

Columbia College
Fall 2006

C1101 section 03
Contemporary Western Civilization I

Mon/Wed 9:00–10:50
315 Hamilton

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Course Description

This course covers a very broad range of topics but, in one form or another, at the heart of all of the texts we will cover is the question: ‘How can I/we be happy.’ Some texts approach this question religiously others in a very secular way. Some propose grand schemes for ordering a city, a state or even humanity as a whole (morally, socially, economically and politically) while others are personal guides for living ones life. Many also ask the prior questions: ‘how do we know what is right?’ ‘How do we know the truth?’; etc. Whoever your reasons for taking the course, you are certainly not indifferent to these question.

What is the goal of this course? It is neither to give you the answers to these questions nor to argue that certain texts are right and others are wrong. Rather the goal is to give you some tools that you can use to answer these questions for yourself.

Course Requirements

The course requirements are as follows:

1. Reading
2. Attendance
3. Class Participation 20%
4. Two Short Paper 20%
5. Final Paper 20%
6. Midterm Exam 20%
7. Final Exam 20%

1. Readings

Quite simply you have to do them! There is no way to do well in the class assignments, exams and class participation without this. This class involves a lot of reading so falling behind is not a good idea. I have included a rough estimate of the number of pages for each reading so you can organize your time accordingly. If you have any problems with or questions about any reading, please do not hesitate to see me in office hours, email me or to raise them in class.

It is essential that you read the texts carefully and thoughtfully and to take notes on each text as you read it.

2. Attendance

At the beginning of each class I will give out an attendance sheet for you to sign. If you come in late, wait until the break to sign the sheet.

IMPORTANT: make sure you sign the sheet; if your name is not on the sheet you are not in class! Excessive lateness will also affect your grade.

Given the nature of the course your presence at class meetings is essential. I will allow two absences from the class without penalty, no questions asked. However, you will have to write a 3-5-page response to the reading assigned for the class you missed. After that, you will lose 2% from your final grade in the course for each class you miss without a valid excuse. It is university policy that if a student's absences are excessive and unexcused they may be denied credit for the course at the instructor's discretion.

A valid excuse for an absence includes the following: **a valid and documented medical or family emergency or absence due to a religious observance**. A valid medical emergency means a note from a doctor stating that you were physically unable to come to class. I will not accept a note that simply says that you went to see the doctor the morning of the class. For religious observances, please let me know ahead of time that you will be absent. In cases of a family emergency or a religious holiday your dean/advisor must contact me about the circumstance of your absence. For any other absence you must get my approval ahead of time and you will be required to do a make up assignment.

3. Class Participation (20%)

This means first and foremost coming to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. In class discussion you should take a position and be prepared to explain why you believe that it is appropriate. Remember that the point of class discussion is not to 'win a debate' or to stick by your initial position at all costs. Rather, class discussion is a chance for you to gain a deeper understanding of the texts and to evaluate your interpretation of the text against the interpretations of your classmates.

You may also participate in class discussions through email or threaded discussions on courseworks. If you think of an interesting point about a particular reading I encourage you to email it/post it to the class before the session at which it will be discussed, this will also be counted toward your participation.

4. Two Short Papers (each 10% for a total of 20%)

Each student will also be assigned two short papers on the course texts during the semester. These will be assigned randomly on **Monday Sept. 11**. You will be assigned one reading before and one after the midterm. NOTE: Each paper is *due* **at the beginning of the class in which we discuss the reading it pertains to!**

I will email each student the question they will write on four days before the paper is due. Each paper should be 3-5-pages in length. Keep in mind that the question you are assigned may ask you to compare that text with one we have already read, so just because you have not been assigned a reading does not mean you do not have to read it!

If you are not happy with your grade in the short papers you have the option of writing a third short paper. I will then drop your lowest grade (i.e. only count your two highest paper grades). If you decide to exercise this option, please email me and I will assign you a third short paper topic. Please make sure that I send you an email with your third assignment.

5. Final Paper (20%)

Due: **Beginning of class Wednesday Dec 6**

For the final paper you should pick an issue you are interested in and that is covered in the readings. In the paper you should discuss how this issue is addressed in at least two of the works we covered as well as argue your position on the issue.

The paper should be 10-12-pages long. Your paper proposal has to be submitted to me in writing by **Monday Oct. 9**. Your proposal should be no longer than a page and should answer:

- 1) What is your question?
- 2) Why is it important?
- 3) What text do you think you will use to cover it

You are free to change your paper topic at any time but you must discuss this with me before you hand in your paper (of course the earlier you do this the better).

