

# **Hon 171: The Human Event I\***

Representative syllabus, assignments will vary

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(please use helpful subject lines. Include your name, class time, and topic)

## **Course Description/Overview:**

Honors 171 is the first semester of “The Human Event” year-long interdisciplinary seminar pulling from, for instance, literature, history, philosophy, religion, political theory, and psychology. The emphasis is on the development of social thought from ancient time to around the 1600s. You’ll build cultural and historical awareness as we sample some primary works of import. These are roughly chronologically arranged.

An effective, informed person/citizen knows from whence their thoughts and ways of knowing/being/doing came. Knowing such helps us make better decisions about what we want to do and how we want to live in the present and future. Thus, this course will ask you to “dig in” to the material and your own self, to think critically about the material and about one’s own life and leanings. It also involves expressing those thoughts clearly and effectively. To be successful at this endeavor, you must study, read, listen, think, express, and write with care and persuasiveness. So plan to build your skills in those areas.

Considering writings on the reflective existence of others will assist you in building the skill of critical thinking, reflection, use of evidence as you consider moral judgments, social order, and other enduring themes across the ages.

## **Course Objectives:**

~ Broaden the student’s historical and cultural awareness and understanding

~ Improve the student’s skill in analyzing written material.

~ Improve the student’s skill in expressing ideas, both orally and in writing, emphasizing use of evidence/connection to text rather than opinion.

~ Develop increased ability to think critically and seriously about the nature of human existence and to formulate his or her own views and insights regarding ethics, philosophy, religion, politics, etc.

~ Instill intellectual breadth and academic discipline in preparation for more advanced honors courses.

## **Required Texts: Available at the ASU bookstore.**

- The Norton Anthology of World Literature , Second Edition , Volumes Package 1: Vols. A, B, C Sarah Lawall, Maynard Mack, Jerome W. Clinton, Et Al. ;

Copyright date, July 2003  
Paperback ; ISBN: 978-0-393-92453-4

- Tao Te Ching by Stephen Mitchell. Pocket Edition.  
Copyright 1992, Paperback. ISBN 978-0-06-081245-4 Publisher: HarperPerennial
- Handbook Enhanced, by Wadsworth/Cengage company, ISBN: 9780495898924
- A Reading Journal/Notebook -- That is, procure an approximately 8.5 inch x 11 inch notebook for the sole use of this class. I will collect them at un-announced times and/or check them in class or at office appointments so be SURE you bring it to every class and don't keep notes in it for other classes as you may be without it for awhile when I collect it. You will take notes on/think through each reading as you read it before class and also use this notebook for in-class prompts/notes.
- Online readings, as assigned to supplement the anthology. Almost all of our readings are straight from the anthology. That said, even if you find the reading in the anthology, be sure to check if I added additional selections online or offered a different translation online.

You must **ALWAYS** bring the readings to class. They should show evidence of use and be available to you to refer to in order to provide pro or con evidence/support to yours or others assertions in class.

Note: The class contains material that is of an "adult" nature. None of it is there for shock-factor or to be gratuitous. Handling such matters maturely is just a part of being an educated person as these topics come up in life. So while some of the topics may be "sensitive" to some and may, in passing moments, make us feel uncomfortable in any number of ways, I prefer we stay in the place of inquiry and learning. This is a safe place and I request/expect everybody to assume the best of the material, of me, and of each other so even if something comes off "odd" at first, hang with it and see where it leads.

### **READING (in preparation for participation):**

*"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."* ~ Groucho Marx

The class requires active reading of the material. Some call it a "close reading" and you might also simply call it "studying" the text. Some of the material will be easy for you, other material may seem "thick" to you at first. You may have to reduce distractions and/or read passages more than once. You will always want to make margin notes and underline key ideas (do not just "go to town" with a highlighter...rather *think* about what you are reading, make connections, etc.). Note in the margin what piqued your interest, surprised you, or caused you to ask a larger or smaller question.

\*\* Plan on spending at least 2 to 3 hours MINIMUM outside class on reading/studying for each hour in class. So set aside that amount of time per class period. There likely will be more time spent in the weeks where you are also working on an essay. \*\*\*

Challenge yourself to demonstrate intellectual perseverance and stick with it. This is aided mightily by your starting the readings early (rather than procrastinating, as feeling rushed rarely enhances careful reading).

