V55.0401 Conversations of the West  
Antiquity and the Middle Ages  
(Tentative) Schedule  
Fall 2004

Instructors:
Jon Farina (section leader)  
Susan Harlan (section leader)  
Shayne Legassie (section leader)  
Hal Momma (lecturer)

Classes:
Section 1 (lecture): Momma; Mon & Wed 9:30 a.m.--10:45 a.m. (Silver 713)  
Section 2 (discussion): Farina.; Thu 8 a.m.--9:15 a.m. (194 Mercer, 206)  
Section 3 (discussion): Farina; Thu 9:30 a.m.--10:45 a.m. (194 Mercer, 308)  
Section 4 (discussion): Harlan.; Thu 3:30 p.m.--4:45 p.m. (Silver 208)  
Section 5 (discussion): Harlan; Thu 4:55 p.m.--6:10 p.m. (25 West 4, C-20)  
Section 6 (discussion): Legassie; Fri 9:30 a.m.--10:45 a.m. (25 West 4, C-18)  
Section 7 (discussion): Legassie; Fri 11 a.m.--12:15 p.m. (Waverley 566B)

Office Hours and locations:
Momma: Monday, 1:30 p.m.--3 p.m. (office: 19 University Place, Room 528)  
Wednesday, 11 a.m.--12:30 p.m. (The Market Place, Student Center)  
Or by appointment: (212) 998-8813; hal.momma@nyu.edu  
Farina: jvf204@nyu.edu  
Harlan: seh256@nyu.edu  
Legassie: sal52@columbia.edu

Required Texts:
Homer, *The Iliad* (handout)  
The Oxford Study Bible: Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha (Oxford University Press, 1992)  

Anonymous, Njal's Saga, translated by Robert Cook (Penguin Classics)

Chrétien de Troyes, Lancelot: the Knight of the Cart, translated by Burton Raffel (Yale University Press, 1997)

Thomas Malory, Le Morte D'Arthur (online)
http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Mal1Mor.html

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales (online)
http://academic.booklyn.edu/webcore/murphy/canterbury/4miller.pdf

Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy, vol. 1 Inferno (translated by Allen Mandelbaum (Bantam, 1982)

Course Description:

This medieval section of the Conversation of the West will concern a wide range of literature composed before the modern period, in different languages, and by authors with different backgrounds. We will consider how ideas like "honor," "love," "fate" and "truth," among others, are shown in these texts, and how men and women depicted there fulfill or fail to fulfill such ideals. In other words, we will consider how our idea of society and human nature owes to or departs from pre-modern imagination and learning.

In the first half of this course, we will read texts from Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern antiquity including a philosophical dialogue (Plato's Symposium), Greek tragedies (Sophocles's Oedipus the King and Antigone), epics (Virgil's The Aeneid and excerpts from Homer's The Iliad), the Bible (both the Old and the New Testament), and an autobiography of a church father (St. Augustine's Confessions).

In the second half, we will read medieval texts including an Old English heroic poem (Beowulf), a Scandinavian saga (Njal's Saga), a French Arthurian poem (Chrétien de Troyes's Lancelot), a fable from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, and Dante's Divine Comedy.

Each week, you will read one or more assigned texts, attend two lectures on historical backgrounds and characteristics of the text(s), and discuss points of interest in a small group led by your section leader.

In order to maximize your progress, we will ask you to stick to two principles: to come to the class regularly, and to read the assigned text(s) before each class. You may miss up to three lectures and two discussion classes, but you will start losing marks after the fourth lecture or the third discussion class you have missed without a medical excuse (with a doctor's note) or a family emergency. Chronic lateness may affect your grade.
The course evaluation will consist of attendance and class participation (10% and 5%, respectively), two essays (10% and 25%), a mid-term examination (15%) and a final examination (35%).

The mid-term examination (October 25) will consist of explanation of key terms (which will be given in each lecture class), identification of key passages from some of the classical texts, and brief comments on them. The final examination (date t.b.a.) will consist of explanation of key terms, identification and interpretation of key passages from some of the medieval texts, and an essay on Chaucer or Dante. Further information will be provided a week before each exam. All questions on the exams should be addressed to the lecturer (Momma).

