

Humanities 1010

Introduction to Humanities

Fall 2006

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“The value of an education in a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts, but the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks.” Albert Einstein

Texts: Knoebel, Edgar E.: Classics of Western Thought: The Modern World, 4th Ed.

Office Hours: Please feel free to contact me through Email or by telephone to set up an appointment. We can meet before or after class, or during other times, if needed. I generally am in the classroom 30 minutes before class begins. If you have a question or concern, or need clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Note: If you are a student with a medical, psychological, or learning disability, or think you may have a disability and would like accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center (652-7516) in the Student Services Center. The Disability Resource Center will determine the eligibility of the student requesting special services and determine the appropriate accommodations related to his or her disability.

Course Data: This course fills a requirement for graduation in the humanities area. It can also be taken as an elective or as a background course for majors in English, Humanities, History, or Philosophy. In this course, students will study the enduring creative expressions of humans that reflect our experiences, as well as our feelings and ideas about other humans, the past, the universe, and ourselves. The course will cover significant ideas, art forms, philosophies, and scientific developments in Western Culture since the Renaissance. Through examining such ideas and events, we can see the traditional ways in which humans viewed their relationship with the past, with the future, with God, with nature, with other humans, and with themselves. We can also discover, in part, how we came to have the kind of culture we live in today. As one author has put it, we can learn to see the “shadow architecture” within which we live as inheritors of the worldview and philosophies of Western Culture.

Course Objectives

1. To develop an understanding of western cultural diversity and continuity as well as some historical influences that have contributed to our present culture.
2. To develop an understanding of the interrelatedness of human history, great ideas, and the arts.
3. To recognize that the study of humanities is a study of the creators of ideas, words, and artifacts and the values those creators held.
4. To develop an increased understanding of what moves humans to create and how their creations reflect their world views.
5. By learning how others have asked “big questions” in creative ways in and in seeing their answers, students will make progress in answering those same questions for themselves and in realizing the universality of the human condition.
6. By seeing how famous men and women have analyzed their own culture, adopting many ideas while making breakthroughs in thought that enriched our lives, we will seek to examine, affirm, and challenge the patterns of thought in our own time.

Attendance:

Attendance is important to the successful completion of the course, since a good portion of the material is complex and difficult. Since this is an evening class in which we will cover and discuss an entire week’s material, attendance at the end of the class is as important as the beginning. The lectures and discussions are important to getting the full benefit of the course; therefore excessive absences or tardiness or leaving early will lower the grade. In reality, you must attend this class to be successful, so attendance is it’s own reward, just as missed classes are most often the cause for a very poor grade.

There will be a series of quizzes over the semester that are intended to reward those who are in attendance and are prepared to discuss the readings. Quizzes will be collected at the beginning of the class period and cannot be made up. However, the lowest quiz score can be dropped for the final grade. Students who must miss an exam for school-related activities or emergencies should make arrangements in advance to take the exam **before** the absence. Exam schedules will not be varied.

Course Requirements and Grades:

The grades will be based on response quizzes and films, three exams, a scholarly paper, and attendance. Quizzes, whether assigned as take home writings or in-class quizzes, are

accepted only at the beginning of the class or when they are given; they can not be brought by a friend, dropped off, or handed in later. The lowest quiz will be dropped however. There are 500 Possible Points, 11 Quizzes: 10 points each, 3 Exams: 100 points each, 1 Scholarly Paper: 100 points. If a student misses more than three classes, he/she will be in danger of having the grade lowered a step for each additional missed class, for example 4 absences: an A grade would change to an A minus, etc. Additionally, late scholarly papers will lose 5 points daily.

Grade Chart

A: 94-100, A minus: 90-93

B plus: 87-89, B: 84-86, B minus: 80-83

C plus 77-79, C: 74-76, C minus: 70-73

D plus 67-69, D: 64-66, D minus: 60-63

F: 59 and below

Course Outline:

Assignments, Readings, Discussions, Exams

All Reading Assignments should be completed BEFORE the class on which they are listed. You will not be successful in this course if you do not successfully read and ponder the reading assignments. The Quiz Points in this section of your course outline are helpful not only for the quizzes, but also as focused reading guides, and exam study guides. Many of the questions on the quizzes and tests come directly from the Quiz Points. Come to class with a good grasp on the material. Be prepared to listen attentively, participate actively, and to write notes about pertinent information, especially during the PowerPoint presentations.

August 23:

Class Introduction, Syllabus Review, Humanities Introduction Power Point, Corn Pone Opinions Discussion, Feudalism and Renaissance Introduction

Quiz in class, Feudalism and Renaissance

August 30

Quiz: Galileo.

