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LS 152L.01: Introduction to the Humanities

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Introduction to the Humanities

Liberal Studies 152 – 01, Spring 2007

MWF 9:10-10:00 a.m.

LA 105

CRN: 32549

Dr. Mark Hanson

LA 152, 243-6844

Office Hours: Tu-Th 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.;

Mon. 10:10 – 11:00, and by appointment

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Course Structure and Objectives

This course is designed to introduce the student to the study of the humanities through a focus on selective texts from the Medieval to the Modern periods that have shaped Western civilization. We will explore the formation and transformation of some Western worldviews and themes, and reflect on how they have shaped and influenced society and culture today. The emphases of the course are engaging in close readings of the primary texts, discussing, and writing about those texts.

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

“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 disclosures 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

Required Texts

Dante, *The Portable Dante* (Penguin: Musa trans.) ISBN: 0-14-023114-5

More, *Utopia* (Penguin) ISBN: 0-140-44910-8

Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (Library of Liberal Arts) ISBN: 0-02-367160-2

Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Signet) ISBN: 0-451-52692-9

Voltaire, *Candide* (Penguin) ISBN: 0-14-044004-6

Blake, *Blake's Selected Poems* (Dover Thrift Edition) ISBN: 0-486-28517-0

Wordsworth, *Favorite Poems* (Dover Thrift Edition) ISBN: 0-486-27073-4

Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (Vintage ed; trans. Pevear & Volokhonsky) ISBN: 0-679-73450-3

ERES readings on Electronic Reserve and Traditional Reserve in Mansfield Library

Requirements

- Regular class attendance and participation that demonstrates a grasp of the reading assignments
- Regular attendance at the weekly plenary lecture
- Two short written essays in response to the readings and plenary lectures
- A longer essay on a topic of your choice in response to the texts with an option to revise
- Written midterm and final exams

Assignments and Classes

Introduction

Jan. 22 Introduction: Laying out themes and structure of the course

Individual and Cosmos in the Late Middle Ages (14th century)

Jan. 24	Dante's <i>Divine Comedy: Inferno</i>	Cantos I-V, X-XI
Jan. 25	Plenary Lecture: "Intro. to Medieval Art & Culture," Paul Dietrich	
Jan. 26	Dante's <i>Divine Comedy: Inferno</i>	Cantos XIII-XVI, XVIII-XIX, XXI-XXII
Jan. 29	Dante's <i>Divine Comedy: Inferno</i>	Cantos XXVI-XXVIII, XXXII-XXXIV
Jan. 31	Dante's <i>Divine Comedy: Purgatorio</i>	Cantos I-IV, VI, XVII-XIX
Feb. 1	Plenary Lecture: "Dante and His Times," Richard Drake	
Feb. 2	Dante's <i>Divine Comedy: Purgatorio</i>	Cantos XXV-XXXIII
Feb. 5	Dante's <i>Divine Comedy: Paradiso</i>	Cantos I-V, VII, X-XII, XIX-XXI
Feb. 7	Dante's <i>Divine Comedy: Paradiso</i>	Cantos XXIII-XXVI, XXIX-XXXIII

First Short Essay Due

Early Renaissance, Reform, and Reformation (15th – 16th centuries)

Feb. 8	Plenary Lecture: "Italian Renaissance Art," Raphael Chacon	
Feb. 9	Christine de Pisan: Selections from "The Book of the City of Ladies" (ERES) Pico: "Oration on the Dignity of Man" (ERES)	
Feb. 12	Erasmus: Selections from "Paraclesis" (ERES) Martin Luther: "The Freedom of a Christian" (ERES)	
Feb. 14	Thomas More: <i>Utopia</i>	Book I (pp. 7-47)
Feb. 15	Plenary Lecture: "Renaissance Humanism," Paul Dietrich	
Feb. 16	Thomas More: <i>Utopia</i>	Book II (pp. 49-82)
Feb. 19	No Class: President's Day	
Feb. 21	Thomas More: <i>Utopia</i>	Book II (pp. 83-113)

Feb. 22 Plenary Lecture "Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation," John Eglin

Exploration of the Self in the Northern Renaissance (16th – 17th centuries)

Feb. 23 Montaigne: Intro. "To the Reader, "Of Idleness, "Of Thumbs" (ERES)

Feb. 26 Montaigne: "Of Giving the Lie," "Of Cannibals," "On Experience" (ERES)
Second Short Essay Due

Feb. 28 Shakespeare: *Hamlet* Introduction, Acts I-II (pp. 3-60)

March 1 Plenary Lecture: "Shakespeare and 'Hamlet,'" John Hunt

March 2 Shakespeare: *Hamlet* Acts III-IV (pp. 61-118)

March 5 Shakespeare: *Hamlet* Act V (pp. 119-144)

March 7 Shakespeare: *Hamlet* Review

The Scientific Revolution and the Age of Enlightenment (17th – 18th centuries)

March 8 Plenary Lecture: "Descartes and Modern Philosophy," David Sherman

March 9 Descartes: *Discourse on Method* Intro, Parts One and Two

March 12 Descartes: *Discourse on Method* Parts Three and Four

March 14 Descartes: *Discourse on Method* Parts Five and Six

March 15 Plenary Lecture: "The Art of the Baroque," Valerie Hedquist

March 16 No class

March 19 Kant: "What is Enlightenment?" Swift: "A Modest Proposal" (ERES)

March 21 **Mid-term Exam**

March 22 Plenary Lecture: "Bach, Beethoven & the Boys," Fern Glass

March 23 Wollstonecraft: "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" (ERES)