Do you have to memorize what you read? No, that's not necessary (and would be highly unlikely!) but you do need to apply yourself and stick with it so you "get" the main points as well as nuances. You can do it, I'm confident. And, to be clear, you should know the author, general context of the piece in time and intellectual space, etc.

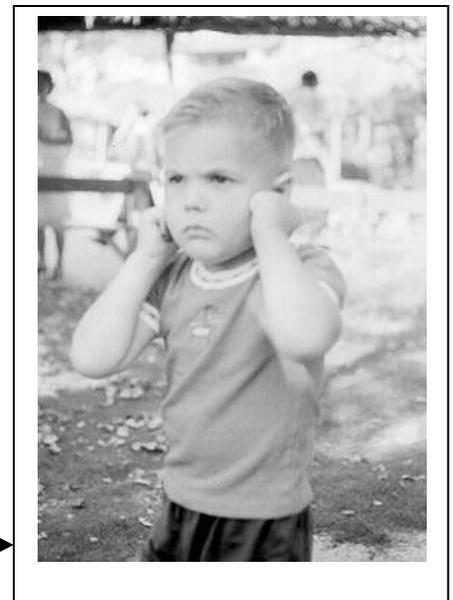
Organize your life to have the readings done before you come to class and bring the material with all your fabulous notes on it or your attendance/participation grade will suffer a harsh fate that day. To help you with that, an on-going Reading Journal is required. (More on this later; keep reading...)

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION (talk, listen, help & otherwise cooperatively play nice):**

When you come to class expect to participate every time and more than once each time. This class isn't a "lecture" class. It is a seminar class—so, yes, you'll need to participate each day in meaningful, on-target ways.

This is a time for informed discussion, not just spouting off random opinions in a dogmatic way. A "spirited" manner is welcome, of course, but note that participation is about more than offering opinions. While opinion may factor in—and we do indeed want to learn how to offer our opinions in constructive ways—evidence-based comments from the readings or life experience are more the order of the day.

At times, you will need to challenge yourself to demonstrate intellectual courage to speak up and intellectual humility and empathy to keep both an open-mind to others as you listen in an active, thoughtful, respectful manner. This cannot be your approach to talking, listening, or handling persuasive counter-arguments. :-)



More on participation: (did I mention it's worth, overall, 40% of your grade? 30% + 10% Reading Journal and additional in-class written work.)

Be prepared for anything in terms of responding to questions I pose (about the reading, connecting back to other material, for summaries, etc.) or those that your peers pose. Plan to support your ideas (or those of your peers) with EVIDENCE (primarily from the text, less so from life, logic) and plan to pose and address counter-arguments. Just because the word "argument" is there does not mean we

will be adversarial or argumentative. This should be fun, open, and sometimes challenging, but not threatening.

P. S. If/when I do give you discussion questions in advance to aid your reading, do not make the mistake of limiting yourself to thinking “Well I answered those so I’m done.” When you get such questions in advance they are to *start* your thinking, not limit or stop it.

**PARTICIPATION INCLUDES** the reading, listening and talking above but relies heavily on your also doing well on any activities like peer-review, in-class activities, discussion boards, pop quizzes, etc. assigned and your **READING JOURNAL**. You cannot participate well without reading with care and keeping track of what you are thinking as you go along. The Reading Journal (which you’ll complete before each class) and in-class writing activities/quizzes, etc. will be worth 10% of your grade but, trust me, it heavily impacts the 40% participation grade as that 10% as is crucial to your being prepared to participate verbally.

More on participation the first day of class! And there’ll be something on BlackBoard about participation that you can consider as part of the syllabus when you read it.

**WRITING (Write, let it settle, re-write, edit, proofread. Life is about revision.)**

*“It is useless to attempt to reason a man out of a thing he was never reasoned into.”*

~ Jonathan Swift

Academic Essays (60% of course grade)

Three out-of-class academic essays will be due. I’ll give you more details later, but you will write at least 15 to 20 pages of academic/argumentative spread between the essay assignments. These are not to be opinion pieces or flights of fancy. They are to demonstrate that you can analyze material, synthesize ideas, and develop a clear thesis statement that you then support with evidence in a logical, coherent way. “Support” means selecting well-chosen, on-target, brief quotes to weave into your writing. This is another reason why you’d be wise to take good notes when you read—it’ll help you do better work on (and make a quicker job of) your papers.