Read and Reread: Knoebel 1-9 (Galileo)

Classtime: Galileo Power Point, Finish Galileo Film

Quiz Points: Galileo- It is important to note two things in the reading: first, notice that Galileo used a fictional dialogue between three people to present the ideas, rather than

stating them directly, in order to avoid identifying himself with the heretical views. Secondly, notice that the character promoting heliocentrism is relying upon observation to describe the theoretical orbit of the earth around the sun, not relying on the traditional teachings of ancient scholars. In other words, Galileo was doing science in a modern way. What does Galileo do to avoid the criticism of the Church?

September 6:

Quiz: Descartes.

Read and Reread: 10-19 Bacon, 20-30 Descartes, Instructions for Scholarly Paper

Class time: Descartes Power point, Renaissance Art Film, Pascal Discussion

Quiz Points: Descartes, like Galileo and Bacon, is continuing to challenge traditional authority. He proposed rejecting every idea that we hold, even the idea that we exist. Then he proposes we should use reason to establish ideas that can be held with confidence. What are Descartes four rules of logic? What is his first principle of philosophy? How does he prove that he himself exists?

Bacon: Bacon is challenging the method of learning that had been practiced for thousand of years. He is opposed to authoritative, traditional, deductive ways of learning. Rather, he argues that we should observe nature, which is what Galileo had done. What are the enemies of truth? What are the four classes of Idols that interfere with human rational thought?

September 13:

Quiz: Renaissance and Age of Reason.

Read and Reread: 43-58 Pascal, Appendix 2.

Class time: Age of Reason Power Point, Art Film,

Pascal: Like Descartes, Pascal is a brilliant mathematician. However, he felt that defending the existence of God based on reason was not the best way; he was a passionate defender of the importance of Faith in human existence. Do any of Pascal's quotes about human existence seem familiar, or particularly meaningful to you personally?

September 20:

Quiz: Locke.

Read and Reread: 31-42 Hobbes, 68-82 Locke

Classtime: Locke and Hobbes Discussions, Test Review, **Take Home Exam #1 Essay Assignments**

Quiz Points: Locke has been called the grandfather of our American system of government because of his confidence that men can rule themselves fairly and reasonably. How does Locke describe humans in a state of nature without government?

How does he differ from Hobbes in his view of human nature? What is the source of the natural law of reason that seems to govern humans? How do we humans acquire property? What are the limits to property rights? If things are generally good in a state of nature, why do people join together in a political society? What are the limits to the power of the state? What should people do if the state violates their rights? Do you see the influence of Locke on our American form of government?

Hobbes is one of the first thinkers to propose a society based on what is known as a “social contract.” Rather than accepting the traditional view that God has given certain rights to royalty (The Divine Right of Kings), some to priests, and much less to commoners, Hobbes argues that rights are determined here on earth, among the people. What are Hobbes’ first and second laws of nature? What are the reasons that humans are continually in a state of war when left alone in nature?

September 29: Exam #1. Please bring a scantron.

October 4:

Quiz: Pope.

Read and Reread: 83-94 Pope and information on Leibniz below, Read 95-130 Voltaire

Class time: Review Test Grades, Pope Powerpoint, Voltaire discussion groups

LEIBNIZ READING: Pope was influenced deeply by a German philosopher named Leibniz. Leibniz asserted the following principles: 1) Truths of Philosophy and Theology can’t contradict. 2) God chose from many possible worlds. This is the best of all possible worlds. All possible worlds must contain some evil. 3) We are necessarily imperfect. Humans could not be as perfect as our creator. 4) Man has free will. God has foreknowledge, but that does not predestine us. 5) Man’s rational nature which is his soul (remember Descartes) is an approximation of God’s nature.

Quiz Points: What does Pope mean when he says that man is as perfect as he ought?

The idea of an elaborate chain of being, ranging from God down to the lowest life forms was an important idea to Pope and others in the Age of Reason. When Pope asserts “Whatever is, is right,” he is asserting another important Enlightenment idea. Notice how Pope’s poetic form, with its emphasis on exact form and repetition is a symbol of the reason and order of his age.

Voltaire: Voltaire uses satire to ridicule some of the excesses of the Age of Reason, as he saw them. How is *Candide* a mockery of Pope and Leibniz? Is Pangloss to be taken seriously? What are the clues that this novel is a satire?

October 11:

No Quiz.

Read and Reread: Appendix 3,

Class time: Romantic Age Power Point, Art Film, Romantic Poetry (Appendix 4) discussion groups

October 18:

Quiz: Thoreau.

