

1-2014

LSH 152L.02: Introduction to the Humanities - Medieval to Modern

Mark J. Hanson

University of Montana - Missoula, mark.hanson@umontana.edu

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Introduction to the Humanities

Liberal Studies 152 – 02, 03; Spring 2014

MWF 12:10- 1:00 (02); 1:10-2:00 (03)

GBB L04 (02); FA 302 (03)

CRN: 31778 (02); 31847 (03)

Dr. Mark Hanson

Office: LA 152, 243-6844

Office Hours: M 2:10 – 3:00; TTh 2:10 – 3:30
and by appt.

e-mail: mark.hanson@umontana.edu

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

Course Structure, Objectives, Learning Outcomes

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 our ideas about what it means to be human today. The emphases of the course are engaging in close readings of the primary texts, discussing, and writing about texts.

Course Objectives

- Become familiar with the study of the humanities
- Read a variety of classic texts in the humanities from the late Middle Ages through the Modern period and use these texts to learn and consider their content and central themes, learn major developments in the history of the Western humanities, and develop skills in critical reflection and writing.

Learning Outcomes for Writing Courses

- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate use of English language

Required Texts

Dante, *The Portable Dante* (Penguin: Musa trans.)

More, *Utopia* (Penguin)

Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (Library of Liberal Arts)

Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Signet)

Voltaire, *Candide* (Penguin)

The Mentor Book of Major British Poets (Mentor Books)

Tolstoy, *Death of Ivan Ilych*

Mill, *On Liberty*

ERES readings on Electronic Reserve and Traditional Reserve in Mansfield Library

Course Schedule and Assignments

Introduction

Jan. 27 Introduction: Laying out themes and structure of the course

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

Jan. 29 Background to Dante's *Divine Comedy*

Jan. 30 Plenary Lecture: "Introduction—Medieval and Modern," Stewart Justman

Jan. 31 Dante's *Divine Comedy: Inferno* Cantos I-V, X-XI

Feb. 3 Dante's *Divine Comedy: Inferno* Cantos XIII-XVI, XVIII-XIX, XXI-XXII

Feb. 5 Dante's *Divine Comedy: Inferno* Cantos XXVI-XXVIII, XXXII-XXXIV

Feb. 6 Plenary Lecture: "Dante's *Commedia*," Paul Dietrich

Feb. 7 Dante's *Divine Comedy: Purgatorio* Cantos I-IV, VI, XVII-XIX

Feb. 10 Dante's *Divine Comedy: Purgatorio* Cantos XXV-XXXIII

Feb. 12 Dante's *Divine Comedy: Paradiso* Cantos I-V, VII, X-XII, XIX-XXI

Feb. 13 Plenary Lecture: "Renaissance Humanism," Paul Dietrich

Feb. 14 Dante's *Divine Comedy: Paradiso* Cantos XXIII-XXVI, XXIX-XXXIII

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

Feb. 17 No Class: Presidents' Day

Feb. 19 Christine de Pisan: Excerpts (ERES Justman)
Pico: "Oration on the Dignity of Man" (ERES Justman)

Feb. 20 Plenary Lecture: "The Reformation," John Eglin

Feb. 21 Erasmus: Selections from "Paraclesis" (ERES Justman)
Martin Luther: "The Freedom of a Christian" (ERES Justman)

Feb. 24 Thomas More: *Utopia* Book I (pp. 7-47)

Feb. 26 Thomas More: *Utopia* Book II (pp. 49-82)

Feb. 27 Plenary Lecture Video: *Return of Martin Guerre* (in part)

March 3	Montaigne: Intro. "To the Reader," "Of Idleness," "Of Thumbs," "Of Giving the Lie," "Of Cannibals"
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March 17 **Mid-term Exam**

April 9 Voltaire: *Candide* Chapters XVI-XXX

Revolution and Romanticism (18th – 19th centuries)

- April 10 Plenary Lecture: “The French Revolution,” Linda Frey Plenary Lecture:
- April 11 Wordsworth: “Tintern Abbey” (pp. 74-77), “Daffodils” (p. 53)
- April 14 Wordsworth: “The World is Too Much with Us; Late and Soon” (p. 68); “Ode” (pp. 69-74); Blake?
- April 16 Mill: *On Liberty*, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-14)
- April 17 “Romanticism” Ruth Vanita
- April 18 Mill: *On Liberty*, Chapter 2 (pp. 15-52)
- April 21 Mill: *On Liberty*, Chapter 3 (pp. 53- 71)
- April 23 Mill: *On Liberty*, Chapters 4-5 (pp. 72-113)
- April 24 Plenary Lecture: “Tolstoy and Dostoevsky,” Stewart Justman
- April 25 Tolstoy: *Death of Ivan Ilych*, chs. 1-6
- April 28 Tolstoy: *Death of Ivan Ilych*, chs. 7-12
- April 30 Marx: “Theses on Feuerbach,” “Alienated Labor”
- May 1 Plenary Lecture: “Russian Revolution,” Robert Greene

