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LS 195.80: Ways of Knowing

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LS 195 – Ways of Knowing

Professors Ron Perrin and Dan Spencer

Fall, 2002, Davidson Honors College, University of Montana

Tu Th 8:10-9:30 am; LA 337 (Perrin) and LA 304 (Spencer)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

What can we know, and how do we come to know what we think we know? This course will draw from Philosophy, Science, and Literature in exploring a variety of answers to these fundamental questions. The primary emphasis is not on *what* we know, but *how* we know what we believe we know. Thinkers in every age have grappled with the question of how we can know – the divine, the world, the self, society. In examining their positions, we will explore together the possibilities of integrating their diverse responses and engaging each response with the others. Through a combination of lectures, discussions, and written essays, students will be encouraged to trace and develop their own responses to the question of how we know through engagement with the authors and texts we examine.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Book of Job (trans. by Stephen Mitchell)

The Tempest by William Shakespeare (Pelican edition)

Civilization and Its Discontents by Sigmund Freud (The Standard Edition, Norton)

FAC PAC #1 and FAC PAC #2

ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASSES

* = Joint Session in LA 337

RP = Ron Perrin, DS = Dan Spencer, BP = Bob Pack, RQ = Rina Quarterone

FP = FAC PAC; # = Number of Reading in FAC PAC Table of Contents

<u>Class</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assigned Reading</u>
			I. Knowing God	
*9/3	TU	1	Introduction: Laying out themes and structure of the course	
9/3	TU		Lecture: Prof. Bob Pack, 7:00 pm: Genesis and the Big Bang (FP#1, 2&3)	
*9/5	TH	2	Setting the Stage: Knowing God in Genesis (DS)	Genesis 1-4 (FP#1, 1)

9/10	TU	3	Abraham and Isaac	Genesis 21-22 (FP#1, 5)
9/12	TU	4	Kierkegaard on Abraham and Isaac	Kierkegaard (FP#1, 6)
*9/17	TU	5	Job vs. John: The unknowable God vs. the knowable Christ (DS)	John 1, 8, 9 (FP#1, 4) Job: Ch. 1-14, 29-31, 38-42 (Mitchell)

Paper #1 due in class

*9/19	TH	6	William James on Mysticism (DS & RP)	James (FP#1, 7)
9/24	TU	7	Discussion of Mysticism	
*9/26	TH	8	Knowledge through Submission to God: Islam and the Qu'ran (DS)	Handout: Selections from the Qu'ran

II. Knowing the World

*10/1	TU	9	Rationalism vs. Empiricism: Introduction to Plato and Aristotle (RP)	Plato (FP#1, 8) Aristotle (FP#1, 9) Aristotle (FP#2)
10/3	TH	10	Discussion of Plato	Plato (FP#1, 8)
10/8	TU	11	Discussion of Aristotle	Aristotle (FP#1, 9) Aristotle (FP#2)
*10/10	TH	12	Modern Science and Human Origins: Introduction to Darwin (DS)	Darwin (FP#2)
10/15	TU	13	Discussion of Darwin	Darwin (FP#2)
*10/17	TH	14	Physics and the Philosophy of Science (DS & RP)	Ladyman (FP#2)
10/22	TU	15	Discussion of Philosophy of Science readings	Ladyman (FP#2)
*10/24	TH	16	Knowing Nature through Poetry: The Poems of Wordsworth and Frost (BP)	Wordsworth (FP#1, 12) Frost (FP#1, 13)

10/29 TU 17 Discussion of Wordsworth and Frost Wordsworth (FP#1, 12)
Frost (FP#1, 13)

Hand out instructions for Paper #2

III. Knowing the Self and Society

*10/31 TH 18 Knowing Society: A Materialist Approach Marx (FP#1, 14)
Introduction to Karl Marx (RP)

11/5 TU Election Day: No Class

11/7 TH 19 Discussion of Marx Marx readings (FP#2)

Paper #2 due in class

11/12 TU 20 Discussion of Marx Marx readings (FP#1&2)

*11/14 TH 21 Initial Discussion of Freud (DS) Freud (C&ID, ix-xxiii; 10-52)

*11/19 TU 22 Knowing the Self: the Psychoanalytic Approach (RP) Freud (C&ID, 53-112)

11/21 TU 23 Discussion of Freud Freud (C&ID, 10-112)

Hand out instructions for Paper #3

*11/26 TU 24 The Self, Society, and Art: Shakespeare: *The Tempest*
Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (BP)

11/28 TH Thanksgiving: No Class

12/3 TU 25 Discussion of *The Tempest*: Shakespeare: *The Tempest*

12/4 WE Lecture: Prof. George Price, 7 pm: Native American Ways of Knowing

12/5 TH 26 Discussion of Prof. Price Lecture

Paper #3 due in class

12/10 TU 27 Desire and Romance: Knowing the Other
Poems by Hardy, Frost, Robinson, and Keats

(FP#1, 15, 16)

12/12 TH 28 Wrap-Up

Final Exam period: Thu, Dec 19, 10:10 am -12:10 pm

Grading Criteria:

- Attendance and Active Participation: 15%
- Paper #1: 15%
- Papers #2 and #3: 20% each
- Take-Home Essay Final Exam: 30%

In assigning the final grade particular attention will be given to the following considerations from the University Catalog's description of the Davidson Honors College:

"Honors courses are limited in enrollment to 20-25 students and are conducted in a seminar format, emphasizing critical thinking, the development of written and oral communications skills, direct contact with the faculty, and the use of original texts..."

Description of Written Assignments

1. Paper #1: A 3-4 page, typed essay in response to the question, "What ways do I know reality, including knowing the divine, the [natural] world, society, and the self? What counts as authoritative sources of knowing, and why?" Due in class **Tuesday, September 17th**.
2. Paper #2: A 5 page, typed essay. Instructions for the essay will be distributed in class a week before the essay is due. Due in class **Thursday, November 7th**.
3. Paper #3: A 5 page, typed essay. Instructions for the essay will be distributed in class a week before the essay is due. Due in class **Thursday, December 5th**.
4. Take-Home Final Exam: An 8-10 page, typed essay exam. The exam will be designed to help you integrate the material from the entire semester. Questions will be distributed on the final day of class. Due during exam period, **Thursday, December 19th**.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity. Please review the University's plagiarism definition and policy on p. 22 of the catalog: *"Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion."* If you have any doubts about plagiarism and attribution of others' work, please consult your instructor.