HONORS 171: THE HUMAN EVENT*
(This is a representative syllabus. Actual assignments and readings will vary.)

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Office Hours
M/W 9:00-11:00
F 1:30-3:30 & by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The Human Event is an intensive, interdisciplinary seminar focusing on 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., Honors 171 is the first half of a two-semester sequence that concludes with Honors 272.

This class promises a tour of several millennia of works written by the ancient Greeks to Shakespeare. As such, our goal is by no means to try and cover everything. Instead, this course serves as an introduction to the diversity of world texts and culture. We will explore multiple texts that cover ideas such as morality, identity, virtue, justice, community, war, cultural encounter, exploration, and history. This course is reading and writing intensive and necessitates careful attention to developing writing skills in reading responses and formal essays. The overall goal is for students to engage critically with the texts and reflect on the ways each shapes our thinking about human society. Furthermore, this course introduces some of the most famous and enduring writing that humanity has ever produced, texts that remain influential and rewarding to this day.

To try and impose some order on this daunting topic, our class will be organized around a common theme: responsibility. We will be looking at the ways that different writers, and different cultures, have addressed these perennial problems: what responsibility do I have to my neighbors, family, children, parents, God or other spiritual forces, or myself? What responsibility do I have to my nation, state, or to history itself? What do we do when these responsibilities are ignored or challenged? What happens when these responsibilities conflict with one another?

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.

REQUIRED TEXTS: (Please buy these exact editions so that we are all working with the same text)
Some readings will be posted to Blackboard (BB). Please check the site (go to https://my.asu.edu and find our class site under “Courses”) frequently for readings, focus questions, online discussions, and announcements.

**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 culture 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.

**ASSESSMENT**: Each class meeting is your chance to have an analytic conversation with your peers about the material we will be reading. Our goal will be to work together, not only to further your critical reading skills but also your writing abilities. Attendance and active participation, therefore, are crucial to success—both for you as an individual and for the class as a whole. Students are required to complete all reading assignments and come to class prepared for discussion.

I will determine your final course grade in the following way:

- Participation: 30%
- Reading Responses: 10%
- 1st paper: 15%
- 2nd paper: 20%
- 3rd paper: 25%

**ATTENDANCE**: Because this class is a collaborative, discussion-based learning community, attendance is mandatory. Your active participation is essential for your success and the success of this class.

- Your participation grade (30% of your course grade) will be marked down substantially—one grade per absence—for every unexcused absence.
- You are allowed two excused absences. For each absence after the initial two, your final participation grade will go down an entire letter grade (e.g. A → A-). If you know you cannot make class for any reason, notify me in advance to discuss how you will make up the missed material. Absences for religious observance are excused. If you miss 6 or more classes, you will not be able to pass the class.
- Bring the assigned texts to class each day; you will often need to refer directly to the text we are discussing to support your arguments. If you do not bring the necessary texts to class, you will be marked as absent.
- Arriving late to class will also impact your participation grade significantly.
- For more information on ASU’s attendance policies, please refer to the following links:
  - ASU’s policies regarding accommodation for religious practices are available here: http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acad/acad304-04.html
  - ASU’s policies regarding accommodation for university-sanctioned activities are available here: http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acad/acad304-02.html

**PARTICIPATION**: Good participation is a matter of quality rather than quantity. Please come prepared to share at least one comment or question about the week’s reading during each class. I’m looking
forward to hearing your ideas and insights, and I welcome suggestions for things you would like to talk about (confusing passages, key terms, etc.). When you talk, please address your comments to the whole class, not just to me. Being a good participant is not just about speaking, but also about listening attentively to your classmates and addressing their comments thoughtfully. To foster a respectful and engaging classroom environment, I am going to have you call on one another during discussion instead of simply directing the discussion myself. This will require you to learn each other’s names and hopefully encourage you to get to know your classmates better. The criteria I use when grading participation include the following:

- **A**: The student in this grade range arrives to class each day thoroughly prepared with comments and questions on the assigned reading. Comments reveal that the student has read carefully; this student occasionally initiates the discussion without waiting for the instructor to do so. This student does not, however, try to dominate the class, but listens carefully to the remarks made by fellow class members, and responds as readily to these as to the instructor’s questions. This student’s comments are almost always backed up by direct reference to the text under discussion. They will be able to ask others insightful questions about their views and will be able to develop and extend the ideas of others.

