

# THE HUMAN EVENT: HON 171

**Barrett Honors College:** ASU

**Instructor:** Robert Niebuhr

**Office:** Sage South 152

**Sections:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Assistants:** |

**Course Meets:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Times:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Hours:** T/TH 10:30–11:45, T 1:30–2:15, or by appt.

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## 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:

- To improve the student's ability to reason critically and communicate clearly.
- To cultivate the student's ability to engage in intellectual discourse through reading, writing, and discussion.
- To broaden the student's historical and cultural awareness and understanding.
- To deepen awareness of the diversity of human societies and cultures.
- To instill intellectual breadth and academic discipline in preparation for more advanced study.

We will examine the increasingly interconnected world that has drawn people closer together while charting the transmission and subsequent impact of political ideologies, religious beliefs, economic practices, and intellectual development. As much as it discusses the legacy of powerful leaders, thinkers, or ideas, it also stresses the progression of otherwise underexplored actors throughout history; furthermore, it encourages students to embrace non-Western cultural practices and modes of thought. While a primary theme is the evolution of identity, subthemes include foreign policy and war, literature and the arts, technology, the economy, and travel. Using a multitude of source materials, we will devote our class time to intense discussion.

**Required Texts:** Available in the ASU Bookstore or online. You must obtain these **EXACT** editions. Use the ISBN if ordering from online sources to ensure the correct copy. **OTHER EDITIONS WILL RESULT IN A LOSS OF POINTS!**

Aristophanes, *Frogs* trans. J. Henderson (Focus, 2008). 1585103089

Dante, *Inferno* trans. Stanley Lombardo (Hackett Pub Co, 2009). 978-0872209176

*Gilgamesh: A New Rendering in English Verse* trans. David Ferry (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993). 978-0374523831

Lao-tzu, *Tao te Ching* trans. Stephen Mitchell (New Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2006). 978-0060916084.

Michael E. Chapman, *Thesis Writer's Guide: Making an Argument in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Reading, MA: Trebarwyth Press, 2010). 978-0-9786597-3-8. \*Available **ONLY** in ASU bookstore!

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* trans. George Bull (Penguin, 2003). 978-0140449150

Murasaki Shikibu, *Diary of Lady Murasaki* trans. Richard Bowring (Penguin) ISBN-13: 978-0140435764.

*Ibn Battutah, The Travels of Ibn Battutah* ed. Tim Mackintosh-Smith (Pan Macmillan). 978-0330418799

This course will also include short readings that are compiled in a course reader. This reader is available for purchase \_\_\_\_\_. The reader is listed as **CR** on the schedule.

## **Administrative Policies:**

### **Course Time Commitment:**

According to ABOR (Arizona Board of Regents) policy a three-credit course requires approximately 135 hours of student work across the semester. Expect to spend about 10 hours each week preparing for and actively participating in this course. During this course you will read a selection of texts and other documents, take quizzes, participate in discussions, and write papers. We move through readings and material quickly in this class so you must be prepared to dedicate significant time to this course in order to reach your level of success.

### **Grading:**

- Attendance and Participation: 30 percent
- Pop quizzes: 7.5 percent
- Self-evaluation: 2.5 percent
- Papers: 30 percent (two 1,250-word analytical essays, first worth 10 percent and second worth 20 percent)
- Final Paper: 30 percent (1,500-word analytical essay)

*\*Note: There are no exams in this course.*

### **Grading Key:**

The grading will be on a traditional scale of 100–97=A+, 96–93=A, 92–90=A-, 89–88=B+, 87–83=B, 82–80=B-, 79–78=C+, 77–70=C, 69–60=D, 59 and below=E.

A-level work will demonstrate mastery of the material and will go far beyond the minimum requirements of a particular assignment; in addition, there will be few or no mistakes.

B-level work will exceed the requirements of an assignment and demonstrate strong competency with the material; some mistakes, but no egregious errors.

C-level work will meet the requirements of an assignment but demonstrate only basic comprehension of the material; some mistakes and potentially a major error.

D-level work will fail to meet the requirements of an assignment and demonstrate little or no content comprehension; many mistakes and more than one major error.

E-level work will fail to meet the requirements of an assignment and have little merit as a demonstration of knowledge or ability.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE: This course is not designed to give everyone an “A”; far from it. Instead, grades are earned. A-quality work goes well above and beyond the expectations; similarly, B-level work shows a strong command of the material and is not simply representative of just showing up and/or submitting poorly/hastily crafted essays.**

### **Attendance and Participation:**

You can only miss two classes without any grade penalty—this includes any reason, including your desire to sleep in, an illness, or a family emergency. **If a student misses four classes then that student forfeits the entire attendance and participation grade.** Students who miss six or more classes are unable to pass the course with a satisfactory grade (in other words, six or more and the student will receive an “E” or failure). For a review of excused absences, please consult: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-02.html> and <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-04.html>.

