

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

Religious Studies Track

Fall 2006

MWF 11-11:50am



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Office Hours: M-F, 1-2pm and by appointment

Course Description:

According to the college catalogue, in the second year of Search students “trace the roles of biblical and classical heritages in the shaping of the values, character, and institutions of western culture and its understanding of self and world. To this end, they read and discuss selections from the works of philosophers, theologians, political writers, scientists, and literary artists from the Middle Ages to the present.” (*Rhodes College Catalogue*, 179)

Course Objectives (for the entire year):

1. To explore the change, conflict, and reform of religious traditions, systems, and philosophies in the West from the Middle Ages to the contemporary era.
2. To engage in active dialogue with primary texts written by representative authors who have made a significant impact and contribution to religious life and thought.
3. To provide a forum for students to connect personal philosophies and experiences with the ideas and insights which have shaped Western religious tradition.
4. To afford students of all religions and belief systems the opportunity to explore religious values as part of a continuing personal quest for meaning.

Required Texts:

Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*

Benedict of Nursia, *Rule of Benedict*

Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*

Shusaku Endo, *Silence*

John Kaltner, *Islam*

Readings Volume, *Read*

Course Assessment:

Attendance and participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Mid-term exam	20%
Four papers	40%
Paper #1, 5%	
Paper #2, 10%	
Paper #3, 10%	
Paper #4, 15%	
Final examination	20%

Course Requirements:

1. **Attendance and participation** are expected and absences will adversely affect a student's grade. Except for official events of the college, permission to be absent will not be given and should not be sought. The Search Program is built on guided discussion of common readings. Adequate time must be budgeted to successfully complete reading assignments. Except for official events of the college, permission to be absent will not be given and should not be sought. Periodically, students may be asked to complete in-class writing assignments; while these assignments will not be individually graded, they will serve as an additional tool for determining the level of class participation and preparation.

As well, two students will be asked to lead the discussion for one class period during the semester. The student-led discussion entails a more thorough preparation of the assigned reading material for the assigned day. You will be responsible for preparing, in advance, a handout to be distributed at least one class period prior to your assigne day. The handout should contain the following:

1. Some statement of the thesis (if present) and argument(s) advanced by the author/text.
2. List of themes related to the course that can be drawn from the text.
3. Consideration of how the ideas and/or values conveyed in the text differ from our own.

What presuppositions do we bring to bear on the text?

These questions might be supplemented by those found in the first assigned reading for the course, "How to Read a Primary Text." Five percent (5%) of your attendance and participation grade will be based on the student-led discussion.

2. **Quizzes** will assist in assessing comprehension. There will be several brief, unannounced quizzes over the course of the semester. At the end of the semester you will select five (5) of these to comprise your daily quiz grade for the semester. Quizzes will be worth twenty (20) points each, for a total of 100 points. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class only. Only quizzes missed due to official events of the college can be completed after consultation with the professor. The daily quiz grade is worth ten percent (10%) of the final course grade.

3. **Examinations.** The mid-term examination is in class on Friday, October 13. The final exam is in class on Friday, December 8, 1pm. Each exam is worth twenty percent (20%) of your final grade. Each exam will be based on the reading assignments and other class materials and will test material not covered on the previous exam. Exams will have any of a number of types of short answer and brief essay questions.

4. **Papers.** Four papers will be assigned over the course of the semester. The first paper is due on August 28; the second paper is due on September 27; the third paper is due on November 13; the fourth paper is due on December 4. The first paper is 3 pages in length; the second and third papers are 4-5 pages in length; the fourth paper is 5-6 pages in length. The topic and details for each paper will be distributed one week prior to the due date. All papers are to be double-spaced and in final form. Papers turned in after class but on the same day (before 5pm) will be penalized 1/2 letter grade; papers turned in after 5pm on the day due will be penalized a full letter grade for every day the paper is late. One writing workshop has been set to hone writing skills on November 13. You may be asked to discuss and to share at length and in detail your paper in class on the day it is due.

Grading Standards for Written Assignments:

1. The A paper or essay demonstrates originality of thought, independence of opinion and maturity of interpretation in stating and developing a central idea. Its basic notions and observations are clear, logical, and thought provoking. The evidence provided in the paper warrants its conclusions. The A essay contains all of the

following characteristics: (a) concentration on a central purpose, demonstrated by an adequate development of its arguments and the specific support of valid sources; (b) careful construction and organization of sentences and paragraphs; (c) careful choice of effective words and phrases; (d) full understanding of the concepts central to the reading material used; and (e) correctness of mechanical procedures (spelling, typing, etc.).

