

**Humanities 201:  
The Search for Values in the Light of Western History and Religion**

History Track - Fall 2004

Section 06 - TR 09:30-10:45 - Clough 304

Section 10 - TR 12:30-13:45 - Clough 313

Dr. Anna Dronzek

Office: 317 Clough

Phone: 843-3882

E-mail: [dronzeka@rhodes.edu](mailto:dronzeka@rhodes.edu) (this is probably the quickest way to reach me)

Office Hours: MW 9:00-10:00, T 11:00-12:00, and by appointment

Please feel free to come and talk to me about any course-related questions or concerns you may have!

**Course Description and Goals**

The second year of the Search course explores how the ideas articulated in the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman worlds have echoed through the following centuries. Humanities 201 begins in the early Middle Ages and concludes in the seventeenth century. Along the way, we will discuss how various thinkers, writers, philosophers, and artists have responded to the intellectual and religious traditions at the root of Western culture.

Humanities 201 also follows distinct disciplinary tracks, to introduce students to the specific ways that different disciplines approach these intellectual and religious traditions. History is by its very nature interdisciplinary, considering all evidence of the human experience grist for the mill, but is especially interested in the ways that ideas from the past function in and influence people's lived experiences, and how those experiences change over time. We will work together this semester to develop the skills that historians use to read and interpret documents. At the same time, this is a Humanities course, not a History course, and it will not provide a comprehensive survey of early European history.

To provide a focus for our discussions this semester, I have organized our readings around the general theme of self, identity, and community: what constitutes the "self"? How do people define their place in the world? How do they define community? What do they consider the proper relationships between different members of a community, and how do they balance their own needs with their responsibilities to that community? These and related questions are integral to each individual's negotiation of the human experience. To consider these issues, we will read a number of autobiographical writings as well as other kinds of texts. Because an important part of identity and position in a community is gender, I have included a number of texts that allow us to examine how men and women grappled with the same questions.

My goals for this semester are that you gain a familiarity with some major texts of western intellectual and religious heritage, that you are able to situate those texts culturally and historically, and that you seriously engage the questions raised by the themes of the course. The processes of the course (reading assignments, class discussion, writing assignments) are also intended for you to develop three skills: the ability to read critically - to extract the most important information from a document with a minimum of effort; to think analytically - to evaluate the information you find and make an informed judgment about how you can use it for your particular purposes; and to communicate clearly - to convey your ideas in clear speech or written English. I encourage you to think about your own goals for the semester and I would be happy to discuss them with you!

## Books

The following books are required and are available for purchase in the Rhodes bookstore (and at most online booksellers):

- Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of Saint Benedict in English*, ed. Timothy Fry (Liturgical Press, 1982). ISBN 0814612725
- Guibert of Nogent, *A Monk's Confession: The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent*, trans. Paul J. Archambault (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995). ISBN 0271014822
- Thomas of Celano, *Saint Francis of Assisi: First and Second Life of St. Francis with Selections from the Treatise on the Miracles of Blessed Francis* (Franciscan Press, 1988). ISBN 0819905542
- Elizabeth Spearing, ed., *Medieval Writing on Female Sexuality* (Penguin USA: 2002). ISBN 0140439250
- Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (Persea Books, 1998). ISBN 0892552301
- Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. David Wootton (Hackett Publishing: 1995). ISBN 0872203166
- William Shakespeare, *Othello* (Dover Publications: 1996). ISBN 0486290972
- Margaret King and Alfred Rabil, eds., *Her Immaculate Hand: Selected Works by and about the Woman Humanists of Quattrocento Italy* (Pegasus Press: 2000). ISBN 1889818275

In addition to these works, a variety of required readings will be available electronically (the method for accessing them will be marked on the schedule below). You are expected to print out these readings and bring them with you to class on the days they are assigned.

## Course Requirements

### **Participation: 20%**

Your participation is one of the most significant factors in the success of this course. Class participation means that you come to class having completed all reading and writing assignments, you are ready to discuss them, and you are willing to listen to others present their perspectives. See "Discussion" under Policies, below.

### **Weekly Writing: 15%**

Each week, you are required to submit a brief written response (ca. 1-2 paragraphs) to a question related to one of the daily reading assignments (you will be assigned a day of the week: half the class will write on Tuesday's readings, the other half of the class will write on Thursday's readings). The questions will be available on, and your response will be submitted via, the course WebCT page (information about access and logistics will be distributed separately). There are 13 weeks' worth of writing assignments; each assignment is worth 1% of the final grade (note that this nets you 2% free).