- **B**: The student in this grade range participates in most discussions, although not as fully or reliably as the student described above. There is evidence of having done the reading. This student pays attention to the comments of the other students.

- **C**: The student in this grade range participates only intermittently, and is more willing to discuss broad, general questions than to engage in concrete analysis of an assigned text. Sometimes unprepared, this student lacks interest in the ideas of other members of the class, and is often inattentive. This student may also sometimes disrupt or otherwise interfere with others’ ability to engage in the discussion.

- **D or E**: The student in this grade range seldom, if ever, participates and/or neglects to bring the proper text to class.

For information on how to assess your performance in discussion and make improvements, see the handout “Some Questions to ask Yourself about Your Seminar Participation” on our Blackboard site. I will calculate your final participation grade at the end of the semester. If you are concerned about this part of your final grade, please come to my office hours so that we can discuss your current performance and make a plan that will help you increase your grade before the end of the semester.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**: To help facilitate discussion and encourage all of you to come prepared for seminar, you are required to write down at least one discussion question for every class meeting. I will collect these questions at the end of each class so if you do not turn in a question you will receive a zero for participation on that particular day. I will periodically call on you to share your questions during class so make sure that you are ready to lead discussion. Your questions should be substantive. In other words, discussion questions are never yes or no questions, and a good discussion question will elicit debate. When coming up with your discussion question, think about the following:

- How can you connect the reading with previous concepts/texts we have discussed?
- What was unclear or hard to understand in the text?
- What did you find the most interesting, strange, or absurd and why?
- How might you connect the reading to more contemporary contexts?
- What controversial claims does the text/author make and what are some possible objections?

After you ask your question, find a quotation or passage that may help us begin to answer your query. Do not simply write down a page or line number but actually copy the passages. Always include proper citations for these quotations. The assignment may be handwritten (only if legible) or...
typed and must be with you in class in hard copy. **You should expect to write 1 paragraph (4-5 sentences) for each class.** I will not accept this assignment by email or in a later class. If I notice that some students are writing these questions during class, I will require typed responses for every class.

**Written Assignments:** This course requires three papers (5-7 pages). These essays are opportunities for you to demonstrate your ability to critically analyze texts, synthesize ideas and concepts, and develop insightful and original arguments. Your papers will be graded on accuracy of interpretation and understanding, quality of argument, expression, and originality.

These papers must be double-spaced and stapled in the upper left hand corner, and have page numbers and one-inch margins. Please use *Times New Roman font size 12*. We will go over formatting and style guidelines before your papers are due. Handouts regarding the structure of an argumentative essay will be discussed in class and posted to our Blackboard site. You will turn in a hard copy of your paper to my office the day it is due and also upload a copy to SafeAssign on Blackboard. Both copies must be submitted by noon. Papers turned in after noon will be counted as one day late.

**Reading Responses:** There will also be mandatory weekly reading responses in which I ask you to reflect upon your reading and make connections between and across texts. **Everyone must post 5 reading responses over the course of the semester.** Successful reading responses will point to a specific passage or line of text to support an interpretation or raise a question about a reading. These responses should be between **250-300 words** in length and must be posted to our course’s Blackboard discussion page (under the appropriate forum heading) either by **Monday at 8:00pm or Wednesday at 8:00pm**. Reading responses submitted any later than this deadline will not be graded and will not count as one of your 5 required posts. You can decide which material you would like to comment on since each class meeting will be devoted to a different text or a different section of a text. Each post is graded on a scale from 1-5. Original, insightful, and thought-provoking responses that pay close attention to the language, images, and themes of the text will earn a (5), while uninspired, simple questions that do not engage with the text will not earn higher than a (1). Model responses will be posted on Blackboard in the “Reading Response Examples and Grading” handout to give you a better sense of the difference between a (5) vs. a (1) response. **It is in your best interest to space your reading responses out over the course of the term instead of waiting until the very end of the semester.**

**Writing Workshops:** Before you turn in each of your papers, we will devote class time to writing instruction and writing workshops. Requirements for each workshop will vary and I will let you know what part of your paper or writing process to bring to class. Be prepared to share your work with your classmates from outlines and brainstorming notes to preliminary thesis statements and rough drafts. Writing is too often viewed as a solitary act and I hope this class will let you see the benefits to collaboration and peer review.

**Late Policy:** Any late papers will be marked down one grade (e.g. B→B-) for each calendar day past the due date. Papers submitted after one week of the due date will automatically fail. There will be no extensions except in cases of emergency.