2. The B paper or essay has a clearly stated thesis, has been logically argued, and has been supported by specific evidence from the texts read. Its ideas are clear and its organization is coherent because it contains most of the characteristics described above. It is relatively free of errors in the use of expository English prose. Although competent, the B paper lacks the originality, stylistic maturity, and the precision of thought of the A paper.

3. The average paper or essay will receive the grade of C. The essay has a central purpose and is organized clearly enough to convey its thesis to the reader. It demonstrates adequate familiarity with the concepts and material in question and it relates them to the course's reading assignments. It avoids serious errors in English grammar and usage. It may, in fact, require few corrections, but it lacks the vigor or complexity of thought and expression, which would entitle it to a higher grade.

4. The grade of D indicates a below-average achievement in the correct and effective expression of ideas. Most D papers contain serious logical errors and grammatical mistakes. The D paper fails either to present a central thesis or to develop and support it adequately.

5. The grade of F indicates a failure to state or develop a main idea. It may also indicate serious errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or sentence structure. Typing errors or poor proofreading are signs of haste and poor presentation. The following major errors are to be avoided: (a) misunderstood ideas used without discrimination; (b) poorly constructed essays without introduction, logical development, or conclusions; (c) essays that miss the point of the question(s) asked; (d) papers that demonstrate derivative use of source material; (e) comma-splicing or run-on sentences; (f) sentence fragments; (g) misspelling common words; (h) lack of verb-subject agreement; (i) lack of antecedent-pronoun agreement; (j) faulty use of tense or person; (k) misplaced or dangling modifiers; and (l) faulty punctuation.

Grading Scale:

The final grade will be determined on the basis of this scale:

A (94-100)	C+ (77-79)	D- (60-63)
A- (90-93)	C (74-76)	F (below 60)
B+ (87-89)	C- (70-73)	
B (84-86)	D+ (67-69)	
B- (80-83)	D (64-66)	

Schedule of Topics and Readings

8/23 Introduction
Assignment: Favazza and Kaltner, "How to Read a Primary Text" (Read)
Opening exercise and in-class writing assignment

UNIT ONE: The Self

8/25 Preliminary Considerations: From Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages

8/28 The Human Condition
Assignment: Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, pp. 21-23, 43-70
Paper #1 due.

8/30 Conversion
Assignment: Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 71-90 and 170-190

9/1 Accountability
Assignment: Augustine, *Confessions*, pp.191-205
Discussion:

9/4 Labor Day. No Class.

9/6 Questions for Augustine.
Assignment: In-class writing, one page response and class discussion.

UNIT TWO: The Self in Community

9/8 Christian Monasticism
Assignment: Benedict of Nursia, *Rule of Benedict*

9/11 Christian Monasticism
Assignment: Benedict of Nursia, *Rule of Benedict*
Discussion:

9/13 Christian Mysticism
Assignment: Thomas of Celano, *First and Second Lives of Francis* (Read)

9/15 Christian Mysticism
Assignment: Thomas of Celano, *First and Second Lives of Francis* (Read)
Discussion:

9/18 Christian Mysticism
Assignment: Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Three Kisses* (Read)

9/20 Christian Faith vs. Reason
Assignment: Peter Abelard, *Sic et Non* (Read)
Bernard of Clairvaux, "Letter Against Peter Abelard" (Read)
Discussion:

9/22 Christian Faith vs. Reason
Assignment: Anselm, *Arguments for the Existence of God*
and *Guanilo's reply* (Read)

9/25 Christian Faith vs. Reason
Assignment: Aquinas, *Five Proofs*
Discussion:

9/27 Paper #2 due and class discussion.

- 9/29 Islam
Assignment: Kaltner, *Islam*, chapters 1-3
- 10/2 Islam
Assignment: Kaltner, *Islam*, chapters 4-6
Discussion:
- 10/4 Muslim Religious Practice (Film)
- 10/6 Muslim Mysticism
Assignment: Sufism (Watt)
Rabe'a Al-Adawiya (selections)
- 10/9 Muslim Faith and Reason
Assignment: The Intellectual Influence of Islam on Western Europe (Watt)
Ibn Rushd and A-Ghazali (selections)
- 10/11 Resolving Religious Conflict
Assignment: The First Crusade (Read)
- 10/13 Mid-Term Exam.
- 10/16 Fall Recess. No Class.

