CONVERSATIONS OF THE WEST: ANTIQUITY AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT
Professor H. Goldwyn
Fall 2002 – SILVER (MAIN) 207
V55.0403.008 – T/R 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.
nyu.edu/classes/goldwyn

Conversations of the West begins with the early roots of Western culture: the Biblical, Greek and Roman traditions. Its aim is to acquaint students with some of the central themes and concerns which dominated antiquity and how these ideas came to be so influential in shaping the modern Western world.

Our section of Conversations of the West – bridging a large historical jump from late Antiquity to the Enlightenment – will focus on voyage, geographic displacement, errantry, exile, discovery, the emergence of new borderland culture areas and a double consciousness which questions the obliquities of "belonging" (be it spiritual, geographic, ethnic or gender).

We will examine key texts of Antiquity and the way in which Enlightenment thinkers revisited, reinterpreted, redefined and, at times, rejected their intellectual and cultural legacy. Much of the thinking in Contemporary Western Society has been profoundly affected by the Enlightenment, a turbulent and revolutionary juncture in the history of the Western world.
Professor H. GOLDWYN  
Email: hgoldwyn_map@hotmail.com (specifically for MAP purposes).

Lecture: V55.0403.008  T/R 2:00 – 3:15p.m.  SILV 207  
Office Hours:  T/R 3:30 to 5:00p.m.  Room 632  
Department of French, 19 University Place, 6th floor,  
Tel: 212-998-8722

PRECEPTORS

A. MARC CAPLAN  
Email: aqc1774@nyu.edu  
V55.0403.009  F 9:30 – 10:45a.m.  SILV 515  
V55.0403.010  F 11:00 – 12:15p.m.  SILV 410  
Office hours:  R 3:30 – 5:30p.m.  Room: 317  
19 University Place, Department of Comparative Literature, 3rd floor.

SUSAN MATTHIAS  
Email: sam4749@nyu.edu  
V55.0403.011  M 3:30 – 4:45p.m.  SILV 708  
V45.0403.012  M 4:55 – 6:10p.m.  SILV 708  
Office hours:  T: 3:45 – 5:45p.m.  Room: 317  
19 University Place, Department of Comparative Literature, 3rd floor.

GREGORY BRUHN  
Email: gpbl@nyu.edu  
V55.0403.013  T 8:00 – 9:15a.m.  SILV 708  
V55.0403.014  T 9:30 – 10:45a.m.  SILV 708  
Office hours:  T 11:00 – 1:00p.m.  Room: 626  
19 University Place, Department of French, 6th floor,
READING LIST


SYLLABUS

SEPTEMBER

9/5/10/12/17  GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Major theme: travel, exploration, geographical displacement, cultural migrancy, exile, diaspora, discovery, self-discovery, transnationalism, the “enigma” of the other. Different genres covered in the course, tragedy, epic poem, dialogue, narrative (stories), first person narrative (the confession as a genre), travel tales (satire, religious and political propaganda), letters, correspondence and epistolary form.
- Life in Greece, birth of drama, tragedy, mythology, the Greek Gods
- Aristotle’s *Poetics* (sections 1, 2 and 3).
- Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides
- Analysis of *Medea* (complete)

9/19/24/26
Introduction to Roman life, politics of the time (Augustus), *Virgil, The Aeneid*. How Aeneas differs from his predecessors, Achilles (*The Iliad*) and Odysseus (*The Odyssey*). The destruction of Troy. Displacement and dislocation of the Trojans. The emergence of new maps: borderland culture areas. An unmoored group of people. Aeneas, the leader, the “culture-bearer”, the son, the father and the lover.
- Analysis of *The Aeneid* (Books I, II, III, IV, VI, VIII, XII) and few excerpts from *Homer* (in photocopies).
  - The tale of the destruction of Troy by Aeneas
  - Dido and Aeneas
  - The battle of the Gods
  - The Underworld
  - The new land
  - The last battle
  - Revision for the first quiz
  - Susan Matthias, Epic Topoi in Homer and Virgil

OCTOBER

10/1  FIRST QUIZ: On Medea (Greek Tragedy) and the Aeneid (Epic Poem) and FIRST PAPER DUE in class.
First speaker, Peter De Staebler, on the City of Rome.

- Plato’s *Symposium*
  - Greek Philosophy
  - Dialogs
  - The search for Truth and Beauty
  - The Whole (complementary self)
  - Socrates

Optional visit of the Greek & Roman Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum.

Continue and end the *Symposium*

- The *Old Testament: Genesis and Exodus* (complete)
  - Problems of translation
  - Analysis of the two creation stories
  - Early mankind: creation, good/evil, expulsion, the flood
  - The wanderings, the covenants and the code of laws
  - Belonging: the community vs. the individual

  - The teachings and healings of Jesus
  - Christianity emerging as a world religion
  - Universalism of Christianity
  - Paul’s conversion
  - His travels and missionary work

- Saint Augustine’s *Confessions* (Books I,II,VII,X)
  - Subjectivity (I am my own subject)
  - First-person narrative
  - Memory
  - The role of literature (epic poem and drama)
  - The will
  - Importance of conversion, the notion of Grace
  - Revision for the Quiz

SECOND QUIZ on The *Symposium*, The *Old and New Testaments* and the *Confessions*. SECOND PAPER due in class.