**Statement of Community Ethics:** The Barrett community is committed to upholding values of academic, professional, and personal honesty of the highest order. We believe that ethical and
Respectful behavior is one of the most important measures of the worth of an individual and, as such, the overall integrity of our community as a whole. As members of a learning community, we all play a part in maintaining that community.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism, or taking credit for words and ideas not your own, is a crime, and I will not tolerate it. The consequences are severe including failure for the assignment, probable failure for the course, disciplinary referral to the Dean and possible expulsion from the University. If I suspect that you have plagiarized, you will receive a 0 on the essay in question and, depending on the severity and extent of your crime, I reserve the right to give you an E for the course. According to ASU’s Academic Integrity Policy, “Plagiarism is stealing. Whenever you borrow a phrase, sentence, paragraph—even an idea stated in your own words—from any outside source (news writing, magazine, TV show, book) without giving credit to that source, you have plagiarized. Plagiarism is cheating yourself and someone else. Academic integrity is expected of every individual.” For more information on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, please visit the following website: https://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity.

**The Barrett Writing Center:** Learning to write clearly, compellingly, and coherently should be a major goal of yours in this class. Writing Center instructors, who are also Barrett students, are trained to work with inexperienced as well as advanced student writers. The Writing Center is an excellent resource and I highly recommend that you take advantage of it over the course of the term. If you would like some help organizing ideas for your paper or some constructive criticism of a draft, please make an appointment to see a Writing Center instructor. For more information, go to http://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/barrett-writing-center/.

**Office Hours:** It is crucial that you drop in to discuss essay ideas and strategies or any subject related to the course. If you cannot make my assigned office hours or need to meet with me urgently because of some other reason outside of my regular office hours, please let me know at least 48 hours in advance. I cannot be expected to grant last minute appointments, so do think in advance.

**Email Etiquette:** Part of learning how to communicate effectively is learning how to write professional and courteous emails. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when you email me or any other faculty member at ASU:

- Treat your email like any other formal communication. Use complete sentences and correct grammar, and please greet me with “Hello, Dr. Soares” or “Dear Dr. Soares.” Please do not begin your emails with “Hey.”
- Use the subject line for the purpose of your email (e.g., “Question about reading responses”)
- Before emailing me with a question, review the syllabus, assignment sheet, or handouts that I have given you. You want to make sure that the answer to your question is not clearly stated in any of the class material I have already given you.
- If you miss a class, your first step should be to contact a classmate to borrow his or her notes. Do not email me to ask if you missed anything important. If there is something you don’t understand after you’ve done the reading and gone over the notes, I’ll be happy to meet with you to go over it.
- Do not expect an immediate reply. I do my best to answer emails promptly but please allow 24 hours for emails that are sent over the weekend. Also, if you email me after 10:00pm you will most likely not hear from me until the following morning/afternoon. **Emails regarding**
papers will not be answered if they are sent after 7:00pm the evening before a paper is due.

**Reminders:**

- Bring a copy of the current book to each class. **Remember, if you do not bring your textbook you will be counted absent for that day.**
- Turn cell phones off before class begins.
- Laptops and tablets **are not allowed** in the classroom. If our readings for the week are available on Blackboard as pdfs, **you are required to print them and bring them with you to class.**
- Some of the assigned texts contain adult content, such as profane language and graphic violence and sexuality. If you are uncomfortable with some of the reading material, please come see me during my office hours or send me an email.
- You may not record class discussions.

**Policies for Disruptive Behavior:**

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per “Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior” [http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm201-10.html](http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm201-10.html)

- Appropriate behavior is defined by the instructor and includes keeping course discussion focused on the assigned topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion.
- The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts incident reports from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct [https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct](https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct).

**Accessibility Statement:**

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended (ADAAA) of 2008, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Center (DRC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations. Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation to the DRC. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information please visit the DRC website: [https://eoss.asu.edu/drc/](https://eoss.asu.edu/drc/)

**Grading Rubric:** The following grade scale will be used in this class:

- **A+** → 100-98%
- **A** → 97-93%
- **A-** → 92-90%
- **B+** → 89-88%
- **B** → 87-83%
- **B-** → 82-80%
- **C+** → 79-78%
- **C** → 77-70%
D → 69-60%
E → 59% and below

**A-level:** An excellent paper engages with the subject in an exceptionally rigorous or imaginative way and demonstrates that the writer has arrived at his or her conclusions through a close and sustained examination of the text. The paper progresses through clearly ordered and relevant stages, and it is developed with concrete, substantial, and consistently relevant evidence. Individual paragraphs, as well as the essay as a whole, are unified and coherent, and transitions are effective. Individual sentences are skillfully constructed: coherent, forceful, and effectively varied. The diction is precise and engaging.

