CONVERSATIONS OF THE WEST: ANTIQUITY AND THE
ENLIGHTENMENT
Professor H. Goldwyn
Spring 2004 – SILVER 207
V55.0403.001 –M/W 3:30-4:45p.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: hg3@nyu.edu

**Lecture:** V55.0403.001  MW 3:30 - 4:45p.m. SILV 207

**Office Hours:**  
M 2:00 - 3:00p.m.  Room 632  
W 5:00 - 6:00p.m.  Room 632  

Department of French, 19 University Place, 6th  
Tel: 212-998-8722

PRECEPTORS

SUSAN MATTHIAS  
Email: sam4749@nyu.edu

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>V55.0403.002</td>
<td>F 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>SILV 406</td>
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<td>V45.0403.003</td>
<td>F 11:00 – 12:15 p.m.</td>
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Office hours:  
M 1:15 – 3:15p.m.  Room: 317  
19 University Place, Department of Comparative Literature, 3rd floor.

BREGTJE HARTENFORD-WALLACH  
Email: bregtje72@hotmail.com

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<tr>
<td>V55.0403.004</td>
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<td>V55.0403.005</td>
<td>R 11:00 – 12:15 p.m.</td>
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Office hours:  
M 10:00 – 12:00 noon  Room: 317  
19 University Place, Department of Comparative Literature, 3rd floor.

MICHAEL EDWARD RITCHIE  
Email: mer6836@nyu.edu

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<td>V55.0403.006</td>
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<td>V55.0403.007</td>
<td>R 3:30 – 4:45</td>
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Office hours:  
M 1:00 – 3:00p.m.  Room  
19 University Place, Department of French, 6th floor
READING LIST


SYLLABUS

JANUARY

1/21,26,28  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
  • Emergence/origin of drama (seasonal festivals)
  • Honoring Dionysus in 700 BC
  • Chorus/costumes/masks/dialog
  • The physical site
  • Acting/the plot/structure of the play
  • The tragic flaw

➤ Aristotle’s Poetics (sections 1, 2 and 3) click on link in blackboard
➤ Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides
➤ Analysis of Medea (complete)

FEBRUARY

2/2,4,9
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. Virtuous Aeneas, the leader, the “culture-bearer”, the son, the father and the lover.

➤ Analysis of The Aeneid (Books I, II, III, IV, VI, 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

2/11  FIRST QUIZ: ON MEDEA AND THE AENEID
2/16  President’s Day – No class

2/18  FIRST PAPER DUE IN CLASS ON MEDEA OR THE AENEID

2/18, 23, 25

- *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

MARCH

3/1, 3

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

3/8  SECOND QUIZ: OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

3/10  SECOND PAPER DUE IN CLASS ON THE OLD or NEW TESTAMENT

3/10  FIRST SPEAKER: Professor Broderick on Biblical Representation in the Sistine Chapel.

3/15 – 3/21  SPRING BREAK

3/22/24/29

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

- 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

2ND SPEAKER: Brad Engelstein on Saint Augustine

To discover on your own: The Greek and Roman Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum.

3/31 THIRD PAPER DUE IN CLASS on The Symposium or the Confessions.

3/31

LINK BETWEEN ANTIQUITY AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT.
- Martin Luther and the Reformation, “the individual”
- Pascal’s notion of Grace, “the wager”.
- Introduction to the Enlightenment (Kant’s the meaning of Enlightenment on the web).
- Christopher Columbus and the metaphor 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.

APRIL

4/5, 7 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).

4/12, 14 Deism, materialism, libertinage, dissociation of morality and religion, the individual’s happiness in this world. Pangloss' optimism. The Burlesque and the philosophical tale
Voltaire’s *Candide* (complete).

4/19, 21 Diderot’s *The Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville* (complete)
- The Encyclopedia
- Notion of utopia/eutopia, the Pacific Islands
- Nature vs. culture: the myth of the “noble 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)
- Parody

4/26 THIRD SPEAKER: Laura Aurichio, on 18th century art

To discover on your own: The Frick Collection (18th-century art).

4/28 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 oblique gaze
- The trope of abduction/abandonment
- The heroic novel/the epistolary novel
- Trad.:’on of the tragic love letter
  - Ovide’s *Heroides* (photocopies)
  - Guilleragues’ *The Portuguese Letters*
  - Montesquieu’s *The Persian Letters*.

APRIL

5/3 Wrap-up the course and revision for the final exam.

FOURTH AND FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS on *Gulliver’s Travels, Candide, The Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville* or *Letters to a Peruvian Woman*.

FINAL EXAM
GRADED REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS
E-MAIL ACCOUNTS
BOBST LIBRARY

➤ 20% Attendance (required at all lectures and sections) +
  participation and presentations in recitation sections.
➤ 40% 4 papers (4 to 5 pages, double spaced, 10% each).
➤ 20% 2 quizzes (10% each).
➤ 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.
20% 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 10-15 minutes on a chosen topic.

SPOT QUOTATIONS
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 (4)

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).
GETTING STARTED ON E-MAIL/INTERNET/BLACKBOARD

- Activate your email account online at http://www.nyu.edu.its.start/or at Information technology Services (ITS) Client Services Centre, 2nd floor or any ITS Student Computer Lab: Multimedia Lab, 35 West 4th Street, 2nd floor; Tisch Hall (LC8); Third Ave North Residence Hall, C3; 14 Washington Place, lower level.

GETTING STARTED AT BOBST LIBRARY

- Take a library class (schedule at Bobst: Info Desk, 1st floor)
- Take a virtual tour of Bobst at:
  http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/info/instruct/tour.htm

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

WHERE DID YOU ATTEND HIGH SCHOOL

INTERESTS

WHAT ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES IN THIS COURSE?