HONORS 2101 (Section 3): Intellectual Tradition, Fall 2017 (HF Designation)

Required Texts


Course Description

The purpose of this course is to examine the origins and development of key ideas in human thought, including humans and their relations with God/the gods, nature and themselves; gender roles; the nature of evil; suffering and its causes; freedom and destiny; and ways to obtain knowledge. We will spend a lot of time inspecting poetics and the power of poetry. We will ask the “big” questions both in regard to the content of our reading as well as how such questions might play into contemporary life. Through reading, writing, and discussion of both Western and Eastern texts, we will enter the long-running conversation about these issues. In the process students will be introduced to works which have been considered the essential reading for educated persons and which will lay a foundation for future studies at the university. We will also explore how ancient texts resonate in our world today. Students will be required to develop critical thinking and written and oral communication skills. The schedule will also include exercises to help facilitate the creative processes that allow for self-exploration as a form of scholarship.

Course Objectives

In this course, students will
- encounter both Western and Eastern philosophies and texts
- practice self-expression and creative reading
- develop critical thinking skills
- learn to take intellectual risks
- compare ancient texts to contemporary literary productions in an effort to understand the bottomless discussion between
- develop basic college writing skills and forms of analysis
**Teaching and Learning Methods**

The course is discussion-based and depends on active student participation. Expect both written and oral in-class exercises. Group work is common. My teaching philosophy aims at the development of student research skills, collaboration, and valuing personal experience in an effort to support and encourage life-long learning.

**Course Policies and Procedures**

**Major Assignments**

**Summary/Response Paper, 3-4 pages (10pts)**
For this exercise, you will choose a reading we’ve discussed in class, summarize it, then respond to the text with what we’ll call “commentary.” The introduction should offer a general background as it leads to a thesis statement that is a product of your commentary section, which will be made up of two named categories that you will create. The body of the paper should include the summary and commentary. The conclusion, rather than merely summarizing what has already been stated in the body of essay, might address the significance of your points. **NO five paragraph essays.**

**Performance Art Interpretation and Critique, 4-5 pages (10pts)**
This assignment requires that you attend a live performance or art exhibit on our campus or in the city. Your job is to summarize the performance, then devise an interpretation of the art. You will finish the piece by offering a critique. When summarizing, remember to give enough detail of the object or performance to allow for an interpretation. When you interpret, you’re creating meaning. Make sure to use the art itself to support the interpretation. Finally, a critique is your idea of whether the art works or not. Imagine your audience to be generally educated adults who haven’t experienced the art or attended the performance.

**Contemporary Comparison Paper, 5-6 pages (15pts)**
The purpose of this assignment is for you to engage in the discussion between texts across the ages. I’m asking that you choose an ancient text that we’ve read in class and a modern text (1800—present) that we’ve read in class or a selection of your own. With each of these texts you’re required to offer an historical context, a summary, and an interpretation. The most important component is the discussion you create between the texts. How do they inform each other? Why does it matter now?

**Perspectives Paper, 5-6 pages, 20pts**
For your final paper I’d like you to take a single ancient work and argue how such a work can be interpreted through various lenses. A simple approach would be to consider the literature through various discourse communities within the university system. For instance, Plato’s *Symposium* could be looked at through a philosophical lens, a social science lens, a health science lens, and a
biological lens. Obviously, there many other options, such as gender-specific lenses, political lenses, religious and otherwise. Both the introduction and conclusion will be challenges that we’ll discuss in class.

Other assignments:

Group Performance, 5pts
Poetry presentation, 5pts
4 pop quizzes, 20pts (5pts each)
Class Participation/Creative Exercises, 15pts

Letter Grade Values
100-95 A
94-91 A-
90-88 B+
87-84 B
83-80 B-
79-77 C+
76-74 C
73-70 C-
69-67 D+
66-64 D
63-60 D-
59-00 E

Class participation and attendance is mandatory. You are allowed two unexcused absences. On every subsequent absence your grade will be lowered by a half point (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.).

Please note that all assignments are to be handed in on time. Late papers are very hard on me, and it’s not fair that some students turn their work in on time while others don’t.

Students are encouraged to bring personal computers to class, which are to be used for note taking or other course related purposes. Computers, cell phones, tablets and other electronic media may not be used for surfing the web, texting or other non-course related matters.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the quarter to discuss any necessary accommodations.
Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677 (COPS).

Plagiarism is using the work of someone else and calling it your own. In this class we will learn to paraphrase, or in the case where you do use someone else’s work directly, how to cite it. Plagiarism is illegal. If you are caught plagiarizing, you may fail the course and university action may be taken.

**Class Schedule**

Still to be Determined

University Information and Policies

1. The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

2. The University Writing Center is a free service available for all students of the University of Utah. It provides one-on-one assistance for all stages of the writing process, from generating ideas for topics, to improving analysis and clarity, to polishing finished drafts. The Center’s staff are trained to work with student writers from first semester freshmen through graduate school, and writers of all levels of ability are welcome. To schedule an appointment, call 587-9122 or stop by Marriott Library, Second Floor to schedule an appointment.
Student and Faculty Responsibilities

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code explained in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty’s responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, and I will do so, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.