

CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION

Fall 2007
402 Hamilton Hall

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Heyman Center, H 2-4
Office hours: 11-12 TR, or by appointment

CC Home Page: www.college.columbia.edu/core
Home Page for this section: [via courseworks.columbia.edu](http://via.courseworks.columbia.edu)

WELCOME TO CC!

This course will introduce you to some of the major Western texts and thinkers of the ancient, medieval, and early modern ages. We will explore a wide array of complex issues, such as, What is justice? What is the good life? What is reason? Our goal will not be to find the final answers to these questions, but to reflect critically on them and use our foundational texts as catalysts for our thoughts. Accordingly, the course is not a lecture: I will guide the discussion, but I expect *you* to debate and argue.

There are two separate yet intimately connected components to this course. First, you will have to think critically about texts. Practically, this implies that you need to read all the texts very carefully, and be ready to discuss them in class. Second, you will also have to express your thoughts in writing. Thinking critically is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for good writing. Writing clearly and interestingly requires additional skills, which are best developed by regular practice. This is why there is a substantial writing component to this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) **Attendance.** According to College policy, absence is only excused for religious holidays, sickness, and family emergencies. Absence for the last two reasons must be explained by a note from a Dean or a doctor. More than two unexcused absences will result in your final grade falling by one third of a grade (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.).
- 2) **Discussion in class** (10%). You need to be not only physically, but also intellectually present in class. *You need to do all the readings.* Ask questions, respond to each other, raise objections, defend what you believe in, etc.
- 3) **Submission of questions for discussion** (10%). Throughout the semester you will need to send me (by email) a total of 10 questions or comments prompted by your reading. These very short questions or comments are due by 8:30 a.m. on the day of class. You

are free to pick the ten readings you want to write about. Each thoughtful comment/question will be worth 1%.

- 4) **Two short essays** (10% each). These four-page (double-space) essays must be sent to me by email as Word attachments. Topics will be given out ten days before each paper is due, but you can also choose your own topic (in which case I encourage you to talk with me about your topic before you start writing your paper).
- 5) **One longer essay** (8 pages, 20%). This essay is on a topic of your own choosing. You must also send it to me by email as a Word attachment.

❖ *Penalty for late papers:* One third of a letter grade for each day (24 hours) late. For instance, the first paper is due on October 5th at noon. If you send it to me at 12:01 p.m., your maximum possible grade will be A-. If you send it on the next day at 11:59 a.m., your maximum grade will also be A-, but it will be B+ if you send it one minute later.

- 6) **Exams.** There will be an in-class mid-term on October 25th (20%), and a cumulative final exam on December 14th (20%). Both of these will be open-book exams.

READINGS

❖ All the readings (except those only available online) have been ordered at Labyrinth Books and are on reserve at Butler Reserves. You are expected to have the readings done for each class. You need to buy the standard set of texts for CC, *plus* Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (Penguin).

9/4: Introduction

9/6: Plato, *Republic*, book I

9/11: Plato, *Republic*, books II-IV

9/13: Plato, *Republic*, books V-VII

9/18: Plato, *Republic*, books VIII-X

9/20: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, books I-II; III:1-9; IV; VII:1-8

9/25: Aristotle: 1) *Nicomachean Ethics*, books VIII, X
2) *Politics*, books I (ch. 1-9, 12-13); II (ch. 1-5); III (ch. 1-13); IV (ch. 1-5); VII (ch. 1-3); VIII (ch. 1)

9/27: Hebrew Bible (selections from *Tanakh* on CC web):

- 1) *Exodus* (ch. 1-21, 25, 31-3, 40)
- 2) *Judges* (ch. 4-10)
- 3) *Isaiah* (ch. 1, 5-11, 52-3)
- 4) *1 Samuel* (ch. 2:22-3; ch. 7:15-17)
- 5) *Nehemiah* (ch. 8-10)
- 6) *Ecclesiastes* (ch. 1-4, 7)

10/2: Hellenistic and Roman Thought:

- 1) Epicurus (selections on CC web)

