

CULTURE, WISDOM AND COMPASSION
IDH 3005/4007 HONORS SEMINAR
FALL 2009

This course will focus on what we don't, rather than what we do know. What are the limitations of perception and knowledge? Of course, in order to even attempt to answer such a question, we must come to grips with and digest what we do know, what has been traditionally handed down in the way of philosophy, literature, music and the fine arts, and to this end this course will attempt to explore a number of representative works from the disciplines mentioned above. We live in critical times, and the question of what in the way of culture, wisdom and compassion we can uncover and perhaps salvage from the past is a most pressing one. What is and isn't worth preserving? What still does or no longer makes any sense to us? What still is or no longer is necessary to a human and humanizing way of life?

The fall semester will cover the period, roughly, from the dawn of civilization to the end of the sixteenth century, with the spring semester exploring the so-called modern era to the present time. Through necessity, not choice, our main concern will be with western (i.e., European and later European/American) civilizations, but, of course, these cannot be fully understood without at least some appreciation of eastern and Arabic influences. In a seminar of this sort class participation is absolutely essential and will constitute 40% of the final grade. Papers and/or class presentations will make up the rest. My hope is for two substantial (20-25 pp.) research papers and perhaps a number of class presentations. The topics will be of your own interest and choosing but generated by our readings and discussions.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Plotz, David. "The Good Book: the bizarre, hilarious, etc.." N.Y., HarperCollins, 2009.
ISBN: 978-0-06-137424-1
- Sappho. "The poetry of Sappho." N.Y., Oxford. U. Press, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-19-5326-72-7
- Plato. "The Republic." New Haven, Yale U. Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-300-13637-1
ISBN: 0-7581-6689-3
- Villon, Francois. "Ballads done into English..." N.Y., Kessinger Publishing, 2009.
ISBN: 978-1-104-03800-7
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. "The Canterbury tales: a selection." N.Y., Penguin Group, 2009.
ISBN: 978-0-14-042445

Shakespeare, William. "Hamlet." N.Y., Barron's, 2002. ISBN: 0-7641-208-0

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS:

Russell, Bertrand. History of western philosophy. London, Routledge, 2004

ISBN: 0-415-32505-6

Clark, Kenneth. Civilization: a personal view. N.Y., Harper/Collins, 1972

ISBN: 0-06-010801-4

APPROXIMATE CLASS SCHEDULE:

- 8/24 Introduction and overview. Assignments in Plotz.
- 9/31 Plotz.
- 9/7 Holiday
- 9/14 Meet in library (GL 280). Plotz. Assignments in Sappho.
- 9/21 Plotz and Sappho. Assignments in Plato.
- 9/28 Plato.
- 10/5 Plato.
- 10/12 Plato. Assignments in Villon.
- 10/19 Meet in library (GL 280). First paper due. Villon.
- 10/26 Villon. Assignments in Chaucer.
- 11/2 Discussions. Honors College Research Conference projects assistance. Chaucer.
Assignments in Shakespeare.
- 11/9 Shakespeare. Honors College Research Conference projects assistance.
- 11/16 Shakespeare.
- 11/23 Meet in library (GL 280). Film.
- 11/30 Shakespeare. General discussions.
- 12/7 Second paper due.

ADDENDUM:

Throughout the course the written material will be supplemented by slides and recordings, and, in consultation with the professor, outside readings, viewings and listening will be strongly encouraged. In research papers students will need to follow the MLA style and the Academic Integrity Policy of the Honors College and F.I.U. will be strictly adhered to. Attendance will be mandatory and tardiness robustly frowned upon.

Students who choose the SRAI 4th year option will be enrolled in IDH 4905 (for six credits total) during the Fall and Spring semesters in which the project is being completed. SRAI projects must be presented at the annual Honors College Research Conference and students must complete other requirements as stated by the SRAI Program. Students who wish to conduct a SRAI project for the fourth year option must submit an application signed by the SRAI Research Affiliate with a 250-word abstract describing the project no later than May 29th, 2009. No extensions will be made to this deadline. Incomplete proposals will not be approved. Only projects that comply with these procedures will be applied toward the fourth year requirements for graduation through the Honors College.

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