The Modern and Post-Modern World (19th – 21st centuries)

- May 2 Arendt: “On the Nature of Totalitarianism” (skim parts I and II, read III)
- May 5 Our Post-Modern World (Reading TBA)
- May 7 “Into the Wild,” a film discussion
- May 8 Plenary Lecture: “The Totalitarian Specter,” Michael Mayer
- May 9 Conclusion; Course Evaluation

Final Exams: **Section 02: Tuesday, May 13, 10:10 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.**
 Section 03: Wednesday, May 14, 3:20 – 5:20 p.m.

Requirements

- Written responses (posted online or submitted in class) (100 pts)

- Formal essay first draft (10 pts.)
- Formal essay final version (20 pts.)
- Midterm exam: 50 pts.
- Final exam: 70 pts.

Grading Guidelines

Written Responses: Regular written responses are due by class time on the date posted. For all 10-point responses, I will deduct two points for each day an assignment is late (unless you have made a prior agreement with me). Response papers are due at class time and should be about 300-350 words (at least one double-spaced page). Written work will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Thoughtfulness (8 pts.)
 - Answers the question(s) posed (2 pts.)
 - Reflects an effort to think about the meaning of the text at some depth (2 pts.)
 - Reference at least one passage within the text with a quotation (no need for a footnote unless otherwise instructed) (2 pts.)
 - Raises a question about the text (2 pts.)
- Writing mechanics and readability (2 pts.)

I will grade groups of responses, rather than individual responses, although you should feel free to ask for feedback on particular responses at any time.

These responses will be available to a small group within the class unless you request otherwise. You are free to read others' work and respond to them, but be sure to credit others if you draw on their ideas in your own response. Remember that responses posted online can be read by others (unless otherwise requested) and are appropriate only for discussions that would normally occur in the classroom. Please use email if you have specific questions or comments for me.

Formal Essay: Each student will write one three-page, typed essay on one of the topics proposed throughout the term (10 points). After receiving feedback, you will revise the paper and resubmit it for a final grade (20 points). First and second drafts will be penalized two points per day

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, except in the case of emergency and at my discretion.

Attendance and Participation: Four or Five absences will result in losing any benefit of the doubt on your final grade. Six absences may result in one half grade level reduction. Seven to nine absences will result in a full grade level reduction (e.g., A to B), and ten or more absences may result in a failing course grade (F). **Late arrivals in class may count as an absence.** (Note: If you have a valid reason for missing several classes, such as illness, disability or other conflicting commitments, you still must speak with the instructor. Documentation may be required.)

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism: All work submitted is expected to be the student's own. Any acts of plagiarism or academic misconduct 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 misconduct, please review relevant sections of the University Catalog or see me.

Students with Disabilities. In accordance with the University of Montana's mission to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, necessary accommodations for students with disabilities will be made whenever possible. If you require accommodations, please provide written information regarding your disability from the Disability Services as soon as possible so that accommodations can be made.

Description of Assignments

1. Written Responses: There are several short writing assignments in response to questions posted about the readings and lectures. They're designed to help build writing skills, as well as interpretive skill and effort.
2. Formal Essay: Each student will write one three-page, typed essay, which will be revised. I will post topic options throughout the term.
3. Midterm Exam: will cover material from the plenary lectures, assigned readings, and class discussions. The format will likely be mixed, including multiple choice, quotation identifications short-answer essays, and/or longer essay questions.
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. It will likely have the same format as the midterm exam, but the final exam will be longer, including a comprehensive essay question. **See above for schedule.**
5. Plenary Lectures are given at 11:10 am - 12:00 pm in NULH 101 (Urey North Underground Lecture Hall). You *must* attend this lecture each week.

Classroom Etiquette

- Please arrive on time and do not walk out on classes early or in the middle of discussion without prior permission. Doing otherwise is disrespectful.
- Give the class full attention: no side discussions, newspaper reading, crossword puzzles, or use of electronic devices. Anything other than full attention (including sleeping) will count as an absence.
- Cell Phones: Please turn off all cell phones prior to class unless you have informed me that you have a legitimate reason: for example, you are an EMT or a firefighter, parent of a young child, or are expecting an emergency call. If you are expecting a call, please keep the phone on the vibrate mode and step outside to take the call.
- Laptops: Laptops are permitted for note-taking only. Web surfing is not permitted.