**  
**2021**

Modern European History begins with the Renaissance. Yet it is very difficult to fully appreciate the Renaissance without a deep understanding of 14<sup>th</sup> medieval Europe. Indeed Europe as we know it took shape in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, allowing it to excel in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is also helpful to understand current Europe as a lens through which to look back on how current Europe came to be. Finally, no history of Europe is complete without an in depth look at the catastrophe of WWII, which became the turning point towards the Europe we see now.

Therefore, this summer I would like you to choose one of the significant periods of European history in the hopes that we can each, within our own sphere, have a better context from which to begin our course.

**Option # 1: Read PART ONE of: **A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century by Barbara W. Tuchman****

*In "A Distant Mirror, a historical narrative, Barbara Tuchman writes of the cataclysmic 14th century, when the energies of medieval Europe were devoted to fighting internecine wars and warding off the plague. Some medieval thinkers viewed these disasters as divine punishment for mortal wrongs; others, more practically, viewed them as opportunities to accumulate wealth and power. One of the latter, whose life informs much of Tuchman's book, was the French nobleman Enguerrand de Coucy, who enjoyed the opulence and elegance of the courtly tradition while ruthlessly exploiting the peasants under his thrall. Tuchman looks into such events as the Hundred Years War, the collapse of the medieval church, and the rise of various heresies, pogroms, and other events that caused medieval Europeans to wonder what they had done to deserve such horrors.*

**Option #2 The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World by Anu Bradford**

*Columbia Law professor Anu Bradford argues the opposite in her important new book The Brussels Effect: the EU remains an influential superpower that shapes the world in its image. By promulgating regulations that shape the international business environment, elevating standards worldwide, and leading to a notable Europeanization of many important aspects of global commerce, the EU has managed to shape policy in areas such as data privacy, consumer health and safety, environmental protection, antitrust, and online hate speech. And in contrast to how superpowers wield their global influence, the Brussels Effect - a phrase first coined by Bradford in 2012- absolves the EU from playing a direct role in imposing standards, as market forces alone are often sufficient as multinational companies voluntarily extend the EU rule to govern their global operations.*

**Option #3 The Long Road Home by Ben Shephard**

*At the end of World War II, long before an Allied victory was assured and before the scope of the atrocities orchestrated by Hitler would come into focus or even assume the name of the Holocaust, Allied forces had begun to prepare for its aftermath. Taking cues from the end of the First World War, planners had begun the futile task of preparing themselves for a civilian health crisis that, due in large part to advances in medical science, would never come. The problem that emerged was not widespread disease among Europe's population, as anticipated, but massive displacement among those who had been uprooted from home and country during the war.*

**BE PREPARED TO LEAD A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE BOOK YOU READ.** Annotate your book. The annotations will serve as the grade for reading the book. We will have book discussions at the end of the first week of school. Good luck students!! I look forward to seeing you all!