

REACTING TO THE PAST

BC 1617x
Fall 2011
MW 9:10-10:25
227 Milbank Hall

Prof. Rebecca Stanton
226A Milbank, x4-3133
rstanton@barnard.edu
Office hours: M 10:30-12:30, and by appt.

INTRODUCTION

“Reacting to the Past” introduces students to a selection of the major ideas, texts, and debates that have shaped the world we live in today. It uses a role-playing format to replicate the historical context in which these ideas acquired significance, so that you can consider them as they were first considered – by thinkers and actors on the world stage for whom they were radical, urgent, and contemporary.

Because “Reacting to the Past” is an unconventional learning experience, all students should read the “Introduction to Reacting to the Past,” which will be emailed to students prior to the first meeting, and come to the first class prepared to ask questions. Students should also begin the reading for the first class of the Athens game as soon as possible.

Student Learning Outcomes (First-Year Seminar)

1. Students in First-Year Seminars will develop their skills in critical reading and analysis, writing, and effective speaking.
2. They will assess and use textual evidence in support of oral and written arguments.
3. Students will explore important issues through significant texts ranging across genres, disciplines, and historical periods.

REQUIRED READINGS

All students should purchase the following books, which are available from Book Culture, 536 West 112th St (between Broadway and Amsterdam). Feel free to buy used copies, but be careful to get the right editions.

- Josiah Ober and Mark C. Carnes, *The Threshold of Democracy*, Third Edition (Longman, 2004)
- Plato, *The Republic* (Penguin)
- Mark Carnes and Daniel Gardner, *Confucianism and the Succession Crisis of the Wanli Emperor*, Third Edition (Longman, 2004)
- Confucius, *Analects* (Penguin)
- Ray Huang, *1587: A Year of No Significance* (Yale)

The game packet for “Greenwich Village, 1913” is not yet published; it will be made available as a PDF file on Courseworks (<https://courseworks.columbia.edu>), which you may download and/or print out as you wish. Most of the primary readings for that game will also be provided as PDF files or online editions. You may wish to bookmark the following two websites, which provide access to two texts that will be central to the political issues in the game:

- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*:
www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/mw-vind.html
- Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*:
www.marxists.org/archive/marx/txindex.htm

Additional online resources and suggestions for further reading will be provided on Courseworks.

LAPTOP COMPUTERS

Please do not bring these to class. (For some classes, you may find you have a compelling reason to need to bring one; in this case, please ask my permission beforehand. I will, of course, be happy to accommodate any technology required by a student with a disability.)

FIELD TRIPS AND OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

Please take note of the field trips that are scheduled for **Sunday, October 16** and **Sunday, December 4**. Unless you have an absolutely binding prior commitment (such as a sports fixture) or a compelling excuse such as illness, you are expected to attend both of these field trips. The Greenwich Village trip is especially important, since it includes a class session! If you know in advance that you can't go on a given field trip, please let me know as early as possible. Note as well that NO classes are cancelled for Thanksgiving. You are expected to be in class as usual on Wednesday, Nov. 23, and Monday, Nov. 28.

GRADING POLICY

You will complete 5 formal writing assignments over the course of the semester, most of which will also be speeches. These writing assignments and speeches will account for 2/3 of your final grade. The other 1/3 will be based on your participation in class discussions and group work (including creative work). Winning a game will boost your participation grade for that game by 1/3 of a grade (e.g. from B to B+).

Each assignment will receive a score out of 20, as explained below. These scores *do not correspond to letter grades* (A, B, C, etc.). They are meant to help you identify where your writing and speaking are strongest and where they are weakest, and to chart your improvement over the course of the semester. Unless you are superhuman and flawless, you will not see scores of 20. In fact, you should be prepared to see scores of 8 or 10 on early assignments. This is normal; look closely at my written comments to see what you need to work on.

Your final grade will be assessed on the basis of your overall record in class and on the assignments. It will be arrived at thoughtfully, not "computed" mathematically. By all means, do come and talk to me during the semester about the class and how you're doing. But please do not expect me to tell you "what your current grade is"; this is a question that has no meaningful answer until all three games are complete.

ASSIGNMENTS

For reasons that will become obvious, it is crucial that you do all assigned readings thoroughly and on time. Otherwise you will find yourself getting completely lost, and your team-mates will not thank you! In addition, for each game, students will be expected to complete about 8 pages of writing. Usually, there will be two separate assignments, although the nature of the writing assignment depends on your particular role. Students will also be speaking in class – a lot. 2/3 of the grade for each game will be based on your formal writing and speaking, with class participation making up the other 1/3. There is no midterm or final exam.

A little more detail about the speaking and writing requirements follows.