Greg Bruhn on Travel Literature and Michael Hughes on Enlightenment Philosophy.
NOVEMBER

11/5 LINK BETWEEN ANTIQUITY AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT.
- Pascal’s notion of Grace (excerpts of Les Pensées in photocopy).
- Introduction to the Enlightenment (excerpts of Kant’s the meaning of Enlightenment)
- Metaphors of Space: new cosmologies, new worlds – The notion of Travel. Travel literature and its reception.
- Religious wars (France, England and Holland). Holland as a Refuge for religious exiles, freedom of the press. How Protestant minister’s see their role as the last prophet, Ezekiel.
- Alliance of the Dutch and the British against France. Queen Ann, the apogee of England and the last years of Louis XIV, the decline of France.
- Battle over sea hegemony (commerce and colonialism).
- The concept of Covenant and how it affects protestant theology and politics. Covenant Philosopher: John Locke (human rights, civil liberties and the right to depose a monarch who has failed to uphold his share of the contract, legitimization of “regicide”). (excerpts in photocopy).
- Paving the way to the French Revolution.
- A. Marc Caplan on The Contradictions of Enlightenment “Universalism”.

11/7/12 Historical (discovery of new cultures, relativism, political satire through the innocent gaze of a stranger), political (Tories and Whigs) and literary introduction (satiric tales) to Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels (Parts I: A Voyage to Lilliput and II: A Voyage to Brobdingnag).

11/14/19 Deism, materialism, libertinage, dissociation of morality and religion, the individual’s happiness in this world. Pangloss’ optimism. Voltaire’s Candide (complete).

11/21/26 Diderot’s The Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville (complete)
- The Encyclopedia
- Notion of Utopia, the Pacific Islands
The myth of the “good savage” (man is good in a state of nature and is corrupted by society – a literary construct through travel literature)

Women’s role in the Tahitian society (a procreation engine)

11/28 Thanksgiving

*Optional Visit to the Frick Collection* (*18th-century art*).

**DECEMBER**

12/3/5 Mme de Graffigny’s, *Letters from a Peruvian Woman* (*complete*)
The critique of nation-ness and the imagined homogeneous singularity of national identity which insists on the autonomy, purity and/or superiority of “one’s own” culture. The trope of abandonment which leads to epistolarity. Tradition of letter writing.
- Ovide’s *Heroides* (*photocopies*)
- Guilleragues’ *The Portuguese Letters*
- Montesquieu’s *The Persian Letters*.

12/10 Wrap-up the course and revision for the final exam.

**THIRD AND FINAL PAPER DUE**

10/17 **FINAL EXAM** 12:00 – 1:50 p.m.
GRADED REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- 30% Attendance (required at all lectures and sections) + participation and presentations in recitation sections.
- 30% 3 papers (4 to 5 pages, double spaced).
- 20% 2 quizzes.
- 20% Final Exam

REQUIREMENTS (Attendance, class presentations, spot quotations, class courtesy and cell phones)

- **ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.** The lectures set out the key directions and concepts of the course. They function in tandem with the discussion sessions. Students are expected to have read each of the works on the reading list, be prepared for the discussions and participate actively in them.
  - STUDENT PRESENTATIONS. 30% of your grade is based on your attendance to the lectures as well as attendance and active participation in the recitation sessions. Specific topics for oral presentations as a team project will be assigned by your preceptors. Each student will have the opportunity of speaking for 10 minutes on a chosen topic.

- **SPOT QUOTATIONS** enable you to select key passages which shed light on and convey meaning to the entire work and also establish links within the text and with other texts on the Reading List. They also allow you to identify the form (how is the text written, in verse or prose, who is the narrator, is it a story or direct speech) as well as the context (role of the passage in the work) and its significance (what does the quotation reveal and how does it relate to the ideas of the work as a whole and to what other key passages can it be linked to)? Spot quotations are key for the written assignments.

- **COURTESY:** As a matter of courtesy to the instructors and your fellow students, arrive at class promptly, and apart from emergencies, remain in the classroom for the duration of the lecture or recitation.

- Make sure that all PAGERS and CELLULAR TELEPHONES are shut off at the beginning of class.
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (3)
Writing assignments offer students the opportunity to formulate for
themselves central insights encountered in the course and to improve their writing
skills. There will be three five-page papers assigned to be written at home, with a
choice of topics specified for each. Papers are clear, coherent and well-formulated
(check your grammar and spelling).
1. What is your point
   The introductory paragraph of the papers should state clearly what your
   position is, and how you plan to support it.
2. Support your thesis
   Once you have stated your position, develop it by giving clear examples
   from the texts which provide solid support for your view. This is where your
   spot quotations are invaluable to create and carry through a well-supported
   argument.
3. Conclusion
   Close with a summary of your thesis and your supports.
4. Spot Quotations
   Use spot quotations to illustrate your arguments.

THE NYU WRITING CENTER
For assistance on specific writing tasks and help in developing strategies for writing
make an appointment at the WRITING CENTER located at 269 Mercer Street, 2nd
floor, 212-998-8866.

NOTIFICATION POLICY
You must notify Prof. Goldwyn or your preceptors by telephone or email
before the class if you will be absent because of a religious holiday or illness
(documented medical emergency). NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED
WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION. A failing grade may be assigned to any student
with three absences from the lecture and/or recitation.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS, QUIZZES AND PAPERS
You are expected to read each text listed on the Reading List, to attend all
lectures and meetings of your recitation section, to arrive at class meetings
promptly. Required readings are to be completed before the first lecture date.
Assigned books should be brought to every lecture and recitation. There will always
be revision of material before quizzes.

READINGS
REQUIRED BOOKS (Be sure to buy the edition indicated so we will all be on the
same page in class).
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STUDENT INFORMATION (please print clearly)

NAME:

RECITATION SECTION NUMBER

PRECEPTOR

STUDENT ID NUMBER

ANTICIPATED YEAR OF GRADUATION

NYU SCHOOL, ADVISOR'S NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS:

MAJOR PROGRAM OR DEPARTMENT

MINOR

LOCAL ADDRESS

LOCAL TELEPHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

HOMETOWN ADDRESS

HIGH SCHOOL

INTERESTS

WHAT ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES IN THIS COURSE?