### **Papers: 30%**

This course requires 3 short papers (3-5 pp.) in response to the readings and issues that have arisen out of class discussion. Due dates are marked on the schedule below; further details will be provided over the course of the semester.

### **Disputationes: 15%**

*Disputationes* (singular: *disputatio*) are a form of structured debate based on a format used in the medieval universities. Each of you is expected to participate in Please see the end of the syllabus for a detailed description of what this will entail. Each of you is expected to

participate in one *disputatio*, and your attendance is expected at all of them, whether you are presenting or not.

***Final Paper: 20%***

The final paper (8-10 pp) requires you to discuss which source among the semester's readings you consider to be the most significant for understanding the two main themes of the course: the search for values in general, or self, identity, and community more specifically. Further details will be provided closer to the end of the semester.

There are no formal exams in this class.

**Policies & Expectations**

***General:*** Readings on the syllabus are listed on the day for which they are due. Therefore, on Tuesday August 31 you should come to class having read *The Rule of Saint Benedict*. Please also bring the assigned readings to class with you each day, as we will often refer specifically to passages in the reading.

***Discussion:*** Search is a seminar, not a lecture course. While I am happy to answer questions (and will doubtless fall into lecture mode from time to time), the goal here is not for you to listen to me talk, but for you to talk to me and each other so that we may have an open exchange of ideas and pursue the issues of the course in depth. Therefore, most of the responsibility for what goes on in the classroom lies in your hands and requires your preparation and participation.

Attendance alone will not earn you an A in participation, but neither will sheer volume without substance. I am a great believer in working through ideas by talking about them, so I do not expect every utterance to be a polished final statement, but contributions must be backed up by knowledge of the assigned materials, even if only to raise what you found confusing about them. I encourage you to disagree with each other and with me, especially in the context of the *disputationes*, but expect you to do so in a way that shows respect for others.

If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of others, do not despair; discussion will include small-group as well as large-group formats, and active listening can be just as important a part of discussion as speaking. If you have any concerns about how the discussion is going in this class - either about your own or others' contributions - please feel free to raise them with me!

***Attendance:*** As the heart of this course is discussion, not attending class means that you will forfeit the benefits of taking it. I do not grade on attendance *per se*, but I do take attendance and more than three absences from class will lower your grade at my discretion. In the event of an unavoidable absence, you remain responsible for all material covered in class; please contact me ahead of time to let me know you will not be in class and to find out how you can make up the work that you missed.

***Late Assignments and Incompletes:*** All assignments must be turned in to me in the classroom at the beginning of the class for which they are due. I will not accept late assignments without extreme extenuating circumstances, and such arrangements must be approved by me in advance of the due date. Incompletes will not be granted in this course unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances, and they must be arranged with me before finals week.

**Honor Code:** Each of you is bound by the Honor Code as elaborated in the Student Handbook, and no violation will be tolerated. Please review the Student Handbook if you are unclear about the details of the Honor Code, particularly the definitions in Article I, Section 3, which includes the definition of “plagiarism.” On every assignment, you should reaffirm the Honor Code by writing the entire honor pledge and signing your name. No work will be accepted without an Honor Code pledge. Studying together and reading one another’s papers is always a good idea, but make sure that your work is your own. Collaboration on an assignment that results in remarkably similar results, whether intentional or accidental, is a violation of the honor code. If you have any questions about what constitutes acceptable collaboration or appropriate citations, etc., please ask!

**Other:** It is Rhodes policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. All course materials are available in alternative formats to persons with documented disabilities upon request. Please contact the instructor or the Student Disability Services office, 843-3994, Modular Unit behind McCoy Theatre, to discuss accommodation needs.

### Grading Guide

**“A”** work shows that you have done all the assigned readings, attended class, and participated in discussion. You know and understand the material covered by the course and can use it appropriately to support your own particular, clearly written argument or interpretation. You are also able to follow instructions and do the assignment asked of you, not another one with which you are more comfortable.

**“B”** work differs from “A” work in that it might not always use the material to support an independent argument or interpretation; or may not present its argument as clearly in writing; or may not exactly address the assignment.