I’ll post handouts in the class BlackBoard site to help with this and you’ll want to plan on leaving time to visit the tutors in the Barrett Writing Center. You’ll also be using the Enhanced Insite Writing Handbook and tutors as well. Make use of all that is available to you to put your “best foot forward.” It’s up to you to do your best and there are supports to help you do that.

Reading Journal/Exercises/Reading Responses/Discussion Questions (10% of course grade)

You will also write in response to readings to help you build skills, engage the material, and be ready for class. These may take several forms from in-class writing, to take-home assignments, to posting to BlackBoard (the class website) the day before class, to your coming prepared with written discussion questions. (By the way, a “discussion question” is thoughtful and well-developed. It is not asking what

year it was or for a simple definition.) You'll have to go with the flow on this. No late work or make-ups for this sort of assignment.

Note: It can take a time or two for you to "get into it" but soon you will see your Reading Journal as your friend! I'll give you more on what to include in it but consider it your "Ticket In" to class each time and you will write in it in class (or pull pages out to give to me) as your "Ticket Out." Again, I will spot check these in class and/or collect them at random from one, some, or all of you and/or check them in office visits.

More on writing and specific paper length, guidelines, etc. in class. And there'll be informational documents provided you on BlackBoard about how to write and submit papers in this class...you can consider those documents as part of the syllabus when you read them.

## Grading

Three Essays totaling 60%

Participation = 30% (Just showing up won't cut it. Practice thoughtful, regular participation)

Reading Journal = 10% (incl. journaling in advance and in-class writing, activities, & quizzes or outside class discussion boards, etc.)

Total = 100%

## Grade Appeals

Additional feedback is one thing, arguing a grade is another. In both cases I expect you to use your "thinking cap" first)... To request reconsideration of a grade you must take the following steps.

- Review the assignment and its instructions with care. Re-read your work with an objective eye.
- Compare your work with the grading criteria, my feedback, tips, etc.
- Wait at least 24 hours after the grade and feedback is posted (to allow any surprise, shock, or anger you may feel to cool and allow time for you to do a proper review as described here)
- Submit an appeal in writing after 24 hours but within one week from the time the grades are posted. After that, the opportunity for appealing a particular assignment grade is lost. Also, when I say "in writing" I mean formal writing, not via email or other quickie form of communication. Write it formally/professionally (not in casual email-speak) 5. Pinpoint your perceived discrepancy between the instructions, the product (your essay) and the grade awarded
- Provide a cogent, well-written argument explaining how your work met the instructions and criteria
- Indicate the grade you feel you **earned**--not the one you want. Remember, this is at University level and Barrett Honors College standards, not your standards or those of your high school or of friends, parents, or other of your cheerleaders and fans. And, sadly, I cannot grade on effort. Effort is part of what college means; quality, clarity, evidence-based, etc. dictates the grade.

NOTE: An appeal does not necessarily equate to getting an improved score. However, if all directions are followed, I will carefully and open-mindedly review your appeal. Use your time wisely, don't quibble over a little thing...focus on what you learned to improve your NEXT paper. Refresh yourself on the grading scheme of the class and put your energy into activities that matter.

Please read "Student Academic Grievance Procedures" on the Barrett website, for more.

## **Policies**

### Technology / Cell Phones / Computers

To quote flight attendants "Cell phones and other electronic devices now need to be turned off and stowed in the overhead compartment or under the seat in front of you."

That's right, there is no texting or computing or other forms of electronics or multi-tasking permitted during class time. Turn everything off (not just on vibrate) and put it away before you enter the classroom. If I ever want you to bring (or get out) your computer in class for some reason, I'll tell you.

I know you may feel like you are going through withdrawal the first couple times but you can handle it for the brief time we'll be together twice a week. Staying on task will not only help you do better, it'll help me and your classmates who would be distracted by your multi-tasking. If you forget to turn it off, I may answer it for you and/or temporarily take it from you for the duration of that class period. Same goes with any other device or object that is distracting or, worse yet!, dangerous to me or the rest of the class.