Read and Reread: 299-322 Thoreau, 323-337 Mill

Class time: Thoreau discussion groups, Mill Power point,

Quiz Points: Thoreau is particularly well known as an independent thinker who taught the doctrine of civil disobedience. He influenced the political and ethical views of Ghandi and Martin Luther King. But he is also a representative of American Romanticism. What value did Thoreau place on such institutions as the post office and the newspaper? Specifically, what were some of the thing the US Government was doing that Thoreau thought to be evil? Given that unjust laws exist, how does Thoreau propose that we should behave toward the government? How is Thoreau like Locke? How do they differ? **Continued on next page....**

Quiz Points continued....

Mill is well known for two reasons. First he wrote a short treatise on personal liberty that has had a profound effect on modern thinkers. In short, Mill argues that the only reason for which any person or government may control or restrict the actions of someone is to prevent harm to others. Society should make no law whose aim is to protect a person from harming himself. Second, Mill is known because of the defense of an ethical system known as utilitarianism. In short, that means that when we make an ethical choice, we ought to try to bring about the greatest good for the greatest number of people, and we ought to bring about the least pain by our choices. For example, we don't just look at the rule against lying and never lie. Rather, if we can see that by lying we might protect innocent people from pain or keep our country out of the clutches of an enemy. Then the ethical choice would be to lie. In other words, we decide what is right by looking at what the consequences will likely be.

October 25:

Quiz: At home, write a 1 page (handwritten is fine) summary on Darwin's discussion of how the selection or variation among domesticated animal could be similar among animals found in nature.

Read and Reread: 635-649 Woolf , and 350-366 Darwin

Classtime: Darwin Power point, Film excerpts from Ibsen's Dolls House, Exam 2 Review

Quiz Points: Darwin's writing gives us a glimpse of the way in which an earlier society had responded to Galileo. Even today, it is likely that many of us will respond to Darwin's theories based on an intuitive or traditional way of understanding nature, not based on the empirical evidences for evolution. Remember Galileo?

In the same manner, people have responded to Darwin. Evidences for the great age of the earth, evidences that all living creatures are related to each other, evidences that living creatures are related to the now extinct species of the distant past whom we study through fossil remain- all these can be ignored if one is convinced that creatures came into existence some 6000 years ago and that the earth is also just a few thousand years old.

It is important to recognize that Darwin didn't introduce the idea of evolution; many other scientists had done that. What he did was give superb scientific evidence fot the

idea that evolution took place through natural selection. That is, he proposed that the struggle for survival that all creatures engage in helped “select” features that made one creature more likely to survive. He claimed that natural selection was much like artificial selection. Just as a farmer takes his best milk-producing cow to the bull to be bred by artificial selection, nature selected its fastest cheetahs, best camouflaged moths, and strongest mountain goats to breed and pass on traits to future generations. The idea was simple, and Darwin’s research was so thorough, that no serious scholar could dismiss evolutionary thought easily from that time on.

Woolf: The writings of Virginia Woolf suggest some of the difficulties experienced by women as they moved into areas traditionally considered off-limits. Why would Shakespeare’s sister be unable to succeed? What do women need today to succeed?

November 1:

No Reading Assignment

Classtime: Film: Sense and Sensibility or Doll’s House

Come to class on time. The films are long and will take the entire class period. To get quiz credit you must stay for the entire film.

Quiz/ Class notes: Sense and Sensibility: While viewing the film, write down 10 ways that Marianne is representative of the Romantic Age, and 10 ways that Elinor represents the Age of Reason.

Doll’s House: While viewing the film, write some reflections about the role of Nora. Does she represent most women? How has she become oppressed? At what point in the film do we come to know the real Nora? What does Ibsen (the playwright) have in common with Virginia Woolf? Is Nora more to blame or her husband?

November 8:

ACADEMIC PAPERS DUE TODAY

Review: Pope, Leibniz, Voltaire, Thoreau, Mill, Darwin, Woolf and the Age of Reason and The Romantic Era.

Assignments given for Exam #2 Essay Assignment.

November 15: Exam #2. Please bring a scantron.

November 22: No Class.

November 29

Quiz to be determined.

Read: Appendix 6, Read 650 –653 Modern Poetry (Read the following poems: Frost “After Apple Picking,” Sassoon “Working Party,” Owen “Dulce et Decorum,” Yeats “The Second Coming,” Auden “The Unknown Citizen”

Classtime: Modernism Powerpoint. Modern Art Film. Poetry Circles.

December 6:

Quiz: Poetry Group Presentations will count as the quiz.

Read 535-545 Einstein, reread Poems from last class.

Classtime: Einstein Discussion Groups, Poetry Presentations, Review for Final Exam

**December 13: Final Exam (Bring a Scantron).
This will be in our classroom at the regular class
time.**