

The Medieval and Renaissance World

Honors 102

Dr. Brandon Look

MH 101

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Course Description

This course is part of the University Studies Program (USP), which is designed to provide a comprehensive liberal arts education to all undergraduates. The four Honors Colloquia together satisfy the English Writing, Humanities Disciplinary, and interdisciplinary requirements for USP, as well as about 80% of the requirements for graduating “with Honors in Honors”.

The general goals of this colloquium are the following: to enhance the abilities of students to read critically, to write and speak clearly about a variety of texts, and to reflect on certain themes important in the development of western civilization. In trying to achieve these goals, we shall look at sources from the medieval and renaissance world, concentrating on the issues of faith, salvation, freedom and the relation of human beings to the world and to God.

Course Requirements

Students will be required to write **four papers** of approximately five pages in length during the course of the semester. I shall hand out assignments every other week starting 1/22/2004; students are to write on two of the first four papers. **No extensions will be granted.** These papers will together constitute **80% of the final grade.**

In addition, **students are expected to attend all classes and be active participants in class discussion.** The Honors colloquia are, after all, *discussion* classes, and it is the responsibility of the students to have read the assigned material carefully and to be willing and prepared to present his or her ideas about the texts. At the end of the semester, each student will be asked to grade the performance of his or her peers. These grades, along with my own assessment, will constitute the final **20% of the course grade.**

Grading

As should be clear from above, 80% of each student's final grade will depend upon the quality of his or her written work – or my estimation of the quality of his or her written work. Does this mean that the grading is “subjective”? Yes. But the grading is neither arbitrary nor whimsical. With each paper, I ask, (1) How well has the student understood the text? (2) How well has the student argued his or her point? (This question sometimes turns out to be, Does the student have a point at all?) (3) How clearly does the student write? (Remember: It is the job to the writer to communicate an idea to the reader. If the reader has to re-read a passage several times before he or she can understand the writer's point, the writer could have been clearer. If the reader simply cannot understand the writer's point, the writer has failed.) If you do not yet own a copy of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, please buy one. Read it, love it, live it.

Students' final grades will be either A, B, C, D, or E. There is no +/- grading in the Honors Program.

Incompletes

No incompletes will be given in this class.

Unexcused absences

As mentioned above, I expect students to contribute to classroom discussion. Therefore, students must come to class. Students who miss more than one or two classes will be marked down **severely** in the class participation grade.

Plagiarism

All work must be the student's own. If a student is caught plagiarizing, he or she will, according to University Regulations, be failed for the course and possibly expelled from the University.

Required Texts

The following texts are required for the course and are available at both Kennedy's and the UK Bookstores:

- Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, C.H. Sisson (trans.), Oxford: OUP, 1980.
- St. Augustine, *Confessions*, John K. Ryan (trans.), New York: Image, 1960.
- *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writing*, B. Ehrman (ed.), Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1998.
- Martin Luther, *Three Treatises*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970.
- Niccolò Machiavelli, *Selected Political Writings*, D. Wootton (trans.), Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
- Thomas More, *Utopia*, P. Turner (trans.), London: Penguin, 1965.
- *The Romance of Arthur*, J. Wilhelm, New York: Garland, 1994.

In addition, I shall make copies available of certain selections from Anselm, Aquinas, Petrarch and Pico. These xeroxes will be marked in the syllabus with an 'X'.

Schedule

- 1/15 Introduction/Class Mechanics
- 1/20 The Gospels of Matthew (pp. 9-39); The Gospel of Thomas (pp. 116-23); The Gospel of Peter (pp. 124-26); The Infancy Gospel of Thomas (pp. 127-30)
- 1/22 The Acts of the Apostles (pp. 145-76); The Acts of Paul and Thecla (pp. 177-82)
- 1/27 The Letter to the Romans (pp. 185-98)
- 1/29 The Letter to the Romans (pp. 185-98); The First Letter to the Corinthians (pp. 199-213)
- 2/3 The First Letter to the Corinthians (pp. 199-213); The Didache (pp. 313-17)
- 2/5 Augustine, Confessions, I-II (entire), III.1, III.4-8
- 2/10 Augustine, Confessions, IV.2-4, 6, 8-12, 15-16; V.14; VI.4-6, 12-16; VII.1-5, 7, 12-21; VIII
- 2/12 Augustine, Confessions, X.1-30, 40-43; XI.1,4-5, 9-28
- 2/17 Augustine, City of God **X**
- 2/19 Anselm and Aquinas, **X**
- 2/24 Lancelot (pp. 121-200)
- 2/26 Lancelot (pp. 121-200)
- 3/2 Sir Gawain (pp. 399-466)
- 3/4 Sir Gawain (pp. 399-466)
- 3/9 Dante, Inferno
- 3/11 Dante, Inferno
- 3/16 **Spring Break**
- 3/18 **Spring Break**
- 3/23 Dante, Inferno
- 3/25 Dante, Purgatorio (selections)
- 3/30 Dante Paradiso (selections)
- 4/1 Petrarch & Pico, **X**
- 4/6 Luther, To the Christian Nobility
- 4/8 Luther, To the Christian Nobility
- 4/13 Luther, Freedom of a Christian
- 4/15 More, Utopia
- 4/20 Machiavelli, Prince
- 4/22 Machiavelli, Prince
- 4/27 Art of the Renaissance
- 4/29 Wrap-up