### Attendance

Coming to class prepared and on-time is crucial. Nothing can substitute for it. This is a discussion-based collaborative class so we need you there "with bells on."

- Life happens so you get two "free" absences. (We're grown-ups now so we won't quibble about whether they are excused or unexcused—you get two, whatever they are.) Any absences beyond those two will seriously lower your participation grade.
- Miss the equivalent of two weeks (4 classes) and you can't get higher than a "C" in the course (but you can get lower! So still apply yourself.)
- Showing up late more than once or twice will cost in your participation grade. Tardiness will accrue to absences so plan to be on time. And don't leave early. Leaving early is a form of absence as well so stay until class is dismissed. If you don't, don't ask my permission to leave, just go and be sure that a) I will note it, b) that you follow-up with a peer to see if you missed any announcements.
- If you aren't prepared with your readings there with you in class, clearly marked up as read, or you do not have your Reading Journal with you, you'll get marked with a partial or full absence.

- Actually being in class is important—if you miss a few minutes, you may actually be missing a lot in terms of information or perspective that could be important to your understanding of the material or doing well on a paper. So BE there in mind and body and....each class session is short enough that you should be able to be there the whole time. In other words, aim to take care of “personal needs” (using the restroom, etc.) before or after class. Of course if some urgent need arises you may briefly excuse yourself (you needn’t ask permission).
- Sleeping in class or being engaged in anything other than the discussion is like being absent.

If you miss class, please plan to touch base with a classmate to find out if you missed important announcements, reminders, etc.

### Due Dates and Late Work

Readings and work for class are due at the beginning of the class period. (So read the assignments listed for that day BEFORE you come to class on the day they are listed.) No late work is accepted for in-class exercises, pre-class reading prompts, Reading Journals, discussion boards, etc. Nor is it accepted for the final paper.

The formal essays at specific times. Late work is accepted on Essay 1 and Essay 2 (sorry, no late work on Essay 3), but the paper will be marked down by 1/3 letter grade per DAY (not per class period) it is late. So, if it is due on Monday at noon but comes in between that time and Tuesday at noon means, say, an B paper would come down to an B-...another day late and that B paper would now be a C+ If you have a valid serious reason (not that the dog or printer ate it) that is documentable well AHEAD of the due date/time, I’ll try to work with you, otherwise....

### Student Code of Conduct

Please see the Student Affairs web page at <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/> and <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity> for policies to which we adhere. Read them.

In terms of plagiarism:

It’s not okay. Most assignments will be submitted through a plagiarism-checking tool. Either way, it is important that you be clear on what you are doing so you don’t plagiarize. Whether it is a formal essay or a reading journal entry or whatever, do your own work, your own thinking, and your own writing in your own words. In the instance where you paraphrase or quote, do so with care and cite your references, etc.

Students who plagiarize or cheat will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. The minimum penalty will be a zero grade for the plagiarized work (or any work that contains things that can be considered plagiarism). The minimum penalty is possible but NOT likely. The maximum penalty is expulsion from the University. What is most common is I fail the student for the course. Don’t take the chance. Please don’t do these things (even on accident).

Here is a fun little quiz to use as a resource to be sure you have this down...

[http://library.umf.maine.edu/plagiarism/is\\_it.html](http://library.umf.maine.edu/plagiarism/is_it.html) This web site from the University of Maine has some excellent links and allows you to take a short quiz with quick feedback on whether different situations are plagiarism or not.

## Email

Do NOT email me your papers...there are places to submit them in the course websites and THAT's where they need to go. If there is some tech issue and you feel you must email a paper to prove you got it in on time, just know that sometimes they don't arrive. Assuming it does, you'll still need to submit the paper ASAP via the tool in the course website. Leave time for tech issues and emergencies so you can call the tech people for help and/or try a different computer or whatever.

I don't live on the computer 24/7 so allow for time to pass before you worry about if I got your email. Usually 24-48 hours during the week, maybe longer if you write on a Friday – Sunday, it just depends on what's going on. I do my best to be speedy, though, so you'll usually hear back from me sooner. If, by chance 2 days have passed and you've not heard from me, just re-send the email as it may not have arrived or been screened out by a filter or who knows what. You can also leave a voicemail with the same question or to check to see if an email arrived.

