

The Contemporary World

Honors 202

Summer 2004

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 some central texts from the 20th-century and other recent works, and we shall focus on the following questions: How is self-knowledge possible? What is the self that is known? How does the self relate to society as a whole? What meaning do we give to our lives if there is no God? How have new technologies changed the way we see ourselves and our world?

Course Requirements

Students will be given daily (or nearly daily) **quizzes**, which will together count towards **40% of the final grade**. There will also be a **final exam** on the last day, which will also count towards **40% 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 final course grade**.

Grading

Students' final grades will be either A, B, C, D, or E.

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:

- Sigmund Freud, *The Freud Reader*, ed. P. Gay, New York: Norton, 1989. ISBN 0-393-31403-0
- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, New York: Penguin, 1999. ISBN 0-1402-8163-0
- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, New York: Harvest/Harcourt, 1927/1981. ISBN 0-15-690739-9
- Elie Wiesel, *Night*, New York: Bantam, 1960/1982. ISBN 0-553-27253-5
- Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, New York: Penguin, 1963/1992. ISBN 0-14-018765-0
- Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, New York: Grove Press, 1997. ISBN. 0802130348
- Peter Kramer, *Listening to Prozac* New York: Penguin, 1997. ISBN: 0140266712
- W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*, New York: Modern Library, 2001. ISBN 0-375-75656-6

The essay by Walter Benjamin will be provided.

Schedule

Th	6/10	Introduction/Class Mechanics
F	6/11	Freud, <i>Interpretation of Dreams</i> and <i>On Dreams</i> , pp. 129-72
M	6/14	Freud, <i>Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality</i> , pp. 239-93
Tu	6/15	Freud, <i>Totem and Taboo</i> , pp. 481-513
W	6/16	Freud, <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i> , pp. 722-72
Th	6/17	Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Parts One and Two
F	6/18	Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Parts Two and Three
M	6/21	Woolf, <i>To the Lighthouse</i> , "The Window"
Tu	6/22	Woolf, <i>To the Lighthouse</i> , "The Window" and "Time Passes"
W	6/23	Woolf, <i>To the Lighthouse</i> , "The Lighthouse"
Th	6/24	Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" X
F	6/25	Wiesel, <i>Night</i>
M	6/28	Wiesel, <i>Night</i>
Tu	6/29	Beckett, <i>Waiting for Godot</i> , Act I
W	6/30	Beckett, <i>Waiting for Godot</i> , Act II
Th	7/1	Kramer, <i>Listening to Prozac</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1
F	7/2	Kramer, <i>Listening to Prozac</i> , Ch. 9 and Afterword
M	7/5	Independence Day Holiday
T	7/6	Sebald, <i>Austerlitz</i>
W	7/7	Sebald, <i>Austerlitz</i>
Th	7/8	Final Exam