**Regarding attendance and participation, the following represents the criteria that I use for evaluation purposes:**

Does the student respond to other students' comments or questions?

Never Rarely Seldom Occasionally Sometimes Frequently Always

Does the student raise questions or comments that receive commentary from others?

Never Rarely Seldom Occasionally Sometimes Frequently Always

Does the student come prepared for an intense discussion, having the correct edition of the reading and necessary marked pages, notes, or ideas in written form?

Yes No

When the student makes reference to the book, is s/he able to cite the page so the class can follow along?

Never Rarely Seldom Occasionally Sometimes Frequently Always

Does the student bring the book to class so s/he can follow along when people reference page numbers?

Never Rarely Seldom Occasionally Sometimes Frequently Always

Overall, does the student participate in a meaningful way to the discussion?

Never Rarely Seldom Occasionally Sometimes Frequently Always

### **Electronic Device Policy:**

**Before entering class, turn off all cell phones completely.** Cell phones are a distraction for you and for the rest of the class. It will also be unnecessary to use a laptop or netbook/pad because you should come to class with a hard copy of the readings and print out/hand-write any notes that you have prepared.

### **Pop Quizzes:**

Pop quizzes will be included in the class and will worth seven and a half (7.5) percent of the total grade. If you miss class or are late for class, you miss the pop quiz **without the opportunity to take it outside of class.** As a consolation, I will drop the lowest score across the semester. We will likely have between seven (7) and ten (10) quizzes during the semester. Pop quizzes will occur during the first five minutes of class—if you arrive after that to class, you cannot make up the quiz.

### **Self-Evaluation:**

Finally, regarding attendance and participation you will complete one self-evaluation. You will complete this and submit on the date marked on the calendar. It will count for a total of two and a half (2.5) percent of your TOTAL grade. Instructions will be forthcoming two weeks prior to the assignment.

### **Extra Credit:**

There is **no** extra credit available in this course.

### **Essay Assignments:**

Please note that late papers will be marked down a third of a letter grade per day. Therefore, if you turn it in one day late (which means one (1) minute past the deadline), a B will become a B-, and if you submit two days late, a B will become a C+.

You **MUST** submit all essays in hard copy. I also require that you submit a copy using “Safe Assignment” on Blackboard. **Both versions are required by the exact deadline in order to avoid losing points.** Please ensure that your printer has ink, paper, and that you have a backup copy for when your roommate steps on your computer, etc. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Essay requirements will be placed on the course website, along with sample essays, grading rubrics, and any other guidelines or helpful information that you can take advantage of when crafting your papers.

Papers are analytical in nature and present a well-organized and persuasive argument relating to our course readings. An argument means that you must develop your opinion and use evidence from the text as support: Reference *Thesis Writer's Guide* (from the reading list on page one) for more information. One of the goals of the course is that you leave with better writing skills. Everyone—no matter how advanced—can always improve and, to that end, informed and constructive criticism serves as a useful tool for progress. My goal is that these assignments facilitate you to become a more focused and clearer writer; the writing guide, coupled with a clear rubric of expectations and critical feedback should facilitate your improvement. As you well know, this is a vital skill in your future academic life and post-academic careers.

*\*See the final page of the syllabus for details on Writing Standards for Human Event papers.*

### **Electronic Course Materials:**

The course uses Blackboard as a means to disseminate official information and course materials. I do NOT use Blackboard for grading but will use it to make official announcements and place course materials. Email from me is also official. If you need any help with Blackboard or your ASU email account, do not ask me; instead, contact the appropriate ASU help staff, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at: 1-855-ASU-5080.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your ASU email account is operational. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email daily.

### **Plagiarism:**

Knowingly presenting another person's language or ideas as your own constitutes plagiarism. Do not do it. All Barrett Honors College faculty members have access to a service that checks an extensive database of essays and notes to detect plagiarism. Plagiarism, the theft of intellectual property, is a serious crime that undermines everything we are trying to accomplish in this course. Repercussions will include failure of the paper AND failure of the course, and may include referral to the Student Conduct Committee of the University and expulsion from the University. If you have any questions, talk to me before you submit your paper. Students will be required to submit an electronic version of formal papers (SafeAssign in Blackboard) along with their printed ones. For more information, consult:

<https://provost.asu.edu/files/AcademicIntegrityPolicyPDF.pdf>

### **The Barrett Writing Center:**

This resource is available to assist Barrett Honors College students with papers for all of their classes. Directed by BHC faculty and staffed by BHC writing tutors who themselves have completed both sections of the Human Event, the Barrett Writing Center offers individual tutoring on writing papers and theses. Its goal is to help you improve your lifelong writing and critical thinking skills, so please take advantage of its services. Go to the BWC web site at <http://honors.asu.edu/> and click on *Prospective & Current Students*. Under the heading *Barrett Writing Center*, you then can access tutoring schedules, appointment information, academic background on the staff, and internet links related to academic essay writing. ASU also has a number of writing centers and resources designed to facilitate your academic development. It is in your best interest to take advantage of these resources; I am here to help connect you with those resources during this semester and at any time during your time at Barrett.

