NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  FALL 2004
V55.0404.008—Conversations of the West: Antiquity and the 19th Century
MW 11:00-12:15 p.m. Silver room: #713

Professor John Chioles, Comparative Literature
Office hours: Mon. 2-4, Tues. (appointments: 3-5) At 19 University Pl. 3rd fl. #318

Preceptors: Ipek Celik, Hugo Pezzini, Alejandra Uslenghi

ANTIQUITY AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

DESCRIPTION: This course deals, in the main, with the way the literary "means" in culture, and how it becomes manifest as an artistic expression, which sometimes survives to become "canonized". It will provide an understanding of the basic genres in a broad fashion: Epic-narrative/Epic Poetry; Dramatic Poetry; Long Narrative—the Novel; and Critical-Philosophical expressions bordering on the artistic. Some emphasis will be given to "dramatic poetry" as both the original way of thinking in the ancient world, and the one "Word" expression with the closest affinity to contemporary and popular culture. The aim of the course will not be of a historical sweep, even though the readings mount progressively from "then to now." The method of discussion and analysis will be culture-specific to the modern world; that is why each older text is coupled with a modern or contemporary one. The mode of thinking with the texts will be comparative (as is done in Comparative Literature.) The goals of the course will be to learn about artistic expression in words, its logical means, as well as its fundamental ambiguity and open-endedness; its aim will be to explore some of the foundations of ancient, as well as early modernist (19th century) culture through reading and frequent writing about them.

Lectures will be designed around specific issues, problems, and passages of each work. There will be no summary of plot in class. As much as possible, a short amount of time will be set aside for discussion in each lecture session. Assigned reading should be completed by the due date for better comprehension of the material. Texts must be brought to class and to the preceptors’ sessions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: 2 SHORT PAPERS (3-5 pages each); for the Preceptors’ sessions, the writing of 1-2 pages (as a personal progress report) to be turned in at arranged intervals; then an IN-CLASS MIDTERM examination. And, finally, ONE LONGER paper, combining the "take-home" final (up to 6 pages).

Each requirement will have the following weight in calculating overall grades: (1) two short papers, together, 25%; (2) participating in Preceptor sessions, discussions (demonstrating your attendance at the Monday-Wed. lectures, including short writings for preceptors), 25%; midterm examination, 20%; and (3) larger paper (comprising take-home final), 30%.
NOTE: late papers will be marked down one letter grade. All sessions, lectures and tutorials have required attendance. Attendance will be checked.

READINGS:

1. HOMER'S Odyssey (the Robert Fagles translation)
2. AESCHYLUS' Oresteia (U. of Chicago Press only)
3. SOPHOCLES' Oedipus
4. SOPHOCLES' Women of Trachis
5. EURIPIDES' Medea
6. EURIPIDES' Bacchae
7. PLATO Phaedrus (Hackett, paper)
8. PLATO Symposium
9. THE BIBLE: APOCALYPSE

11. IBSEN A Doll's House and Other Plays
12. CONRAD'S Heart of Darkness (Signet Classics)
13. MANN'S Death in Venice

SYLLABUS (weekly breakdown)

WEEK ONE
1. INTRO Talk on early Greek writing

WEEK TWO 9/13,
1. Intro. to Homer's ODYSSEY
   Please read bks 1-6

WEEK THREE 9/20
1. Homer (bks, 13-18) AND
   Conrad, Heart of Darkness (part I)

WEEK FOUR 9/27
1. Heart of Darkness (part III)
   and Homer

WEEK FIVE 10/4
1. Oresteia

WEEK SIX 10/11
1. Sophocles' Oedipus, Hegel
   from 19th Cent. Philosophy. p. 40-87

WEEK SEVEN 10/18
1. Euripides' Medea, Nietzsche, p. 321-366

WEEK EIGHT 10/25
1. Plato's Phaedrus (& Symposium),
   Mann's Death in Venice

WEEK NINE 11/1
1. Plato, Mann

9/15
2. cont. Homer
   Read: the next 3 bks, 7-12

9/22
2. Homer (bks, 19-24) /Conrad (part II)
   TOPICS FOR FIRST PAPER

9/29
2. Aeschylus' Oresteia trilogy
   FIRST PAPER DUE

10/6
2. IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

10/13
2. Oedipus, Women of Trachis

10/20
2. Medea, Bacchae, Nietzsche

10/27
2. Plato, Mann (TOPICS FOR 2ND PAPER)

11/3
2. Plato, Mann, SECOND PAPER DUE
WEEK TEN 11/8
1. Bible: APOCALYPSE / Mann
   Kierkegaard (excerpts in text: p.289-320)

11/10
2. Bible, Plato, Kierkegaard

WEEK ELEVEN 11/15
1. Symposium, Hegel
   from Hegel,

11/17
2. On Consciousness: Hegel

WEEK TWELVE 11/22
1. Hegel, Marx (excerpts in text, p. 261-288)

11/24
2. Hegel, Marx, Conrad's
   "A Secret Sharer"

WEEK THIRTEEN 11/29
1. Kierkegaard, Ibsen (Doll's House)

12/1
2. (Kierkegaard) THIRD PAPER DUE

WEEK FOURTEEN 12/6
Ibsen, Conrad, Mann

12/8
2. (Same)

LEAP WEEK Monday December 13---Review discussion