**“C”** work shows that you know the material covered in the course, but does not use the material to sustain a clear argument or interpretation, either through lack of evidence, factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings, problems in writing clearly, or not answering the assignment.

**“D”** work shows only that you have a minimal knowledge of the course material.

**“F”** demonstrates no knowledge of the course material at all. *If you receive an F on an assignment, please come see me so we can talk about how to improve on future work.*

### Final Caveat

Please note that I reserve the right to make adjustments to this syllabus as the semester progresses, should circumstances merit (any changes will be discussed with the class and announced well in advance of any due dates).

## Schedule

Th 8.26  
Introduction

T 8.31  
Monastic Community  
Reading: *The Rule of St. Benedict* (entire)

Th 9.2  
The Monastic Self  
Reading: Guibert of Nogent, Book I, 1-7 (1-21), 12-19 (34-74); Book II, 3-4 (104-110)  
[you are more than welcome to read all of Book I, but we will only discuss the chapters listed]. If you have time, please skim the introduction (xiii-xi), but if you have to prioritize, focus on Guibert's writing.

T 9.7  
Urban Community  
Reading: Guibert of Nogent, Book III, 7-20 (144-212)

Th 9.9  
The (Sort of) Scholastic Self  
Reading: Abelard, *Historia Calamitatum* [Faculty Folder]  
**Disputatio #1: Do Guibert and Abelard possess a sense of "self" in the modern sense of the word? If so, why, and if not, why not?**

T 9.14  
The Sainly Self – Men  
Reading: Thomas of Celano, *Life of Saint Francis*, Part I: Prologue, Book One (1-78); please also skim the introduction (xxi-liv).

Th 9.16  
The Sainly Self – Men  
Reading: Thomas of Celano, *Life of Saint Francis*, Part I: Books Two-Three; Part II: Prologue, Book One (79-158)

T 9.21  
The Sainly Self – Women  
Reading: Spearing, "Hildegard of Bingen" (3-26), "Christina of Markyate" (27-45), "Christine the Astonishing" (75-86); please also skim the introduction (vii-xxviii).

Th 9.23  
The Sainly Self – Women  
Reading: Spearing, "Mary of Oignies" (87-106), "Elizabeth of Spaalbeek" (107-119), "Bridget of Sweden" (145-74)  
**Disputatio #2: Why did medieval people value the behaviors expressed by medieval saints?**

T 9.28  
The Almost-Sainly Self  
Reading: Spearing, "Margery Kempe" (226-54) and "Margery Kempe (Supplement)" [Faculty Folder]  
**Paper #1 Due**

Th 9.30

Women's Place

Reading: Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Introduction; Part One: 1-11, 14, 27, 33, 37-8, 43; Part Two: 7, 12-13, 19, 25, 28 (xxiii-l, 3-32, 36-8, 62-4, 70-3, 77-81, 86-9, 110-13, 116-20, 127-9, 134-5, 137-8)

T 10.5

Women's Place

Reading: Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Part Two: 30, 36-7, 42, 44, 47, 53-4, 62, 64, 66, 68-9; Part Three (142-3, 153-56, 158-9, 160-2, 164-6, 184-8, 204-5, 206-7, 209-10, 212-15, 217-57)

**Disputatio #3: Was Christine de Pizan a feminist?**

Th 10.7

Europe and the Rest of the World

Reading: John Mandeville, *The Travels of John Mandeville* (excerpts), Christopher Columbus, "The Columbus Letter" [Faculty Folder]

T 10.12

The Princely Self

Reading: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Introduction, "Letter to Vettori," Chapters 1-11 (xi-38)

Th 10.14

The Princely Self

Reading: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 12-26 (38-80)

T 10.19

NO CLASS - FALL BREAK

Th 10.21

The Renaissance Self

Reading: Baldessar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (excerpts) [Faculty Folder]

T 10.26

Women in the Renaissance Community

Reading: *Her Immaculate Hand*, Introduction, Part I, Part II: 8-10 (11-69)

Th 10.28

Women in the Renaissance Community

Reading: *Her Immaculate Hand*, Parts II-III (69-129)

**Disputatio #4: Was the "Renaissance man" a realistic ideal?**

T 11.2

Critiques of the Christian Community

Reading: Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Praise of Folly* (excerpts) [Faculty Folder]