### **Multiculturalism at Barrett:**

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.

### **Student Participation:**

You must come to each class having read the assignment carefully. Not reading the assignments conscientiously will seriously hamper discussion. Participation includes listening and responding to other students. No matter how much you talk, if you do not respect the class, you will receive a low grade in class participation. Again, no cell phones or other electronic devices in class.

### Student Conduct:

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. See <http://www.asu.edu/honors/forms.html> for information on student academic grievance procedures. Students will also behave in a respectful manner and not engage in any offensive or otherwise inappropriate behavior. Behavior will be dealt with according to ASU's norms: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm104-02.html>

*\*Please also note that some course content may be deemed offensive by some students. Please bring concerns to the attention of the instructor to ensure that all steps are taken to create a completely safe atmosphere.*

### Title IX:

This protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. Sexual harassment, which includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. ASU is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on sex and provides a number of resources and services to assist students, faculty and staff in addressing issues involving sex discrimination, including sexual violence. We strongly encourage victims of sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking and relationship violence to seek support and report incidents. An excellent resource is <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/>. The Office of Equity & Inclusion has been designated as ASU's Title IX coordinating office. Help from the Title IX Office can be found here: <https://cfo.asu.edu/hr-titleIX>. For help that is confidential please go to ASU Counseling: <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>. If you have experienced sexual assault please see these resources for help: <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/> and/or <https://eoss.asu.edu/wellness/SVHelp>.

### Student Support Services:

- Disability Accommodation: If you need disability accommodations in this class, please provide me that with documentation ASAP. See <http://www.asu.edu/drs/> for more information.
- Learning Resources Center: See <http://www.asu.edu/vpsa/lrc/> for more information.
- Counseling and Consultation: See [http://www.asu.edu/counseling\\_center/](http://www.asu.edu/counseling_center/) for more information.

### Proposed Schedule: (subject to changes – especially page numbers)

## August 2016

### Week 1

18 August: Course introduction. Discussion of art (provided in class).

### Week 2

23 August: *Epic of Gilgamesh* (pp. 1–64)

25 August: Finish *Gilgamesh* (pp. 65–92)

## September 2016

### Week 3

30 August: *Tao Te Ching* (pp. 1–81)

1 September: *Analects* by Confucius. (CR Section #1)

### Week 4

6 September: Herodotus, *The Second Persian Invasion of Greece* (CR Section #2).  
8 September: Aristophanes, *Frogs*. (pp. 1–107)

### Week 5

13 September: Plato's *Apology & Phaedo*. (CR Section #3)  
15 September: Islam Readings (CR Section #4)

**Essay Workshop:** Hosted by TAs. Time TBD. \*\*\*Attendance is highly encouraged.\*\*\*

**READ:** selections from *Thesis Writer's Guide*, especially pp. 4–15, 28–53, 64–72, 79–82, and 87–107).

**First Paper Topics Posted: 14 September** (Texts covered: Gilgamesh, Tao, Analects, Aristophanes, Herodotus, and Plato)

### Week 6

20 September: Yuan Chen, *The Story of Ying-ying*. (CR Section #5)  
22 September: Attila the Hun (CR Section #6)

### Week 7

27 September: Crusades (CR Section #7)  
29 September: Hasanaginica + Serbian folk tale (CR Section #8)

**First Essay due 2 October at noon:**

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## October 2016

### Week 8

4 October: *Diary of Lady Murasaki* (pp. \_\_\_\_)  
6 October: *Diary of Lady Murasaki* (pp. \_\_\_\_)

### Week 9

11 October: **No class, Fall Break.**  
13 October: *Memoir of Janissary* (CR Section #9)  
\*\*\*Self-evaluation due\*\*\*

### Week 10

18 October: Selections from *Saint St. Sergius of Radonezh* (CR Section #10)  
20 October: Bogomil Reading (CR Section #11)

**Second Paper topics posted on 19 October** (Yuan Chen, Hasanaginica, Attila, Crusades, *Diary of Lady Murasaki*, Janissary, St. Sergius, and *Tale of White Cowl*)