6. Midterm (20%)

You have two options for the midterm:

- 1) **In class:** There will be an in-class midterm on **Monday Oct. 23**. The exam will require you to answer questions in essay format.
- 2) **Take home:** Due at the beginning of class on **Monday Oct. 23**.

You will have to tell me which option you want a week before the exam. Please choose the option you are most comfortable with. Neither is inherently harder than the other.

Regardless of the option you choose, I will send five questions to the class a week before the exam. Then for:

- 1) **The in class option:** three of the five questions will be chosen at random at the beginning of the class and you will have to answer two of them. The exam is close book.
- 2) **The take home option:** four days before the take home is due I will email you three questions of the five questions chosen at random and you will answer one of those questions in the form of a 6-8 page paper.

7. Final Exam (20%)

The final will be held on **Friday Dec. 15**, from **12:30 to 3:30pm**. The location of the exam will be announced near the end of the semester. A week before the final, you will be given five questions, of these three will be chosen at random at the beginning of the exam and you will have to answer two of them. **Absence from the final has to be dealt with through your dean.**

Late Penalty

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Unless a student has a valid and documented medical or family emergency, **students will lose a third of a letter grade for every 24-hour period after the deadline until their assignment is handed in.** Thus if you hand in an assignment a day late and you get an A- on it, your grade will be a B+. If the assignment due date falls on a religious holiday the student is still expected to hand in the assignment before the deadline. However, the student should contact me if this presents difficulties and we will find a suitable accommodation.

Student must submit all assignment in **hard copy**. I will not accept assignments in the form of an email attachment. If you are handing in an assignment late, make sure to put it in my mail folder in the Political Science Department (7th floor IAB). My mail folder is in the graduate student filing cabinet, which is in the middle cubical of the east wing of the 7th floor of IAB (if you cannot find it ask someone in the office). Also make sure that **someone in the office writes the date and time you are handing it in and signs it!**

Academic Dishonesty

Presenting part or all of someone else's work without acknowledgment is plagiarism and it is a serious academic offence. Any case of academic dishonesty will be presented to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and will be dealt with harshly.

Course Materials:

The following books are available for purchase at the Columbia Bookstore:

Core Curriculum Boxed Set:

Plato, *Republic* (Hackett)

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Hackett)

Aristotle, *Politics* (Hackett)

The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version (Meridian)

Augustine, *City of God* (Penguin)

The Koran (Penguin)

Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Penguin)

Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (Penguin)

The Protestant Reformation (Harper & Row)

Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (Hackett)

Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford)

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett)

Other Books:

Cicero, *On Duties* (Cambridge)

Epictetus, *Handbook* (Hackett)

Aquinas, *Treatise on Law* (Hackett)

Thomas More, *Utopia* (Penguin Classics)

The rest of the readings will be made available through the CC web site or on coursework. These readings are marked with an '*'. In addition some of the books listed above are available on the web. I have added the web link for these readings below.

Course Schedule:

W Sep 6: Introduction to the course

F Sep 8: **CC Course-wide Event**
The Apology of Socrates,
Lerner Auditorium: 11 a.m.