SPEAKING

For each game, you will prepare one or two formal speeches which you will **deliver – not read** – to the whole class. These should be about 5 minutes long (the written version should be 3-4 double-spaced pages). Each speech you make is meant to persuade your audience to come around to your point of view, so it should obviously be well-researched, well-argued, and carefully worded. But it should *also* be delivered with verve, conviction, and apparent spontaneity – so that your audience gets the sense that you know what you are talking about and that your opinions are sincere. To this end, you should neither read your speech aloud nor (necessarily) memorize it word for word; instead, write the *ideal* version of the speech (which you will hand in to me), practice it with your "script" in hand a couple of times, and then write yourself a set of note cards or bullet points that will enable you to deliver the *gist* of the speech without forgetting any important points, but will also allow you to "speak from the heart" while looking your audience in the eye. A speech that is mumbled, garbled, or read aloud from a script will lose points both in the game and in the gradebook. (**Note that special speaking workshops will be offered on September 14 and 15.**)

Being able to make an argument articulately and persuasively in a public forum is a crucial skill for anyone who wants to get things done in the real world!

WRITING

You will also submit written versions of your speeches (think of this as an “ideal” version of your speech, a script that you prepare and then memorize the main points of, but do not read aloud), along with any other written assignments required by your role, to me for grading. The written “ideal speech” is due on the day that you give the speech in class. On that day, please hand in the following:

- the written version of your speech
(3-4 pages double-spaced, 12-point font, due at the **beginning** of class)
- any notes you used while giving your speech orally
(maximum of 1 page or 6 notecards, due at the **end** of class)

These will be handed back to you at the next class session.

Each of your written speeches will receive a score out of 20, broken down as follows:

- I. **Logic (5 pts)**. This rubric assesses the structural soundness of your argument. Is your paper well-organized? Does it lead the reader/audience through a series of logical steps, each well-supported by appropriate evidence, to your conclusion? Do you use logically appropriate “[transition words](#)” (and, yet, but, because, whereas, nevertheless, furthermore, however, therefore, etc.) to connect each sentence to the next, and each paragraph to the next? If you have resorted to any **logical fallacies** * in the hope of bamboozling your audience, have you correctly labeled these in your footnotes? (If I find a logical fallacy that you have not labeled, I will assume it is a mistake and deduct points.)
- II. **Content (5 pts)**. This rubric assesses whether or not you have “done your homework” on the issues your speech addresses. Your Game Book and role sheet do not contain everything you need to know in order to make an argument for your position. These resources tell you roughly **what** you want to happen, but you must go beyond them in order to figure out **why** you want to pursue certain policies and **how** these policies might, practically speaking, be pursued. Remember that you are dealing with real historical places, people and events; while you are free to suggest a different course of action from that which was historically taken, you must know what the range of plausible possibilities for such action was – which you can only find out by undertaking historical research.
You should take the Game Book only as a starting-point -- a blueprint to help you generate good questions about the material, which you will then try to answer through your research. Ask yourself, “What kind of information would I need to include in this paragraph in order to convince a stranger that the point I am making is valid?” Once you have your questions, use the rich resources of the Internet and the library to track down the information you need. (*Hint*: if I can find out that one of the “facts” or assumptions in your paper is wrong merely by performing a simple Google search, you haven’t done your homework.)
- III. **Style (5 pts)**. Under this rubric, I consider all the things that make your paper *rhetorically effective*: clarity and concision, word choice, appropriate use of metaphor and/or other figurative language, freedom from cliché, and most of all, impeccable grammar and **usage** (see below).
- IV. **Delivery (5 pts)**. This rubric assesses the effectiveness of your speech as an oral performance: do you establish contact with your audience, use appropriate vocal emphasis, and speak with expression? Do you avoid stumbling over words, misplacing the emphasis in sentences, and losing momentum between high points?

* **Logical fallacies** (especially the Appeal to Authority, Appeal to Popularity, Sweeping Generalization, and Straw Man arguments) are sometimes employed deliberately by dishonest arguers seeking to sway their audience by any means necessary. It may sometimes be appropriate for you (when in character) to use these sleazy tools. **If so, please insert a footnote in the written copy of your speech to tell me which fallacy you are deliberately committing.**

Resources for your writing process: *Rules for Writers* by Diana Hacker is the official writing manual for Barnard College. If you do not already have a copy, please acquire one (new or used). My comments on your papers will refer to this book. I will also ask you to become familiar with the following websites:

<http://www.logicalfallacies.info/>

<http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html>

-- which catalogue, respectively, a set of common **logical fallacies** and a plethora of common errors in **English usage**, many of which are all too frequently found in Barnard student papers (and, regrettably, in the public discourse sustained by politicians, journalists, etc., who ought to know better).

Fumbling **English usage** is one of the easiest ways to make an intelligent and well-thought-out argument sound foolish and illiterate, so you will be doing yourself a big favor if you consult the “errors” website ahead of time to avoid making obvious howlers in your speeches. If (in my comments on your paper) I point out a usage error, please look it up, make a note of it, and be sure not to repeat it in future assignments! This, more than any other single effort you make in your writing and public speaking, will ensure that you *sound* as educated as you *are* by the time you leave Barnard.

Finally, don’t overlook the **Writing Center** (<http://www.barnard.edu/writing/writingcenter.html>) as a potential resource. Their philosophy is that “every writer needs a reader” and “no piece of writing is ever truly finished,” so they are ready to offer you feedback on a draft of your paper in the expectation that you will benefit from constructive criticism and will put in the effort required to make your paper more clear, elegant, and convincing.