### Week 11

25 October: Dante, *Inferno* (pp. 1–175)  
27 October: Dante, *Inferno* (pp. 176–335)

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## November 2016

### Week 12

1 November: *Ibn Battuta* (pp. \_\_\_\_)  
3 November: *Ibn Battuta* (pp. \_\_\_\_)

**Second Essay due 6 November at noon.**

**Week 13**

8 November: Vasco da Gama (HC), Columbus, (CR Section #12)

The Journal of Columbus and indigenous accounts of the conquest

10 November: **NO CLASS – Veteran’s Day**

**Week 14**

15 November: Machiavelli, *The Prince* (pp. 1–85)

17 November: **Class cancelled – faculty conference**

**Third Paper Topics Posted on 16 November:** (Dante, Ibn, New World texts, Machiavelli, and de Navarre)

**Week 15**

22 November: Marguerite de Navarre, *Heptameron*. (CR Section #13)

24 November: **NO CLASS Thanksgiving Holiday**

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**December 2016**

**Week 16**

29 November: Luther’s *95 Theses* versus Boniface VIII’s *Unam Sanctum* (CR Section #14)

1 December: Course summation; group activity – **Submit final essays \*NOTE: Final Essay Due**

## Writing Standards for Human Event Papers

The elements outlined below form the basis of all Human Event argumentative papers, and therefore constitute the fundamental criteria of evaluation.

### 1. A Human Event paper contains a clear thesis statement.

- The thesis statement makes a specific, text-based claim, not a vague or broad observation.
- The paper must stake a substantive position, one that is neither trivial nor obvious.
- Human Event papers are typically 1,250–1,500 words, and the thesis statement should appear in the first paragraph.

### 2. The body of a Human Event paper defends the thesis via a progression of arguments.

- The opening of the paper provides an overall map of its direction.
- The body of the paper mirrors the introductory map, and each paragraph builds the case in logical progression.
- The paper makes an evidence-based case in support of the thesis. Accordingly, the paper also anticipates and addresses potential objections.

### 3. Evidence from and analysis of the primary text(s) form the backbone of the paper's defense of a thesis.

- Textual evidence constitutes the foundation of the paper's argument. The paper cites the sources of evidence.
- No outside sources are permitted.
- Analysis offers plausible explications of the texts that show how the meaning of the cited evidence helps develop the argument.

### 4. Human Event papers adhere to fundamental style elements.

- The paper uses proper grammar and word choice including gender neutral and inclusive language.
- The author proofreads the paper to avoid errors, wordiness, unnecessarily complex phrasings, and excessive use of passive voice.

*\*Note: Style fundamentals are important because poor style will undermine the thesis.*

Please refer to Mike Chapman's, *Thesis Writer's Guide*, for detailed information about crafting your papers. This guide will serve as an invaluable resource for any class where you need to submit written work and will assist you with your Honors Thesis.

## General Grading Guidelines for Human Event Papers

### **An excellent essay clearly demonstrates consistent mastery in each of the following areas:**

- Effectively and insightfully develops a viewpoint on the issue and demonstrates outstanding critical thinking, using clearly appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position.
- A thesis statement is clearly identifiable, which also anticipates the logical progression of the paper.
- Evidence is cited correctly and citations formatted properly.
- Is well organized and clearly focused, demonstrating strong coherence and smooth progression of ideas.
- Exhibits skillful use of language and uses a varied, accurate, and apt vocabulary.
- Demonstrates meaningful variety in sentence structure and is free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

### **A good essay would demonstrate reasonably consistent mastery, despite occasional errors or lapses in quality:**

- Effectively develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates strong critical thinking, generally using appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position.
- A thesis statement is easily identifiable, but fails to anticipate adequately the logical progression of the paper.
- Citations are generally correct but a few irregularities might exist.
- Is well organized and focused, demonstrating coherence and progression of ideas.
- Exhibits facility in the use of language and uses appropriate vocabulary.
- Demonstrates variety in sentence structure and is generally free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

### **A satisfactory essay demonstrates adequate mastery, despite lapses in quality:**

- Develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates competent critical thinking, using adequate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position.
- A thesis statement is less discernible and/or fails to anticipate a logical progression of ideas for the remainder of the paper.
- Evidence is cited improperly and/or citations are incorrectly formatted.
- Is generally organized and focused, demonstrating some coherence and progression of ideas.
- Exhibits adequate but inconsistent facility in the use of language and uses generally appropriate vocabulary.
- Demonstrates some variety in sentence structure but has some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

### **An unsatisfactory essay will include at LEAST ONE of the following characteristics:**

- Develops some discernible point of view on the issue and demonstrates some critical thinking, but may do so inconsistently or use inadequate examples, reasons, or other evidence to support its position.
- No clear thesis statement is identifiable.
- Citations may or may not be present and/or are formatted poorly.
- Is limited in organization or focus, or demonstrates serious lapses in coherence or progression of ideas.
- Displays developing facility in the use of language, but uses weak vocabulary or inappropriate word choice.
- Lacks variety or demonstrates problems in sentence structure, alongside an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