M Sep 11: Plato I [c. 121 pp.]
Republic, Books I-IV

W Sep 13: Plato II [c. 98 pp.]
Republic, Books V-VII

M Sep 18: Plato III [c. 80 pp.]
Republic, Books VIII-X

- W Sep 20: Ancient Historians [c. 78 pp.]
 *Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*
 Funeral Oration of Pericles
 Revolt of Mitylene
 Corcyraean Revolution
 The Melian Dialog
 *Polybius, *Histories*, Book VI
- M Sep 25: Aristotle I [c. 69 pp.]
Nicomachean Ethics, Bks I–II; Bk III, chs 1–3; Bk IV,
 chs 1–7; Bk VI, chs 5–8 and 12–13; Bk VIII,
 chs 9–12; Bk X, chs 6–9
- W Sep 27: Aristotle II [c. 95 pp.]
Politics, Bk 1; Bk 2, chs 1–6; Bk 3, chs 1–13; Bk 4,
 chs 1–12; Bk 7, ch. 1-3; Bk 8, ch. 1-3
- M Oct 2: Cicero [c. 117 pp.]
On Duties, Books I, II (sections 9-29), III
- W Oct 4: Hellenistic Philosophy [c. 64 pp.]
Epicureanism:
 *Epicurus, “*Letter to Herodotus*,”
 “*Letter to Menoeceus*,”
 “*Principal Doctrines*,”
 “*Vatican Sayings*”
Stoicism:
 Epictetus, *Handbook*
 *Seneca, *On the Private Life*
Skepticism:
 *Sextus Empiricus, *The Modes*
- M Oct 9: Hebrew Bible [c. 80 pp.]
Exodus, 1:1–6:13, 7:1–11:10, 13:17–14:31, 15:22–
 20:18, 31:18–34:35
Deuteronomy, 1:1–45, 4:1–13:18, 15:1–19:21, 21:10–
 26:19, 27:11–28:68, 30:1–34:12
Paper Proposal Due
- W Oct 11: New Testament [c. 47 pp.]
Matthew,
Romans,
Galatians

- M Oct 16: Augustine [c. 118 pp.]
City of God: Bk. I chs. 1-11; Bk. IV chs. 1-4; Bk. VIII chs. 4-12; Bk. XII chs. 1-9 & 22-24, Bk. XIV entire; and Bk. XIX chs. 7-17.
- W Oct 18: al-Qur'an [c. 43 pp.]
 Suras 1, 114, 112, 12, 2
- M Oct 23: **MIDTERM**
- W Oct 25: Aquinas [c. 58 pp.]
Treaties On Law: Q.90-Q.95 & Q.97
- M Oct 30: Medieval Thought [c. 81 pp.]
 *Averröes, *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*
 *al-Ghazali, *The Rescuer from Error*
 *Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*
- W Nov 1: The New World [c. 76 pp.]
 *de las Casas, *Thirty Very Juridical Propositions Apologetic History of the Indies* (extracts)
 *de Sepúlveda, *Democrates Alter*
 *de Vitoria, "On the American Indians"
- M Nov 6: **NO CLASS University Holiday**
- W Nov 8: More [c. 70 pp.]
Utopia
- F Nov 10: **CC Course-wide Lecture**
 Title: TBA
 Vaclav Havel
 Lerner Auditorium: 11 a.m.
- M Nov 13: Machiavelli I [c. 80 pp.]
The Prince
- W Nov 15: Machiavelli II [c. 83 pp.]
The Discourses, I. 1-5, 10-13, 16-18, 21, 55, 58; II. 1-3, 29; III. 1, 3, 8-9, 31, 41, 43
- Sun. Nov 19: **CC Course-wide Event**
 Reading of Vaclav Havel's "The Garden Party"
 Miller Theater: times TBA

- M Nov 20: Protestant Reformation & Counter Reformation [c. 74 pp.]
The Protestant Reformation
 Luther, “*The Freedom of a Christian Man*”,
 “*On Governmental Authority*”,
 **“Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants”*
<http://www.historyguide.org/earlymod/peasants1525.html>
The Counter Reformation:
 *Layola, “*Bull of Institution, 1540*” & “*Rules of Thinking with the Church*”
 **The Reform Bull*
- W Nov 22: Scientific Revolution [c. 68 pp.]
 *Galileo, “*Letter to Madame Christine of Lorraine, Grand Duchess of Tuscany*”
 *Newton, “*Rules for the Study of Natural Philosophy*”
 Descartes, *Discourse Concerning Method*
- M Nov 27: Hobbes & Lock I: On Man and the State of Nature [c. 60 pp.]
Leviathan, chs 13-15 (c. 25pp.)
Second Treatise of Government chs 1-6 (c 35pp)
- W Nov 29: Hobbes & Lock II: On the Rise of Government [c. 98 pp.]
Leviathan, chs 17-22 (c. 48pp.)
Second Treatise of Government chs 7-15 (c 50pp.)
- M Dec 4: Hobbes & Lock II: On the Decline of Government [c. 57 pp.]
Leviathan, chs 29-30 (c. 23pp.)
Second Treatise of Government chs 16-19 (c 34pp)
- W Dec 6: Locke [c. 47 pp.]
 **“A Letter Concerning Toleration”*
Final Paper Due
- M Dec 11: **Review Session**
- F Dec 15: **FINAL EXAM**
 Location and time: TBA
- Reading Over Winter Break:** [c. 20 pp.]
 *Hume, *Of the Original Contract*
 *Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*