The first essay will be a brief analysis (with ca. 750 words) of one of the texts read in the weeks of September 13 and 20 (Plato or Sophocles). Topics will be provided on September 23 or 24, at your discussion meeting. The essay is due on October 7 or 8, depending on your discussion section. Please submit your essay to your section leader. The second essay will be a more developed discussion (with ca. 1,750 words) of one or more texts read in the weeks of September 27 through November 15 (Virgil, Homer, the Bible, St. Augustine, Beowulf, Njal's Saga, and Chrétien de Troyes). Topics will be provided on November 11 or 12 at your discussion meeting. The essay is due on December 2 or 3, depending on your discussion section. Again, please submit your essay to your section leader. All questions on essays should be addressed to your section leader.

Tentative Schedule:

Sep. 8       Introductory lecture
9-10        Introductory meetings for discussion sections

Part 1: Antiquities

15          Lecture on Plato, The Symposium (2), pp. 40-77 (from "Socrates Questions Agathon")
16-17       Discussion sessions

20          Lecture on Sophocles, Oedipus the King
22          Lecture on Sophocles, Antigone
23-24       Discussion sessions; essay topics assigned

27          Lecture on Virgil, The Aeneid (1), books I-VI with emphasis on I, II, IV, and IV; excerpts from Homer, The Iliad (photocopy)
29 Lecture on Virgil, The Aeneid (2), books VII-XII with emphasis on Books VII, IX, and XII; excerpts from Homer, The Iliad (photocopy)  

30-1 Discussion sessions

Oct. 4 Lecture on the Gospel according to Luke (pp. 1327-1364)  
6 Lecture on the Acts of the Apostles (pp. 1394-1430)  
7-8 Discussion sessions; first essay due

Oct. 11 Lecture on Genesis (pp. 11-61)  
13 Lecture on Exodus (pp. 62-104)  
14-15 Discussion sessions

18 Lecture on Augustine's Confessions (1), books I-V  
20 Lecture on Augustine's Confessions (2), books VI-XIII, emphasis on books VI-IX  
21-22 Discussion sessions

25 Midterm Exam

Part 2: the Middle Ages

27 Topic t.b.a.  
28-29 Discussion sessions

Nov. 1 Lecture on Beowulf (1), ll. 1-1676  
3 Lecture on Beowulf (2), ll. 1677-3182  
4-5 Discussion sessions

Nov. 8 Lecture on Njal's Saga (1), chs. 1-88  
10 Lecture on Njal's Saga (2), chs. 89-159  
11-12 Discussion sessions; essay topics assigned

15 Lecture on Chrétien's Lancelot (1), ll. 1-3673; Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur (chapters t.b.a.)  
17 Lecture on Chrétien's Lancelot (2), ll. 3674-7120; Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur (chapters t.b.a.)  
18-19 Discussion sessions

Nov. 22 Topic t.b.a.  
24 No lecture  
25-26 No discussion sessions

29 Lecture on Chaucer, The "General Prologue," ll. 545-66, and "The Miller's Prologue and Tale" from The Canterbury Tales (1), ll. 3187-3512  
Dec. 1 Lecture on Chaucer, "The Miller's Prologue and Tale" from The Canterbury Tales (2), 3153-3854
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Discussion sessions; <strong>2nd essay due</strong></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Lecture on Dante's <em>Inferno</em>, cantos I-XVII, emphasis <em>I-V, IX, XI, XV, XVII</em></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Lecture on Dante's <em>Inferno</em>, cantos XVIII-XXXIV, emphasis on <em>XIX, XXVI, XXVIII, XXX-XXXIV</em></td>
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<td>9-10</td>
<td>Discussion sessions</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Lecture on Dante (including <em>Purgatorio</em> and <em>Paradiso</em>, photocopy); <strong>conclusions; information on the final exam</strong></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td><strong>No lecture</strong></td>
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<td>16-17</td>
<td><strong>No discussion sessions</strong></td>
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<td>t.b.a.</td>
<td><strong>Final exam</strong></td>
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