March 26-30 No Class: Spring Break

Revolution, Romanticism, Realism, Modernism (18th – 19th centuries)

April 2 Voltaire: *Candide* Chapters I-XV

April 4	Voltaire: <i>Candide</i>	Chapters XV-XXX
April 5	Plenary Lecture: "The Enlightenment," John Eglin	
April 6	Wordsworth: "Lines" (pp. 21-25), "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (pp. 43-44); "The World is Too Much with Us; Late and Soon" (p. 53); "Ode" (pp. 54-60) Blake: Selected Poems (TBA) Longer Essay Due	
April 9	Dostoevsky: <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Part One (pp. 1-86)
April 11	Dostoevsky: <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Part Two: I-III (pp. 87-131)
April 12	Plenary Lecture: "Romanticism"	
April 13	Dostoevsky: <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Part Two: IV-VII (pp. 131-193)
April 16	Dostoevsky: <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Part Three (pp. 195-278)
April 18	Dostoevsky: <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Part Four (pp. 279-358)
April 19	Plenary Lecture: "The Nineteenth Century Novel"	
April 20	Dostoevsky: <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Part Five (pp. 359-436)
April 23	Dostoevsky: <i>Crime and Punishment</i> Optional Longer Essay Revision Due	Part Six (pp. 437-531)
April 25	Dostoevsky: <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Epilogue (pp. 533-551)
April 26	Plenary Lecture: "Modern Political Thought," Richard Drake	
April 27	Dostoevsky: <i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Review

Revolution and the Modern World (19th – 20th centuries)

April 30	"Declaration of Independence," Madison: "Federalist Papers #10 (ERES)
May 2	Marx: "Theses on Feuerbach," "Alienated Labor" (ERES)
May 4	Arendt: "On the Nature of Totalitarianism" (ERES)

Final Exam Period: Monday, May 7, 10:10 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

Grading Policy

Two short essays: 10 percent (25 pts. each)
 Longer essay plus revision: 30 percent (150 pts.)
 Midterm exam: 20 percent (100 pts.)
 Final exam: 30 percent (150 pts.)
 Participation: 10 percent (50 pts.)

Grades given reflect the following criteria of judgment and will be recorded using pluses and minuses:

- F: Failure to meet minimum requirements
- D: Unsatisfactory, but some effort to meet minimum requirements
- C: Satisfactory; meet minimum requirements of assignment but not much more
- B: Good to Very Good: thoughtful reflection, good analysis, clear writing style
- A: Excellent depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, and writing style;
 demonstrate creativity and mature analytical skills in going beyond the primary requirements of the assignment

Papers: Papers are due in class on or before the date listed in the syllabus. Unless you have made a prior agreement with me, I will take off one grade level (e.g., A becomes A-) for each class day an assignment is late. Papers with an undue number of errors of punctuation, spelling, or grammar will be returned ungraded for correction and marked down half a letter grade. Written work will be evaluated in terms of the strength and accuracy of your exposition of the texts, your depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, clarity of writing, and ability to address issues raised in the text and in class on the topic at hand.

Exams: Exams must be taken at the scheduled time unless prior permission has been obtained from me for an alternate time. The final exam may only be rescheduled if you have two other exams scheduled for the same day. Failure to take the exam at the scheduled time will result in no credit given for the exam with no make-up possibility.

Participation: Regular attendance and participation in the class and at the weekly plenary lecture is expected. Participation also means having read assigned materials prior to class time and being ready and willing to participate in discussions, offer perspectives, and answer questions. More than five (5) absences will result in one grade reduction. More than ten (10) absences will result in a failing course grade. Late arrivals in class may count as an absence. (Note: If you have a valid reason for missing several classes, such as illness or other conflicting commitments, you still must speak with me).

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism: All work submitted is expected to be the student's own. Any acts of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course and may result in further academic punishment. If you have any doubts about definitions of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please review the relevant sections of the University Catalog.

Description of Assignments

1. Short Essays: Two short, two-to-three-page essays are required. Each should be a critical response to a selection from the readings. After reading the text, write (1) three to four paragraphs that summarize and explain the main points of the reading and (2) three to four paragraphs giving your thoughtful response and discussion of the reading. The main objective is for you to identify and wrestle with a tough question or theme that the reading raises for you and attempt to offer your perspective on that issue. I will distribute a grade criteria sheet in class prior to the due dates.
2. Longer Essay: This 5-6-page, typed essay is an opportunity for you to consider a theme, key term, or other consideration(s) from the texts we read up to the due date for the paper. Use the text to support a well-constructed argument for the theme. We will discuss paper topics in class prior to the due date of **April 6**. You also will have the option to revise and resubmit this essay, due **April 23**.
3. Midterm Exam: will cover material from the plenary lectures, assigned readings, and class discussions. The format will likely be mixed, including multiple choice, short-answer essays, and/or longer essay questions. **Wednesday, March 21**.
4. Final Exam: The final will cover material from the second part of the semester and will ask you to integrate your learning from across the semester. I will likely have the same format as the midterm exam, but the final exam will be longer. **Monday, May 7, 10:10 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.**
5. Plenary Lectures are given at 11:10 am - 12:00 pm in ULH (Urey Lecture Hall) and repeated at 7:10-8:00 pm in SS (Social Sciences) 352. You must attend one of these weekly lectures each week.

Credit/No Credit Grade option: A minimum grade average of D- is required for a CR grade in the CR/NC Grade option.

Incomplete Grade: Please see the criteria that must be met for an Incomplete in the University Catalog.