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LSH 151L.80: Introduction to the Humanities - The Bible, Greeks and Romans - Honors

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LS 151.80L **Introduction to the Humanities(Honors)**

Paul A. Dietrich
Office: LA 150
Phone: 243-2805
Hours: MWF 11-12
& by appointment
4 credits

Fall, 2013
MWF 10:10-11:00
DHC 120
Th 11:10-12:00
(ULH)

An introduction to the Western Humanities through an investigation of selected texts from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, classical Greek civilization, the New Testament and early Christian literature. Topics to be considered include: conceptions of self, family, community, cosmos and the gods; ideas of virtue, wisdom, piety, justice, law, and the state; the nature of the good life, good and evil, and the meaning of suffering; the role of myth, symbol and ritual; conceptions of creation, time, and temporality; varieties of visionary experience and the poetics of change, conversion and metamorphosis; the language of love and desire; imagery of journey and pilgrimage; genres of classical and biblical literatures.

"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 Syllabus

Aug.26	Introduction
28,30,Sept.4	Creation and Covenant in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible: Genesis, Exodus
Sept.2	Labor Day Holiday
6,9,11,13	Law (Torah)and Prophets: Amos, Isaiah et al.
16,18,20	Wisdom (Writings): Love and Suffering in the Song of Songs, Psalms, Job
23,25,27,30	Greek Civilization and Homer's Epic
Oct.2,4,7	Separation, Initiation and Return in the Odyssey
9,11	Songs of War, Love and Honor in Greek Lyric: Archilochus, Sappho, and Pindar
14,16,18	The Birth of Tragedy: Greek Drama and Sophocles' Oedipus Cycle and Euripides' Medea and the Bacchae
21	Midterm Exam
23,25,28	Paideia and the School of Athens: Greek Philosophy and Plato's Dialogues
30,Nov.1	The New Covenant: Jesus in the Gospels (Luke)
4,6,8	Paul's Letter to the Romans

11	Veterans Day Holiday
13,15,18	Augustine's Confessions: The Poetics of Conversion
20,22,25	
Nov.27-29	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec.2,4,6	Augustine, Confessions. Time, Memory and Healing
9	Conclusion and Review
11	Final Exam - 8:00 - 10:00 (Tues.)

Required Reading

The New Oxford Annotated Bible (w/Apocrypha)(Coogan,ed.; Oxford)
Homer, The Odyssey (Fagles,tr.;Penguin)
Greek Lyric, (Miller,tr.;Hackett)
Sophocles, Three Tragedies (Oedipus Cycle)(Greene tr.;Chicago)
Euripides, Three Plays (Roche,tr.; Norton)
Plato, Five Dialogues (Grube tr.; Hackett)
St. Augustine, The Confessions (Boulding tr.; Vintage)

Course Requirements

1. Class meetings will be supplemented by weekly plenary lectures (attendance required). Written responses (1-2 pages) to selected lectures due Friday following lecture. (No late responses)
2. Essay (4-6 pages) responding to biblical materials due Sept. 27 on "What does it mean to be human in ancient Israel? How are understandings of the self (virtue, wisdom, piety) related to understandings of the family, the community, and the gods (justice, covenant, law)? A revised and enlarged version of your essay (6-8 pages) incorporating materials from classical Greek civilization will be due Nov.1. The final version of the essay including material from the New Testament and St. Augustine will be due Dec. 9 (8-10 pages). The final essay will thus compare and contrast the various answers to these questions from Genesis to the Confessions. No extensions on written assignments.
3. Prompt completion of assigned reading. Quizzes on readings as needed. Evidence of plagiarism results in failure of course.
4. Grades will be based on papers and exams; however, attendance and participation will be considered in the final grade.
5. Midterm Exam (Monday, October 19) and Final Exam (8-10,Fri., December 13).

"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

