The Human Event (272) * Representative Syllabus

Dr. Abby Loebenberg
E-mail: Abby.Loebenberg@asu.edu
Office: Sage 169
Hours: By email appointment or drop in T 10.00 -1

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 approximately 1600 to the present, HON 272 is the second half of a two-semester sequence that starts with HON 171.

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 1650 CE until the present. 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 relate to others?
• What is the role of violence in social change?
• What are human rights?
• How are social and philosophical themes explored through literature?

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.


Other readings will be made available through Blackboard as PDFs or as links to online sites. You will be required to print these out and bring hard copies to class. No laptops or smart phones are allowed in class.

Requirements and Grade Breakdown

The final grade is assessed as follows:
30% (5% class leadership assignment 25% general participation)
10% (Online quizzes)
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 5pm on their due date through Blackboard Safe Assign. Hard copies are also required. The hard copies should be turned in outside of my office door in the marked box, also by 5pm. Late work is penalized by a grade letter per day and is not accepted (0) after the third day (72 hours).
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. Participation is your responsibility, take it and speak up, contribute to your break-out groups and use the opportunities for presentation.

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.
- Asking questions and engaging other students.
- 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.
- Use of phones or laptops.
- Sleeping or lack of focus.
- Chattering or having side conversations that are not invited by the instructor.
- Over-dominating discussion.
- Negative or defensive body language.

25% of the participation grade is graded on a four-point scale in every class where there is a reasonable opportunity for you to participate. This will likely include any class where any type of discussion or presentation is held, but none where writing workshops or movies are part of the class plan. Good participation (4/4) includes meeting all of the above positive criteria and none of the negative. Average participation (3/4) includes meeting some of both category or meeting only some of the positive criteria. Poor (2/4) participation includes meeting none of the positive and none of the negative criteria or meeting more negative criteria than positive. Absences will score 1/4.

5% of the participation grade is for a class leadership assignment. You will do one assignment in the semester where you will sign up (with a partner) to lead the class in discussion. In consultation with the professor you will develop an outline lesson plan and a series of discussion questions or group exercises. This lesson plan will be due by 11pm Sunday for a Wednesday class or 11pm Friday for a Monday class.

Quizzes

Other graded work will consist of ten quizzes on the week’s readings (10 points each – lowest score is dropped). 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 11 pm the night before the
class they are due through Blackboard. This will usually be a Tuesday. Late submissions will receive a 0 for 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.

I recommend consulting with this syllabus and **making appointments well in advance** of the due dates of papers.

For more information, go to the BWC website: [http://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/barrett-writing-center/](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](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](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 XE for the course. 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**

*Please note that when “page range” is noted this is a minimum reading requirement. You may need to read beyond this to effectively answer certain essay questions. Expect to read novels in full and expect they may take you longer than a couple of days to do. Plan your time. * Indicates a student-led class.*

**Week 1 – 13/15 January**

i) Syllabus and Participation contract.
ii) The Dawn of Enlightenment
   - Diderot. “Encyclopédie.” *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* 17
   - Kant. “What is Enlightenment?” *TPER* 1
   - Rousseau. “On the Origin of Inequality among Men” (PDF on BB)

**Week 2 – 20/22 January**

i) No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
ii) The Reasonable Mind*
   - Descartes. “I think, therefore I am…” *TPER* 181
   - Locke. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* *TPER* 185
   - Hume. *A Treatise of Human Nature* *TPER* 195
   - Pope. *An Essay on Man* 255

**Week 3 - 27/29 January**

i) Savages, Slaves, and the Other Races*
   - Diderot. “Who Are You, Then, to Make Slaves…” *TPER* 640
   - Diderot. “Enjoyment and Tahiti.” *TPER* 265
   - Paine. “African Slavery in America.” *TPER* 645
   - Gibbon. “Of Empires and Savages.” *TPER* 649
   - Woolman. “Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes.” *TPER* 630
   - Kant. “The Difference between the Races.” *TPER* 637

ii) The State and the Citizen *
   - “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.” *TPER* 466
   - Rousseau “The Social Contract.” *TPER* 430
   - Smith, “The Wealth of Nations” *TPER* 505

**Week 4 - 10/12 February**

i) Peer editing/Writing workshop
ii) No Class – Faculty Retreat (**Essay** Due)
**Week 4 - 3/5 February**
- i) Writing week
- ii) Writing week

**Week 5 – 17/19 February**
- i) War, Torture, Crime and Punishment *
  - Voltaire. "On Torture and Capital Punishment." *TPER* 532
  - Bentham – “Cases unmeet for punishment…” *TPER* 541
  - Franklin – “There never was a good war…” *TPER* 550
  - Voltaire – “Splendid Armies”… *TPER* 546
- ii) Grimm’s Fairy Tales (page range TBC)

**Week 6 – 24/26 February**
- i) Grimm’s Fairy Tales (cont...)*
- ii) The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Page range TBC)

**Week 7 – 3/5 March**
- i) Brave New World*
- ii) Brave New World*

**Week 8 - 10/12 March**
- i) No Class - Spring Break
- ii) No Class – Spring Break

**Week 9 – 17/19 March**
- i) Paper Feedback
- ii) Light in August

**Week 10 – 24/26 March**
- i) Light in August*
- ii) The Origins of Totalitarianism (Page range TBC)

**Week 11 – 31/2 March/April**
- i) Marx (PDF on BB)
- ii) The Battle of Algiers Film in class (Universal Declaration of Human Rights – link on BB) (Essay Due)

**Week 12 – 7/9 April**
- i) The Battle of Algiers - film
- ii) The Sea

**Week 13 - 14/16 April**
- i) Waiting for the Barbarians
- ii) Waiting for the Barbarians*

**Week 14 - 21/23 April**
i) Writing Workshop
ii) No Class – Professor at Conference

**Week 15 - 28/30 April/May**

i) The Complete Maus *
ii) The Complete Maus

NB! FINAL ESSAY DUE May 5th