

Lit. Hum.
Spring, 2003

Christia Mercer
707 Philosophy Hall; 854- 3190/3196
Office Hours: (tentative: T/Th 1-2; Fri. 2:30-5).

Assignments: There will be a quiz every week on the reading for the week. A combination of the quizzes and class participation will count for 15% of your final grade. There will be a mid-term and final examination, the former counts for 20%, the latter for 25% of your grade. There will be two papers of 4-6 pages, each will count for 20% of your grade. I encourage you to come to my office and chat about the course material, assignments, or (almost!) anything else.

Readings: Our schedule will be *slightly* different from the standard syllabus. We will not read Cervantes, and instead will have a couple of assignments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Our “choice” readings are: Letters of Abelard and Heloise, and Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye. These are available in Labyrinth Bookstore.

Our Questions of Focus: The following questions will form the core of our discussions and it is recommended that you keep them in mind as you read the assigned texts.

What is a human being? What is human good? What is human contentment or happiness? Do all people have an equal chance to attain happiness? What are the most important or essential human faculties and capacities (e.g. reason vs emotions)? What is the natural place of a person? How free are they? Where does a human being best fulfill her or his nature? Is an inward or outward journey necessary to fulfill that nature? What temptations or difficulties prevent a complete human life? What role do social conventions play in life? What can people know and how do they acquire knowledge? Is imagination, reason, or experience the most important source of knowledge? What role does the artist play in the acquisition and transmission of the truth? What role do storytelling and the manipulation of words play in life and the attainment of truth?

A SUMMARY OF OUR SEMESTER BY WEEK:

Jan. 20 Introduction/Virgil's Aeneid (Books 1-6)

Jan 27 Virgil's Aeneid (Books 1-12); **assignment in the Metropolitan Museum** due next week.

Feb. 3 Augustine's Confessions: Books I-X.

Paper Topics Distributed

Feb. 10 John Updike's "Augustine's Concubine" (distributed in class); Letters of Abelard and Heloise: pp. 57- 182.

Feb. 17 Dante's Inferno: Cantos 1-9, 11-12, 16, 19, 26, 30-34.

FIRST PAPER DUE by Friday, 3:00

Feb. 24 Boccaccio's Decameron: Prologue, Intro; I Intro 1-3; II 7, 9, 10; III 1, 10; IV Introduction, 1, 2, 5; V 4, 10; VI Introduction, 1-10; VII 2, 6, 8, 9; VIII 7; IX 6, 10; X 5, 10; epilogue.

March 3 Montaigne's Essays: To the Reader, p. 23; On Idleness, pp. 26-28; On Cannibals, pp. 105-119; On Democrates and Heraclitus, pp. 130-33; On Repentance, pp. 235-250; On Experience, pp. 343-406.

March 10 Review/ Mid-term

March 17 **Break**

March 24 Shakespeare's King Lear

March 31 Austen's Pride and Prejudice

April 7 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment

April 14 Woolf's To the Lighthouse

April 21 Class on 22nd will be cancelled to make room for trip to and assignment in Metropolitan Museum; 24th: Morrison's The Bluest Eye

April 28 Complete discussion of The Bluest Eye / Review and Discussion of Art Assignment

May 5 **SECOND PAPER DUE by 3:00 Monday, May 12th**