The Human Event (171) * Representative Syllabus

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Catalog Course Description

The Human Event is an intensive, interdisciplinary seminar focusing on key social and intellectual currents in the development of humanity in its diversity. Students examine human thought and imagination from various perspectives, including philosophy, history, literature, religion, science, and art. Coursework emphasizes critical thinking, discussion, and argumentative writing. Exploring texts from earliest recorded history to approximately 1600 C.E., HON171 is the first half of a two-semester sequence that concludes with HON272.

Course Objectives:
1. To improve the student’s ability to reason critically and communicate clearly.
2. To cultivate the student’s ability to engage in intellectual discourse through reading, writing, and discussion.
3. To broaden the student’s historical and cultural awareness and understanding.
4. To deepen awareness of the diversity of human societies and cultures.
5. To instill intellectual breadth and academic discipline in preparation for more advanced study.

Section-specific description and objectives

This course is a chronologically organized seminar course that looks at the intellectual history of the West, and other cultures, from 600 BCE until 1650 CE. The aim of the course is to stretch and strengthen your ability to analyze, draw connections to themes, and understand the historical narrative of these great works. Students are expected to be able to prove these abilities both verbally and in written work.

This should be primarily demonstrated through increasing competency in argumentative essay writing, with the use of appropriate academic conventions, and through depth reading and verbal discussion in the seminar classes.

The core themes we will encounter this semester are:
- How should we live and what is the good life?
- How do stories of great adventures teach and inspire us to be better human beings?
- Is there a God(s) and how does belief motivate our deeds?
- What happens to us after death?

This class is enabled through Blackboard so be alert to updates to the calendar below, including specific chapters assigned for each week, online readings and other content.

List of Texts
You must have the following texts for this class. Please buy the version indicated as class members having editions with out-of-sync page numbers makes our discussions more difficult.


These are required texts referenced in the calendar that will be made available online either through links on Blackboard in the course ‘content’ area, or in a PDF format. For seminars where these texts are required, laptops are invited to be used in class.

1. Aesop’s Fables
2. Plato’s Apology
3. Plato, Allegory of the Cave ex. Republic
4. Excerpt from the Aeneid (Virgil)
5. Apollonius Rhodius, Argonautica I, 23- 34; IV, 891-909.
6. Ovid, Metamorphoses X, 1-105; XI, 1-66
7. Apocryphon of John
8. Gospel of Mary Magdalene
9. The Gospel of St. Thomas
10. Excerpts from St. Augustine
11. Celsus, On the True Doctrine: A Discourse against the Christians
12. Anselm, Proslogion
13. Letters of Marsilio Ficino

Requirements and Grade Breakdown

The final grade is assessed as follows:
20% (Participation)
20% (Pop-Quizzes and Discussion Board)
60% (Formal Papers – 20% each)

Grading Scale
100-98% = A+, 97-93 = A, 92-90 = A-, 89-88 = B+, 87-83 = B, 82-80 = B- etc.

Papers

The writing assignments for this course are three formal papers of between 1400-1700 words in
length each. The questions will be given out approximately two weeks prior to the due date. Formal writing consists of essay responses to specific questions. These questions are meant to be answered with clear and cogent arguments overarched by a clear thesis statement. They are not ‘prompts’ designed to let you go off on any tangent you feel like. Overly discursive writing that does not address the question specifically will be returned to you without a grade and is considered late work. All formal writing must be cited using the citation system detailed in the ‘citation guide’ provided online. If a citation is not covered in the guide, use the Harvard style of citation. All papers are due by the start of your class time on their due date through Blackboard Safe Assign. Hard copies are also required for feedback. Late work is penalized by a grade letter per day and is not accepted (0) after the third day.

Participation

The Human Event aims to develop critical thinking and mature writing skills. Taught in seminar style, this honors course is an intensive reading, writing, and discussion experience. Active student participation in each class, therefore, is absolutely essential. The participation grade is judged both on frequency and quality of class contributions. If you do not actively participate in each class, you cannot achieve an A for this component.

Things that will raise your participation grade are as follows:

- Preparing notes for each class and bringing your text to class.
- Speaking up.
- Connecting previous readings to current ones.
- Being respectful of the classroom, the discussion, your instructor and your fellow students’ opinions.

Things that will lower your participation grade are as follows:

- Failure to bring your text to class.
- Using laptops when they are not necessary or you are not invited to use one.
- Sleeping or lack of focus.
- Chattering or having side conversations that are not invited by the instructor.

