

## The Search for Values in the Light of Western History and Religion

### Course Description:

This course examines a selection of major works of European literature, philosophy, and religion from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment. We will consider the literary and intellectual traditions which these texts have come to define and the ways in which these texts speak to each other. The goals of the course are

1. to develop an understanding of these texts and the cultures that produced them
2. to develop an ability to approach these texts and ideas critically
3. to develop an ability to discuss and write about these texts effectively

**Required Texts:** (available at Rhodes College Bookstore)

Course Packet (**CP**)

Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (Trans. Musa and Bondanella)

Dante, *Inferno* (Trans. Pinsky)

Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (Ed. Eversly)

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Trans. Griffin)

Machiavelli, *La Mandragola*

*The Rule of St. Benedict* (Ed. Fry)

*The Song of Roland* (Trans. Burgess)

Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Ed. Mowat)

Electronic handout (E\*)

**On reserve** at Barret Library

**N.B.** Make sure you purchase the correct edition of each text, as indicated above and at the bookstore. Check the publisher and translator/editor to make sure. Be aware that different sections of Search may be reading the same work but a different edition.

### Requirements:

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| Paper #1 (3-5 pages)   | 20% |
| Paper #2 (3-5 pages)   | 20% |
| Paper #3 (5-7 pages)   | 30% |
| Mid-term exam  | 10% |
| Final exam   | 10% |
| Participation and attendance<br>(includes quizzes, homework, etc.) | 10% |

**Discussion:** This course is a seminar and requires the active and engaged participation of every member of the class. Make sure you read each day's reading carefully and come to class with questions or comments to bring to the discussion. While I encourage you to choose your own moment to enter a discussion, if you haven't contributed in a while, be prepared to be called on. Be aware that on some days I will go around the room and ask everyone to contribute a question or comment. It is acceptable to occasionally pass on responding to a question, but if you do so habitually, your grade will suffer.

A good discussion requires some very basic but crucial elements. Everyone needs to have done the reading and to come in **with at least one question or idea they would like to discuss.**

More often than not, it is the most basic, simple questions that produce the most fruitful discussions. Another basic but crucial requirement for a good discussion is that if you are speaking, you need to speak clearly and loudly enough so that everyone in the room can hear. **No mumbling!** If you do not have the floor, then it is your duty to **listen carefully**.

There will undoubtedly be disagreement in the class over different ideas presented in the class. I encourage you to air your disagreements both with the readings and with each other; however, this absolutely must be done with **respect and civility** and the recognition that there are people in the room who have had very different experiences from your own.

I am aware that some people are extremely comfortable talking in class and others are not. I will do my very best to make the atmosphere in the class conducive for participation. If you tend to be reticent you will need to make an extra effort to participate; however, in the same measure, if you are someone who is comfortable talking in groups, you will need to make an extra effort to monitor yourself so that you do not end up dominating discussion. In discussion, as in writing, I value quality over quantity.

**Reading:** All assigned reading and writing is due at the beginning of the class for which it is assigned, unless otherwise noted. Always bring the assigned text to class; repeated failure to do so will cause you to be marked absent.

**Exams:** The mid-term and final exams are intended to measure the extent to which you are keeping up with the reading. You will be asked to identify passages and briefly answer some questions about various readings.

**Attendance and Lateness Policies:** I expect you to be on time to class. **Repeated lateness** will cause you to be marked absent.

Because informed participation in class discussion is part of the work of the course, **more than three absences** during the semester will adversely affect your final grade. Failure to complete one or more assignments or to attend class on a regular basis will result in a **failing grade for the course**.

The schedule of assignments is subject to change as needed, so **if you miss a class, make sure you check with a classmate to get both notes and confirm the next assignment**. Except under extraordinary circumstances, I do not provide notes to students who miss class. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to catch up on what you missed from someone in the class.

Late papers will be penalized a third of a letter grade per day. Except in the case of documented illness or family emergency (and by prior arrangement with me), papers more than a week late will receive a failing grade. Under extremely special circumstances I may grant extensions on papers, but I will **only** consider requests made **in advance of the due date**. If you believe you have a legitimate reason to ask for an extension, you must contact me **at least two class periods before** the paper is due. Requests made for extensions on the night before or the day a paper is due will not be entertained. Email is not an appropriate medium for requesting extensions or any other kind of dispensation.