**Paper #2 Due**

Th 11.4

Challenges to the Catholic Community

Reading: Martin Luther, "95 Theses," "Letter to Christian Nobility," "A Treatise on Christian Liberty" [Faculty Folder]

T 11.9

More Challenges to the Catholic Community

Reading: Jean Calvin, "On Civil Government," "The Order of Excommunication and Public Repentance," "On Predestination," "How to Use the Present Life" [Faculty Folder]

Th 11.11

The Catholic Community Redefined

Reading: Canons of the Council of Trent (selections) [Faculty Folder]

**Disputatio #5: How successfully does the Council of Trent address the critiques/challenges posed to the Catholic community by reformers such as Erasmus, Luther, and Calvin?**

T 11.16

Outsiders

Reading: William Shakespeare, *Othello*, Acts I & II (1-39)

Th 11.18

Outsiders

Reading: William Shakespeare, *Othello*, Acts III-V (39-91)

T 11.23

The Community of the Cosmos

Reading: Nicolaus Copernicus, "Dedication to the Revolution of the Heavenly Bodies," *The Revolution of the Heavenly Bodies* (excerpts), Galileo Galilei, "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany," "The Crime of Galileo: Indictment and Abjuration" [Faculty Folder]

Th 11.25

NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK

T 11.30

More Communities

Reading: Montaigne, "On Cannibals," Marie de Gournay, *On the Equality of Men and Women* [Faculty Folder]

**Paper #3 Due**

Th 12.2

Political Community

Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (excerpts); Domat, "On Social Order and Absolute Monarchy," Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (excerpts) [Faculty Folder]

T 12.7

LAST DAY OF CLASS – Conclusions

**W 12.15 - NOON**

**FINAL PAPER DUE TO ME IN MY OFFICE**

## ***Disputationes***

Description: The *disputatio* is a pedagogical method practiced in the original universities in medieval Europe. For four days each week (Tuesday-Friday), students listened to the masters read from the text (of the New Testament, of Aristotle, of Gratian, etc.), adding their own comments and glosses ("lecture" comes from the Latin word, "*lego, legere, lexi, lectus*," meaning "to read"). But on the fifth day (Saturday!) the students participated in debates called *disputationes* (plural of *disputatio*). The master would pose a question and the students (or *disputatores*) would then offer concise answers and arguments to support their answers.

For this class, the *disputatio* will be a modified form of debate in which I pose a question related to recent course reading assignments and selected students respond (these questions are listed on the syllabus). Participating in a *disputatio* requires both a written and an oral component responding to the question for that week. There will be five *disputationes* during the semester, with 3-4 students presenting in each one (although all students are expected to participate actively as the audience in each *disputatio* as well). On Tuesday August 31, I will distribute a sign-up sheet for the specific dates/topics.

*Purpose:* The goal of the *disputatio* is for students to gain experience presenting material orally and responding to questions on those presentations. Both the *disputatores* and the audience should come away from these assignments better able to evaluate evidence and critique an argument.

*Written component:* A brief (maximum of 2 pages) written statement of your answer to the question posed and the argument(s) supporting your answer (to be handed in the day of the *disputatio*).

*Oral component:* participating in a structured discussion of responses to the question assigned for that day. The format will be:

- 1) Each *disputator* presents her/his answer and argument(s)
- 2) Each *disputator* asks one question of another *disputator* on a different side of the issue
- 3) The rest of the students each ask at least one question of any *disputator*
- 4) The non-*disputatores* will then vote on which argument they find more or most convincing

*Assessment:* One-third of the *disputatio* grade is based on the written component and two-thirds is based on the oral component. Both should be clear, convincing, and based on specific evidence drawn from our readings and discussions. You are encouraged to be creative in your presentations/written statements, and your written statement need not strictly follow a formal essay format, but your work should be carefully considered and polished in whatever format you choose to present it.

*Academic Dishonesty:* Your work for this assignment, like all coursework, is governed by the Honor Code. All *disputationes* must be individual work and you may not present them collectively. You may discuss the material on which the *disputationes* are based with your classmates (e.g., for the first *disputatio* you and a classmate might discuss Guibert's relationship with his mother), but you may not discuss the specific questions (e.g., do not discuss how Guibert's relationship with his mother contributes to his sense of self). The written and oral components for this assignment must be entirely your own.