Discussion Boards and Quizzes

Other graded work will consist of five short, discussion board contributions on Blackboard and four quizzes on the week’s readings. If you prepare for class by reading and note-making, you will need to perform minimal extra preparation for this component. These will be due at 9pm the night before the class. They are due through Blackboard. Late submissions will receive a 0 in these components.

Attendance

You are allowed 2 excused or unexcused absences per semester. Further absences will affect your overall grade in the class, by a grade letter per absence. If you are absent 6 times (or more) you will fail. Please discuss conflicts with me in advance as a courtesy. Excessive tardiness will
be noted as an absence.

Writing Center

The Barrett Writing Center is available to assist Barrett Honors College students with their papers for all their classes. Directed by BHC faculty and staffed by BHC writing tutors who themselves have completed both HON 171 and 272, the Barrett Writing Center offers individual tutoring on writing papers for the Human Event and your other courses. Its goal is to help you improve your lifelong writing and critical thinking skills, so please take advantage of its services. For more information, go to the BWC website: http://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/barrett-writing-center/

Student Conduct and Academic Regulations

Students must conduct themselves according to the ASU policies posted online at http://www.asu.edu/studentlife/judicial. These include the ASU Student Code of Conduct and the Student Academic Integrity Policy. For information on BHC policies for grievances and grade complaints, go to the BHC web page at http://honors.asu.edu and follow the links for Prospective and Current Students, then Advising and Honors Curriculum, then Academic Advising Office, then Student Academic Grievance Procedures.

Academic integrity is essential to all values upon which a university is founded. A student with a documented case of academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism or cheating) in an honors class will receive the grade of F for the course. The case will be referred to the Student Conduct Committee for the University and may result in expulsion. Ask questions if you are unsure of how to cite others’ work. All work is electronically scanned through plagiarism software.

Multiculturalism Statement

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.

Additional Notes:

The instructor reserves the right to modify the course calendar during the semester. The student agrees to this by registering and remaining in the course. Classes should not be recorded unless you have a disability statement that indicates it is necessary.

Calendar and Reading Assignments

Week 1 - Aug 22: Introduction
Week 2 - Aug 27 29:
i) Odyssey (pp 77-83 and pp 152-167 and pp 172-178 and pp 191-198)
ii) Odyssey (Page range to be confirmed)

Week 3 – Sept 3 5:
i) Ramayana (Page range TBC)
ii) Ramayana (Page range TBC)

Week 4 – Sept 10 12:
i) Aesop's Fables (selection online – link through BB) and Tao Te Ching (page range TBC)
ii) Essay writing workshop

Week 5 – Sept 17 19:
i) Hippolytus (Page range TBC)
ii) Hippolytus (Page range TBC)

Week 6 – Sept 24 26:
i) Plato’s Allegory of the Cave (online – link through BB)
ii) ESSAY DUE – Peer Feedback

Week 7 – Oct 1 3:
i) The Swerve
ii) Lucretius (Page range TBC and PDF excerpt of Greenblatt’s ‘The Swerve’ BB)

Week 8 – Oct 8 10:
i) Aeneid (Excerpt PDF on BB)
ii) Orpheus and Eurydice (PDF of Appolonius Rhodius and Ovid excerpts online)

Week 9 – Oct 17:
i) No class (fall break)
ii) Gospel of St. Thomas (online – link through BB)

Week 10 – Oct 22 24:
i) ) Apocryphon of John and Gospel of Mary Magdalene (online – link through BB)
ii) St. Augustine ‘On the Trinity’ and ‘Confessions’ (PDF)

Week 11 – Oct 29 31:
i) Anselm, Proslogion (online link through BB)
ii) Celsus, On the True Doctrine: A Discourse against the Christians

Week 12 – Nov 5 7:
i) ESSAY DUE – Peer Feedback (No reading)
ii) Beowulf (Page range TBC)

Week 13 – Nov 12 14:
i) Beowulf (Page range TBC)
ii) The Divine Comedy (Page range TBC)

Week 14 Nov 19 21:
i) The Divine Comedy (Page range TBC)
ii) The Letters of Marsilio Ficino (PDF on BB)

Week 15 Nov 26
i) Anthony and Cleopatra
ii) No Class

Week 16 Dec 3 5:
i) Anthony and Cleopatra
ii) Anthony and Cleopatra

NB! FINAL ESSAY DUE TUESDAY DECEMBER 10th at 9am.