**Email etiquette:** Email is a very useful invention that, in many ways, saves time. However, it also has some undesirable effects. I am happy to answer quick questions over email, but you need to make sure that you have used your own resources (like the syllabus or the college web page) first. Also, you need to make sure that your email question or request is something that you would be comfortable asking in person. If it's not, then you should probably rethink it. In order to prevent email from interrupting my own work, I generally set aside one part of the day to responding to it rather than monitoring it throughout the day.

**Plagiarism:** The bulk of the work in this course requires writing. Failure to adequately document a source of any kind, whether or not intentional, constitutes plagiarism and must be dealt with by the Rhodes Honor Council. For a quick reminder of how to recognize and avoid plagiarism, see the Rhodes Writing Center website: [http://www.rhodes.edu/writingcenter/group\\_b/plagiarism.html](http://www.rhodes.edu/writingcenter/group_b/plagiarism.html)

**\*\*All work for this class must be done in compliance with the Rhodes Honor Code.\*\***

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments (subject to adjustment as needed)

W 8/23 Introductions

F 8/25 **Monasticism:** *The Rule of St. Benedict* pp 3-35

M 8/28 Viewing of “Trappist”

W 8/30 *The Rule of St. Benedict* pp 36-70

F 9/1 **Christian and Muslim Encounters:**  
“The Speech at the Council of Clermont”**E\***  
From *Arab Historians of the Crusades* **CP**

M 9/5 Labor Day holiday

W 9/6 *The Song of Roland* (through verse 120)

F 9/8 *The Song of Roland* (through verse 188)

M 9/11 *The Song of Roland*(through verse 298)

W 9/13 **Self and Salvation:** St. Augustine, from *Confessions* (handout)  
(hand out paper topics)

F 9/15 **Writing day/paper topics**

M 9/18 Dante, *Inferno* cantos 1-7

W 9/01 *Inferno* cantos 8-13

F 9/22 *Inferno* cantos 15, 17, 18, 21, 23

M 9/25 *Inferno* cantos 25, 26, 30

W 9/27 *Inferno* cantos 31-32

F 9/29 *Inferno* cantos 33-34

M 10/2 **Storytelling and Society:**  
Boccaccio, *The Decameron* Preface (pp3-5) and Introduction (pp 6-24); First Day, Tenth Story; Second Day, Ninth story;

W 10/4 Boccaccio cont'd: Third Day, First Story; Third Day, Tenth Story; Fourth Day, Fifth Story; Fourth Day, Ninth story; Fifth Day, Eighth story,

F 10/6 Boccaccio cont'd: Sixth Day, Seventh Story; Tenth Day, Tenth Story; Tenth Day, Conclusion  
**Paper #1 due by 4pm, outside my office**

M 10/9 **Politics: the Real vs. the Ideal**  
Machiavelli, *La Mandragola*

W 10/11 Machiavelli, excerpt from *The Prince* **on reserve**

F 10/13 **Midterm exam**

M 10/16 Fall recess

W 10/18 Poetry (handout)

Fri 10/20 Castiglione, from *The Courtier* **on reserve**

M 10/23 **Paper topics/Writing day**

W 10/25 **Clash of Reason and Faith:** Copernicus E\* and Galileo E\*

F 10/27 Class cancelled

M 10/30 **The Reformation:** Martin Luther E\*

W 11/1 **The Reformation continued:** Calvin **CP**

F 11/3 Council of Trent E\*

M 11/6 **Colonialism and the Other:** Montaigne, "To the Reader" and "Of Cannibals" **CP**

W 11/8 Shakespeare, *The Tempest* Acts 1-3

F 11/10 *The Tempest* Acts 4-5

**Paper #2 due by 4pm, outside my office**

M 11/13 Hobbes, from *Leviathan* **CP**

W 11/15 Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*

F 11/17 Pope, *Essay on Man* E\*

M 11/20 Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* . .

W 11/22 Thanksgiving recess

F 11/24 Thanksgiving recess

M 11/27 Equiano, cont'd

W 11/29 Equiano, cont'd

F 12/1 Rousseau from *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*

M 12/4 Rousseau, cont'd

Wed 12/6 **Paper #3 Due in class**

**Final Exam:** Tues 12/12, 1pm (9:00 am section)

Wed 12/13, 8:30 am (10:00 section)