## Multiculturalism

Barrett, the Honors College at Arizona State University, is committed to creating a multicultural learning environment, which is broadly defined as a place where human cultural diversity is valued and respected. Barrett courses integrate multicultural and diversity issues in ways that are designed to enhance students' honors experience and promote learning goals. We hope that our students will contribute their unique perspectives to this effort by respecting others' identities and personal life histories and by considering and raising issues related to multiculturalism and diversity as appropriate to individual course content.

Continue on for Course Schedule

## Course Schedule

(Subject to change. Take note of class and BlackBoard announcements.)

Most of readings are in the anthology, so always go there first. Sometimes I will post additional support documents or alternate translations on our class BlackBoard site so you should always check there too.

### Week 1

Thurs. Introduction to class and each other, close reading, psychological contracts & seminar participation guidelines, etc.

### Week 2

Tues. Popol Vuh (Mayan creation accounts and heroic tales)  
Part 1, 2, 4 and 5

Hesiod's *Theogony*

North American Indian creation stories

They are: Spider Woman, Hopi  
The Emergence of the World, Pueblo  
The Cosmic Parents and Twin Brothers, Zuni

Thurs. Genesis

### Week 3

Tues. Gilgamesh

Thurs. Book of Job (in the anthology, and a translation on BlackBoard)

### Week 4

Tues. Homer's *Iliad* (Books 1 – 16, which are on pages 114-177 in book, and read the background notes and summaries of books 2 and 5 on the class website)

Thurs. Homer's *Iliad* (Books 17 -24, which are pages 177 – 225 in the book. Read it all and focus extra attention on 18, 22, and 24). Also read the summaries of 17 to 20 on the website to fill in some blanks or be otherwise supportive.

### Week 5

**Monday Essay 1 DRAFT due by midnight.**

Tues. Peer Review of paper in class

Thurs. Confucius' *The Analects*

### Week 6

**Monday Essay 1 due to "Enhanced Insite" class website by noon.**

Tues. Oresteia, *Agamemnon*

Thurs. Oresteia, summary of *The Libation Bearers* and read *The Eumenides*

**Week 7**

Tues. Plato's *Apology of Socrates*  
 Thurs. Sophocles' *Antigone*

**Week 8**

Tues. Mahabarata and Bhagavad Gita excerpts  
 Thurs. Christian Greek Scriptures (selections from Matthew, Luke, Thomas, Romans)

**Week 9**

Tues. *The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity* and *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*  
 Thurs. Augustine. Excerpts from *Confessions*

**Week 10**

**Monday Essay 2 DRAFT due by midnight.**

Tues. Peer Review of paper in class  
 Thurs. Excerpts from Christine dePizan and from Sei Shōnagon's *The Pillow Book*

**\*\*\* Submit Essay 2 to Personal Tutor via "Enhanced Insite" for Review.**

**Week 11**

**Monday Essay 2 due to "Enhanced Insite" class website by noon.**

Tues. Dante's *Inferno*  
 Thurs. Dante's *Inferno*

**Week 12**

Tues. Machiavelli's *The Prince*  
 Thurs. Tao Te Ching

**Week 13**

Tues. Shakespeare's *Hamlet*  
 Thurs. Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

**Week 14**

Tues. Las Casas' *Destruction of the Indies*  
 Thurs. Montaigne "Of Cannibals", "Of the Inconsistency of Our Actions" (and possibly others)

**Week 15**

Tues. Excerpts from Sor Juana  
 Thurs. Thanksgiving Day

**Week 16**

**Monday Essay 3 DRAFT due by midnight.**

Tues. Peer review of papers in class

Thurs. Writing workshops

**Week 17**

Tues. Instead of another reading, instead of writing in your Reading Journal, bring to class 1 copy (and submit the e-version online before class) of 2-3 double-spaced typed pages on “What is the Human Event?” Include a reflection on, among other things, observations on you before taking the course and after...What have you learned? What are your “Take Home Points”? How will you use them going forward? Be prepared to discuss what you wrote.

**Friday Essay 3 due to “Enhanced Insite” class website by noon.**

\* The syllabus and assignment information may be added, deleted, or changed at the discretion of the professor. Changes are unlikely and rare, but you are responsible to know about changes (keep up with announcements).