V55.0402. Conversations of the West:
Antiquity and the Renaissance

Spring 2003
Low

Instructor: Professor Anthony
Preceptors: Scott M. Cleary, Mark Hewitt, Leif Sorensen

TEXTS:
Sophocles, Sophocles I: Three Tragedies, University of Chicago Press.

Jan 21
Introduction.
Jan 23
Odyssey 1-4 (The quest of Telemachus).
Jan 28
Odyssey 5-12 (Odysseus from the sea).
Jan 30
Odyssey 13-24 (Homecoming).
Feb 4
Genesis 1-11 (Creation and fall: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah).
Feb 6
Genesis 12-50 (Covenant and blessing: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, story of Joseph).
Feb 11
Exodus (Moses).
Feb 13
Job (Trial and debate; the voice from the whirlwind). [You may omit ch. 32-37.]
Feb 18
Sophocles, Oedipus the King (Justice and tragedy). Paper 1 Assigned.
Feb 20
Plato, dialogues in The Trial and Death of Socrates (freedom and justice).
Feb 25
Plato, ASymposium@ (the nature of love). Paper 1 due in class.
Feb 27
Virgil: Aeneid 1-2 (Driven by Fate).
Mar 4
Virgil: Aeneid 3-4 (Love and Duty).
Mar 6
Virgil: Aeneid 5-6 (Death and Prophecy)
Mar 11
Virgil: Aeneid 7-12 (Alliance and war). [You may omit 7:864-1028; 9:670-992; 10:
Mar 13
Midterm Examination.
Mar 17-22
Spring Vacation.
Mar 25
Mar 27
Apr 1
Augustine, Confessions 1-4 (Youth).
Apr 3
Augustine, Confessions 5-9 (Conversion).
Apr 8 assigned. Pico, On the Dignity of Man (the Renaissance philosophy of man). **Paper 2**

Apr 10 Machiavelli, The Prince (Natural law, morality, and political sovereignty).

Apr 15 Castiglione, The Courtier, Books 1 and 4. **Paper 2 due in class.**

Apr 17 Milton, Paradise Lost 1-2.

Apr 22 Milton, Paradise Lost 3-4.

Apr 24 Milton, Paradise Lost 5-7.

Apr 29 Milton, Paradise Lost 8-10.

May 1 Milton, Paradise Lost 11-12.

May 7-14 Final Examination period (May 6 is Reading Day).

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION: The readings include seminal works from three traditions, represented by the cities and civilizations of Athens, Jerusalem, and Rome, which deeply influenced the development of western thought and culture, converged in the middle ages, and were reborn in the Renaissance. We shall attempt to strike a balance between respecting the integrity of each work as it speaks on its own behalf and relates to its particular time and culture, and various significant themes that emerge among the works, as they influence, continue, develop, talk to, modify, and sometimes reject one another. No single overarching theme can encompass such a variety of works and do them justice, but some concerns repeatedly arise: the nature of humanity; the purpose of life; the nature of justice; death and the afterlife; sin, error, and repentance; virtue, excellence, and the good life; body and soul; national identity; the building of civilization; the value of community; the relation between God or the gods and human beings; the balance of providence or fate and free will. In the late classical period, Augustine transforms and synthesizes many of these topics, which are reborn and reconsidered in the Renaissance. Such large themes cannot be well understood, however, without attention to particular texts, stories, persons, images, and similar details, which give them life and energy and make them memorable. **Therefore you should read the assigned works closely, with imaginative care, and preferably with enjoyment, and should not hesitate to ask questions about things that puzzle you.**

OFFICE HOURS: Professor Low: 19 University Place, Room 521 Hours: Tues-Thurs 1:00-2:00, or other times by appt. Tel. 998-8805.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Papers should be 5-6 pages typed, with further details provided by your preceptors. The midterm and final exams will include several essay questions on the assigned materials as well as short answer questions and identifications. The midterm will cover readings to that point; the final will cover readings for the whole course with emphasis on the second half of the course. Grades are based on papers (18.75% each), quizzes, attendance and participation in sections, midterm exam (12.5% each); and final exam (25%).