Spring 2-1-2003

LS 152L.01: Introduction to the Humanities

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"Classics are certain texts, events, images, rituals, symbols and persons (in which we acknowledge) a disclosure of a reality we cannot but name truth...some disclosure of reality in a moment of 'recognition' which surprises, provokes, challenges, shocks, and eventually transforms us; an experience that upsets conventional opinions and expands the sense of the possible; indeed a realized experience of that which is essential, that which endures - the presence of classics in every culture is undeniable. Their memory haunts us. Their actual effects in our lives endure and await ever new appropriations, constantly new interpretations."

David Tracy

Course Syllabus

I. Individual and Cosmos in the Late Middle Ages (14c)
   Week of:
   1/27 Introduction. Dante's Divine Comedy
      Inferno - The Hell Descent and Damnation
   2/3 Purgatorio - The Ascent of the Mountain and Purification
      Paradiso - The Love that Moves the Sun and Beatitude
   Plenary Lecture 1/30 - Introduction/Medieval Culture - Dietrich
   Plenary 2/6 - Dante - Drake

II. The Early Italian Renaissance and the Wonder of the Human (15c)
   2/10 Christian Humanism and Renaissance Platonism in Petrarch and Ficino
      Pico della Mirandola's "On the Dignity of Man"
   Plenary 2/13 - Italian Renaissance Art & Culture - Chacon
   2/14 Last day to add/drop by Cyberbear

III. Folly and Freedom – Catholic Reform and the Protestant Reformation (16c)
   2/17 Washington/Lincoln Holiday - no class
   2/19 Satire and Salvation in Erasmus
      Martin Luther, "On Christian Liberty"
   Plenary 2/20 - Reformations of Religion and Society - Farr
   2/24 Satire, Social Criticism, and Reform in More's Utopia
   Plenary 2/27 - Early Modern Political Thought in Utopia - Dietrich
IV. The Exploration of the Self in the Northern Renaissance (16c/17c)
3/3 Montaigne’s ‘Book of Myself’ and Shakespeare’s Hamlet
Plenary 3/6 – Shakespeare - Hunt
3/10 An Anatomy of Melancholy?: Action, Character and Criticism
(Excursus: Heroism, Romance and Folly in Cervantes)
3/10 Drop/add deadline

V. The Scientific Revolution and the Birth of Modern Philosophy (17c)
Plenary 3/13 – Descartes and Modern Philosophy - Perrin
3/17 Science, Method and the Reasons of the Heart – Bacon,
Descartes’ Discourse on Method and Pascal
Plenary 3/20 – The Enlightenment - Borgmann
3/21 Midterm Exam
3/24 Spring Break

VI. The Poetry and Art of Meditation in the Age of the Baroque (17c)
3/31 The Erotic and the Sacred in Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, and Marvell
Plenary 4/3 – Music: Baroque, Classical, Romantic - Glass

VII. The Age of the Enlightenment (18c)
4/7 The Proper Study of Mankind - Pope, Hume, Kant
Plenary 4/10 – Romantic Literature – Vanita

VIII. From Neoclassicism to Romanticism (18c/19c)
4/14 Goethe’s Faust One - The Myth of the Magus
Faust Two – From Mephistopheles to the Eternal Feminine
The Visionary Universe of William Blake

IX. Revolution and Realism (19c)
Plenary 4/17 – Marx and the Age of Revolution - Perrin
4/21 Marx, Materialism and Revolutionary Practice
Plenary 4/24 – The Nineteenth Century Novel - Glendening
4/28 Dostoevsky’s “The Grand Inquisitor” and related chapters from The Brothers Karamazov - Freedom and Totalitarianism

X. Democracy and Modernism (19c/20c)
Plenary 5/1 – The American Experience: Promise and Reality - Mayer
5/5 Democracy in America: Deism, Federalism, and Self-Reliance in Franklin,
Madison, and Emerson
Plenary 5/8 – Darwin, Freud, and Modern Intellectual History - Drake
5/9 The Diagnosis of Dr. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents
Required Reading

Dante, *The Portable Dante*, Viking (Musa trans.)
Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Library of Liberal Arts
Goethe, *Faust Part One*, Oxford World’s Classics
______, *Faust Part Two*, Oxford World’s Classics
Dostoevsky, *The Grand Inquisitor* et alia from *The Brothers Karamazov*, Hackett
Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Norton
LS 152 ERES (http://eres.lib.umt.edu - password “Erasmus”)

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and participation are crucial in a class such as ours. (10% of grade.) It is not possible to engage in a deep conversation with these books and with each other if you miss class. Therefore, three absences (or persistent tardiness) will lower your grade one letter grade. Six absences will result in failure of the course.
2. There will be brief in-class written responses to the plenary lectures during the Friday class following the lecture. (10%) No make-ups.
3. You are expected to complete the assigned reading in a timely fashion. Weekly quizzes may be needed to encourage you in this regard.
4. Thematic essays (4-5 pages) in response to two of the major readings (e.g., Dante, More or Shakespeare; Goethe, Dostoevsky or Freud) will be due at the end of Spring break and at the end of the term, respectively. Topics to be discussed. (20% each.) No late papers. Evidence of plagiarism will result in failure of the course. (Special materials on writing will be forthcoming.)
5. There will be a midterm exam on Friday, March 21 and a final exam on Thursday, May 15, 10-12. (20% each.)

For those who elect the P/NP option, the equivalent of a “C” is necessary for a “Pass”.

“A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say. A classic is something that tends to relegate the concerns of the moment to the status of background noise, but at the same time this background noise is something we cannot do without. (Conversely) A classic is something that persists as a background noise even when the most incompatible momentary concerns are in control of the situation.”  

*Italo Calvino*