- 2) Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, books II-V; VI:1-13, 16, 44; VII:1-3, 26, 33; VIII:1, 10, 17, 36, 52-59; IX-X

10/4: New Testament (selections from Anchor Bible on CC web):

- 1) *Gospel of Matthew* (entire)
- 2) *Romans* (ch. 1-8)
- 3) *Acts* (ch. 2, 3, 9, 11, 15)
- 4) *Galatians* (entire)
- 5) *1 Corinthians* (ch. 13)

✓ **10/5: FIRST PAPER DUE AT NOON (sent by email)**

10/9: Augustine, *City of God*, books I; V:1-11; VIII:4-11; XII

10/11: Augustine, *City of God*, books XIV; XV:1-7, 27; XIX:7-17; XXII:23-24, 29-30

10/12: CC COURSE-WIDE LECTURE

Daniel Boyarin, “Dethroning the Son of Man: Daniel and the Antiquity of Christianity”
(11:00-1:00, Roone Arledge Auditorium, Lerner Hall)

YOU NEED TO READ THE BOOK OF DANIEL, Chapter 7, BEFORE THE LECTURE

10/16: Qur’an, Suras 1, 2, 4, 56, 112, 114

10/18: Comparative Mysticism (all texts are on CC Web):

- 1) Al-Ghazali, *The Rescuer from Error*
- 2) *The Essential Kabbalah* pp. 134-7, 148-58, 206-17 (ch. 1-6, 32, 82-6)
- 3) (Mother) Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (ch. 1-6, 32, 82-6)

10/23: Comparative Rationalism (all texts are on CC Web):

- 1) Averroes (Ibn Rushd), *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*
- 2) Maimonides *The Guide of the Perplexed* (II:40, III:27-31, III:54)
- 3) Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Writings* (pp. 3-7, 14-29, 30-38, 46-53)

✓ **10/25: MID-TERM EXAM**

10/30: Machiavelli, *The Prince* (entire)

11/1: Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, books I:1-5, 10-13, 16-18, 21, 55, 58; II:1-3, 29; III:1, 3, 8-9, 31, 41, 43

11/6: ELECTION DAY – UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)

11/8: Protestant Reformation (all texts in Hillerbrand (ed.), *The Protestant Reformation*):

- 1) Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian Man”
- 2) Luther, “On Governmental Authority”
- 3) Calvin, “The Institutes of the Christian Religion”

✓ **11/9: SECOND PAPER DUE AT NOON (sent by email)**

11/13: The Scientific Revolution (the first two texts are available online on courseworks under “Class Files”; Galileo’s text is available on CC Web):

- 1) Copernicus, *Dedication of the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*
- 2) Bacon, *The New Organon*
- 3) Galileo, *Letter to the Grand Duchess*

11/15: René Descartes:

- 1) *Discourse on Method* (entire)
- 2) *Meditations on First Philosophy* (entire)

11/ 20: New World (all texts on CC web):

- 1) Vitoria, *On the American Indians*
- 2) Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*
- 3) Guamán Poma, *Appeal Concerning the Priests*

11/22: THANKSGIVING

11/27: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, The Introduction, ch. 1-16

11/29: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 17-21, 29, 32, 37, 46, A Review & Conclusion

12/4: Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (entire)

12/6: Locke, *A Letter concerning Toleration* (CC web)

✓ **12/7: THIRD (LONGER) PAPER DUE AT NOON (sent by email)**

✓ **{12/14: FINAL EXAM (12:30-3:30) -- DATE TO BE CONFIRMED}**

CLASS POLICIES

- 1) **Plagiarism policy.** Any instance of plagiarism in papers and exams will result in an automatic F for this course, and will not be negotiable. Any appeal should be submitted to the Dean’s office. Keep in mind that the Internet is a very useful tool, but that it needs to be used cautiously. If you have any doubt about what counts as plagiarism, please visit the following website: <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/plagiarism.html>.
- 2) **Laptops.** Laptops will be permitted only for taking class notes. Emailing, web-surfing, or any use other than note-taking is strictly forbidden during class.