Syllabus

God and Man in the “Great Conversation”

The Honors College — Florida International University
IDH 3035
Spring 2018

Rubén Garrote
OE 146A | 305.348.1620 | garroter@fiu.edu

Course Description

From the dawn of history down to our own time the record of humanity’s struggle to give answer to the great questions of life has taken the form of a “great conversation,” whereby writers, while listening to the answers provided by their predecessors, have tried to offer their own solutions, — or to record their perplexity in the face of the difficulties encountered. This great conversation is ongoing, and it is there for us to draw near and listen to.

Perhaps no question has dominated this conversation more than that which reflects on the relationship between God and Man, faith and reason, the problem of evil or suffering, fate and free will. In this course we will read and discuss some of the great works of the past which address themselves to this great question. “Not,” as C.S. Lewis once wrote about the reading of old books, “that there is any magic about the past. People were no cleverer than they are now; they made as many mistakes as we. But not the same mistakes.” We will ourselves become participants in this great conversation, reflecting and commenting on their mistakes and ours, and — why not? — offering our own solutions.

Course Requirements
1. Regular attendance and informed participation in the seminar.

2. **Three** published blog posts based on the readings. The format will be discussed in class.

3. **Two** 2-3 page book reviews of a work dealing with the topics discussed in the course, to be determined in consultation with the professor.

4. **One** final reflection paper on a topic to be determined in consultation with the professor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Points for Each</th>
<th>Total Points Available</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published blog posts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book reviews</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection paper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Range (%)</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Range (%)</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Range (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 or above</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 86</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 - 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 94</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 82</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 - 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Calendar**
Week 1 — THE DEATH OF GOD
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (excerpts) and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (excerpts)

Week 2 — BEYOND THE DEATH OF GOD
Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism”

Week 3 — BEYOND THE DEATH OF GOD
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*: First Essay

Week 4 — BEYOND THE DEATH OF GOD

Week 5 — BEYOND THE DEATH OF GOD
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*: Third Essay
DUE: First book review (THU, Feb 9 @ 11:59 PM)

Week 6 — CONSOLATION
DUE: First published blog (THU, Feb 16 @ 11:59 PM)

Week 7 — MYTH AND TRUTH

Week 8 — MYTH AND TRUTH
Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Part II

Week 9 — THE WAY TO UNION
*The Bhagavad Gita*, chapters 1-6

Week 10 — SPRING BREAK

Week 11 — THE WAY TO UNION
*The Bhagavad Gita*, chapters 7-12
DUE: Second book review (THU, Mar 23 @ 11:59 PM)

**Week 12 — THE WAY TO UNION**  
*The Bhagavad Gita*, chapters 13-18

**Week 13 — THE JOURNEY'S END**  
DUE: Second published blog (THU, Apr 6 @ 11:59 PM)

**Week 14 — THE JOURNEY'S END**  

**Week 15 — THE JOURNEY'S END**  
DUE: Final reflection paper (THU, Apr 20 @ 11:59 PM)

**Week 16 — EXAM WEEK**  
DUE: Third published blog (THU, Apr 28 @ 11:59 PM)

* Please acquaint yourself with The Honors College’s [academic](#) and [citizenship](#) policies, including the [portfolio](#) graduation requirement.
SOMEONE HAS SAID: “THE DEAD WRITERS ARE REMOTE FROM US BECAUSE WE KNOW SO MUCH MORE THAN THEY DID.” PRECISELY, AND THEY ARE THAT WHICH WE KNOW.

(T.S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”)