UNIT THREE: Reforming the Self

- 10/18 Virtue.
Assignment: Dante, *The Divine Comedy*
- 10/20 Humility.
Assignment: Dante, *The Divine Comedy*
- 10/23 Love.
Assignment: Dante, *The Divine Comedy*
- 10/25 Visualizing Piety.
Assignment: In-class writing, one page response and class discussion.
- 10/27 Gender
Assignment: Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (Read)
Discussion:
- 10/30 Gender
Assignment: Ficino, *The Soul of Man* (Read)
Discussion:
- 11/1 Politics
Assignment: Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Read)
Discussion:
- 11/3 Writing Workshop
Assignment: Bring working title, thesis statement, outline, and opening paragraph of Paper #3

UNIT FOUR: Reforming Community

- 11/6 Protestant Reformation
Assignment: de Valdes, *The Lutheran Revolt* (Read)
- 11/8 Protestant Reformation
Assignment: Luther, *A Treatise on Christian Liberty* (Read)

Discussion:

- 11/10 Reformation Debate: Sadolet vs. Calvin
Assignment: "A Reformation Debate" (Sadolet's Letter) (Read)
"A Reformation Debate" (Calvin's Letter) (Read)
- 11/13 Catholic Reformation
Assignment: *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Read)
Paper #3 due.
- 11/15 Catholic Reformation
Assignment: *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Read)
Pope Paul III, "The Bull of Institution of the Jesuits, 1540" (Read)
Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises* (Read)
- 11/17 The Price of Reform.
Assignment: In-class writing, one page response and class discussion.
- 11/20 Missions
Assignment: In class viewing of "The Mission."
- 11/22-24 No Class. Thanksgiving Break.
- 11/27 Missions
Assignment: Endo, *Silence*, ch. 1-5
- 11/29 Missions
Assignment: Endo, *Silence*, ch. 6-10
- 12/1 Does Christianity have "an infinite capacity for adaptation?"
Assignment: In-class writing and response to Endo.
- 12/4 Paper #4 due and class discussion of papers.
- 12/6 Conclusion and Evaluation

Class Discussion
Humanities 201 (McNary-Zak, 2006)

As part of your attendance and participation for the course, you and a colleague will lead the discussion for one class period during the semester. It is not my expectation that you lead for the entire fifty minutes of class. However, I hope that good questions will lead to good discussion.

As indicated on the syllabus, the student-led discussion entails a more thorough preparation of the assigned reading material for the assigned day. You will be responsible for preparing, in advance, a handout to be distributed at least one class period prior to your assigned day. This can be distributed electronically as an attachment sent to the entire class if you wish (17324@rhodes.edu) The handout should contain the following:

1. Some statement of the thesis (if present) and argument(s) advanced by the author/text.
2. List of themes related to the course that can be drawn from the text.
3. Consideration of how the ideas and/or values conveyed in the text differ from our own.
What presuppositions do we bring to bear on the text?

As you prepare for the discussion, you might want to work through those questions found in the first assigned reading for the course, "How to Read a Primary Text." While you are free to structure the discussion as you wish, *and it must be grounded in the text*, you might consider including any or all of the following parts:

1. Why do you think we are reading this text? In other words, how does this text seem to fit with the goals of the Search course? Does it make the unfamiliar familiar or the familiar unfamiliar? How does it contribute to the conversation about the best way to live, the best way to live in community, or how to negotiate personal or cultural loss?
2. What are the key ideas in the text? While the text may contain many ideas, try to identify what you think are the one or two most important ones, or the ideas upon which other ideas rest. As part of this process, direct the class to one or two key passages in the text where these ideas are best articulated by the author.
3. Do the ideas of this text connect to other texts we have read in Search or other texts you have read in other classes? The connections you make might be very obvious or they might be much more obscure. What I am most interested in is your ability to think synthetically and contextually beyond a single text or author.
4. If the author of the text were alive today, what would s/he say about...? Set up a scenario where the author of the text is engaging some contemporary event, person or topic. Be creative.

Five percent (5%) of your attendance and participation grade will be based on the student-led discussion.