**B-level:** A good paper has many of the same qualities as an excellent paper, but it is not as consistently distinguished in all areas. The content is sound, but not as original as that of an excellent paper. The organization and style are generally effective, but they are not as polished or elegant as those of an excellent paper. Occasional awkwardness in sentence structure, punctuation, or other areas may occur, but they do not detract seriously from the effectiveness of the essay.

**C-level:** Marginal work suffers from major problems, but it is still minimally passing. In some cases the central idea is not entirely clear or its development is inadequate; there may be little supporting evidence for the admittedly sound generalizations. In other cases, the content may be sound, but the paper contains significant grammatical or mechanical errors. Such grades do not indicate that a student cannot succeed in this course, merely that he or she needs to devote significant time and effort to improving his or her writing and work closely with the instructor to determine the precise source of the problem.

**D to E-level:** Papers in this grade range suffer from major problems in content, form, or both. In some cases the content is unclear and the central idea is not supported. Organizational problems and/or errors in sentence structure and grammar may severely hinder communication. In other cases the paper may fail to meet the requirements of the assignment.

**Writing Standards for Human Event Papers:** The elements outlined below form the basis for 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 usually 5-7 pages long (1600-1800 words), and the thesis statement should appear in the first paragraph.

2. **The body of 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.

3. **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 phrasing, and excessive use of passive voice.
**COURSE CALENDAR**

Note: This calendar is subject to revision to take into account the progress of our class. Complete all of the readings **before** class on the dates indicated below. Bring the assigned text to class each day, as you will need to support your views with textual evidence. The majority of the readings are included in the Norton Anthology of World Literature. **Please note that you are required to read the critical introductions that precede all of the readings in the Norton.** However, some materials will be posted to our Blackboard site.

A, B, or C → Indicates the volume of the Norton Anthology in which the reading can be found
BB → Material is available on Blackboard
**The syllabus also lists the approximate dates during which the texts were composed and/or the various authors lived. This is to help you see the chronology that we will work through over the course of the term.**

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>Thu Aug 20</th>
<th>Introduction to Course and Critical Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th Aug 27</td>
<td><em>The Epic of Gilgamesh</em> (ca. 1900-250 B.C.E.), A p. 99-124 (to Tablet VI)</td>
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<td>WEEK 5</td>
<td>T Sept 15</td>
<td>Writing Workshop</td>
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<td>WEEK 6</td>
<td>T Sept 22</td>
<td>Plato’s <em>Republic</em> (ca. 387-361 B.C.E.): Book VII-VIII (BB)</td>
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<td><strong>Paper #1 due Friday, September 25th by noon</strong></td>
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<td>WEEK 7</td>
<td>T Sept 29</td>
<td><em>The Passion of St. Perpetua and St. Felicity</em> (203 C.E.) (BB)</td>
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**WEEK 9**
Th Oct 13  No Class for Fall Break
Th Oct 15  Farid Ud-Din Attar, from *The Conference of the Birds* (1145-1221) B p. 373-387

**WEEK 10**
Th Oct 20  Dante, *Inferno* (1256-1321), B p. 392-453 (stop at Canto XIX)
Th Oct 22  Dante, *Inferno*, B p. 453-511 (start with Canto XIX)

**WEEK 11**
Th Oct 29  *The Thousand and One Nights* (14th century), B p. 556-605

**WEEK 12**
Th Nov 5  Christine de Pizan, from *The Book of the City of Ladies* (ca. 1364-1431), B p. 783-807
**Paper #2 due Friday, November 6th by noon**

**WEEK 13**
Th Nov 12  Hernán Cortés, from “The Second Letter” (1485-1547), C p. 549-559
Th Nov 19  Bartolomé de las Casas, from *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552), C p. 566-567

**WEEK 14**
Th Nov 19  Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (1610-1611), Act I & II

**WEEK 15**
Th Nov 26  No class for Thanksgiving

**WEEK 16**
Th Dec 3  Writing Workshop
Th Dec 3  Wrap-up/Course Evaluations
**Final paper due Monday, December 7th by noon**