RESEARCH

While you all no doubt have extensive experience at Internet research, you may not know the ins and outs of the library catalog so well. Luckily, Barnard has reference librarians on duty every day to help you find information on the topic you’re researching. Go and talk to them! For more information and a list of Reference Desk open hours, see: <http://www.barnard.edu/library/reference/>.

Needless to say, any source (including the Game Book) of information used in your speech should be cited in a footnote or an in-text reference in the written version (see *Rules For Writers* for acceptable formats). If you use in-text citations, keep them brief, and include a Works Cited list with the full bibliographic information at the end of your paper.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

September

W 7 Introductions; Athenian history to 403 B.C.E (Olympiad 94, year 2 by the Athenian calendar).

Game 1. The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.

The readings and assignments for this game are outlined in the game book (Ober and Carnes, *The Threshold of Democracy*). The activities for each session are summarized and explained on pages 33-38 (“Classroom Schedule”). Please ignore the book’s schedule of Assembly topics; we will follow the schedule below.

M 12 Class 1: Discussion of the *Republic*, Books I-III. Distribution of roles.

Before class: Please read the entire game book (excluding Appendices), as well as *Republic* I-III.

W 14 Class 2: Discussion of *Republic* IV-V and Documents (Game Book, Appendix B).
Faction meetings.

W 14 and Th 15, 12:15-1:10pm: Special speaking workshops with Lily Lamboy (room TBA).

M 19 Class 3: Assembly Session 1: Reconciliation Agreement

W 21 Class 4: Assembly Session 2: Electorate (who can vote?), Agency (how will government decisions be made?), and Welfare (will people be paid for democratic participation?)

M 26 Class 5: Assembly Session 3 (suggested topic: Education and social organization)
Later in the day: **THE BIG PNYX** (stay tuned for details)

W 28 Class 6: Assembly Session 4 (suggested topic: Remilitarization and imperialism)

October

M 3 Class 7: Dikasteria Sessions.

W 5 Class 8: Final Assembly Session (topic open).

M 10 Post-mortem discussion (winner/s revealed!). Begin reading China game materials.

Game 2. Confucianism and the Succession Crisis of the Wanli Emperor, 1587

W 12 Class 1: Introduction; first discussion of *Analects*.

Before class: read Game Book (GB), but not appendices; read *Analects*, Books I-IX.

**Sun 16 10am-12pm: Met Museum Tour (Ancient Greek galleries and Ming Scholar's Court)
Departure from Barnard Hall lobby at 10am SHARP (tour starts at 11am)**

M 17 Class 2: Discussion of *Analects*, cont. Appointment of FGS. Roles distributed.

Before class: read *Analects*, Books X-XX, and "State and Society Under the Ming" (GB Appendix)

W 19 Class 3: *1587: A Year of No Significance*. Private interviews with Wan-Li and FGS.

Before class: read *1587: A Year of No Significance* (pp. 1-74) and Zhang Juzheng biography (GB)

M 24 Class 4: First audience with Wanli Emperor

W 26 Class 5: Second audience with Wanli Emperor

M 31 Class 6: Wanli Emperor and First Grand Secretary respond

November

W 2 Classes 7 and 8 (combined): Final presentations to Wanli Emperor. Decision rendered.

M 7 *no class (Election Day weekend)*

W 9 Post-mortem discussion. Fill out survey for GV 1913 roles; begin reading game materials for Mon.

Game 3. Greenwich Village, 1913: Suffrage, Labor and the New Woman

Sun 13 7pm: Screening of Warren Beatty's [REDS](#). Dessert served. Location TBA.

M 14 Class 1: Women's Rights and Suffrage

Before class: read Game Book, pp. 1-4, 45-57, 100-129, 145-147, 193-201.

W 16 Class 2: Labor and Labor Movements. *Before class:* read Game Book, pp. 58-74, 152-177.

M 21 Class 3: Bohemia and the Spirit of the New.

Before class: read Game Book, pp. 75-87, 208-222, 223-24, 240-42, 269-276; also pp. 5-32, 92-98.

W 23 Class 3.5: Extra set-up class. Art activities and multimedia. **Roles distributed.**

M 28 Class 4: The Suffrage Cause (game session run by Suffrage Faction).

Before class: read Game Book, pp. 130-144, 148-151.

W 30 Class 5: Labor Has Its Day (game session run by Labor Faction)

Before class: read Game Book, pp. 178-192.

December

Sun 4 10am-2pm: Walking tour of Greenwich Village, followed by Class 6: The Feminist Mass Meeting over lunch at the former "Polly's" (now La Lanterna Caffè, a restaurant on the same site). All Villagers should come prepared to speak today. Prepare by reading Game Book, pp. 243-268. **IMPORTANT:** We will meet at 10am in the lobby of Barnard Hall. **DRESS WARMLY!!!**

M 5 Class 7: Mabel Dodge's Evening.

W 7 Class 8: *The Masses* and the Vote.

M 12 Class 9: Coda and Post-Mortem. Course evaluations.