CONVERSATIONS OF THE WEST: ANTIQUITY/RENAISSANCE
LECTURES: Mon-Wed 3:30 - 4:45

Instructors (see “Staff Information” on Blackboard):

Professor Ernest Gilman
Ms. Emily Cone-Miller
Ms. Michelle Goodin
Mr. John Mellilo

Course Goals:

The Renaissance understands itself as an age bearing witness to the "rebirth" of classical antiquity. In art, philosophy and literature it also assumes the task of reconciling the cultural inheritance of Greece and Rome with the Christian tradition (itself entering into a moment of crisis as allegiances split between the Catholic church and the "reformed" church of Luther). Our first task will be to look at antiquity. Our second, to explore the ways in which European culture between 1400 and 1700 invents itself—and us—by making itself conversant with the past. In the process, we will explore the two words in the title of this course not to be taken for granted: “conversation,” and “the west.”

Required texts:

The Oxford Study Bible (Oxford)
Homer, Odyssey. tr. Allen Mandelbaum (Bantam)
Sophocles, Sophocles I. (2nd Ed. tr. David Grene (Chicago)
Plato, Five Dialogues. tr. Grube (Hackett)
Plato, The Symposium, ed. Gill
Virgil, Aeneid. tr. Allen Mandelbaum (Bantam)
Augustine, Confessions. tr. Chadwick. (Oxford World Classics)
Castiglione, Book of the Courtier. Tr. George Bull (Penguin)
Erasmus, Praise of Folly. tr. Robert Adams (Norton Critical)
More, Utopia tr. Robert Adams (Norton Critical)
Montaigne, Essays tr. J.M Cohen (Penguin)
Shakespeare, The Tempest ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford)

Course requirements:

Three 5-page essays (40%)
Participation in Recitation (20%)
Midterm exam (20%)
Final exam (20%)
Course policies:

1. Deadlines:

All work is due when it is due. Late work will be penalized five points per day in fairness to students who hand in assignments on time. All course requirements must be completed satisfactorily for a passing grade.

2. Attendance:

Attendance will be taken in lecture and in recitation. Four excused absences are allowed in lecture, and two in recitation. Whether an absence is “excused” will be at the discretion of the teaching staff. We will ask you for a good reason and, in case of illness, a doctor’s note. With the exception of serious medical problems or other personal issues brought to our attention in advance, any absences beyond the allotted number will lower your final grade by one full grade. Work missed because of absence must be made up. If you know that you need to be absent for any reason, it would be better to inform your recitation instructor in advance.

3. Academic integrity:

Any instances of academic dishonesty, cheating or plagiarism (including e-plagiarism) will result in a failure in the course and a letter of notification to the Dean. There is no appeal, as plagiarism is a matter of fact (what appears on the page) and not of the intention of the plagiarist (“I didn’t mean to do it”). Ignorance, anxiety, lack of time, and so on, are not legitimate excuses. If you are unsure about the proper use of sources it is your responsibility to consult your section leader. Please read the "Statement on Academic Honesty" posted under the "Course Information" button on Blackboard.

4. Examinations:

Examinations are to be taken at the designated time and place, on the designated day. The final exam cannot be administered in advance. It cannot be “made up” afterwards except in the case of a documental medical emergency on the scheduled day. Those who need special accommodation should present their documentation to the instructor at the beginning of the term.

Tutorial assistance:

Additional tutorial assistance for this class is available to you free of charge at the College Learning Center located on the 1st Floor of Weinstein Hall (right behind Java City). For information on one-on-one and group peer tutoring, please stop by the CLC or go to their website: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/clc. They can also be reached at 212.998.8008.
Schedule of Lectures:

JANUARY
17: Introductory
22: Genesis
24: Exodus
29: Luke, John
31: Acts of the Apostles

FEBRUARY
5: Homer, Odyssey
7: Homer, Odyssey
12: Sophocles, Antigone
14: Plato, Phaedo
19: Holiday: President's Day (No Class)
21: Plato, Symposium
26: Virgil, Aeneid
28: Virgil, Aeneid

MARCH
1: Virgil, Aeneid
5: MIDTERM EXAMINATION
7: Augustine, Confessions (Selections)
12-14: Spring Recess (No Class)
19: Augustine, Confessions (Selections)

21: Bridge Lecture: Antiquity to the Renaissance

26: Bridge Lecture: What is the "Renaissance"?

28: Castiglione, The Courtier (Books 1 and 4)

APRIL

2: Machiavelli, The Prince

4: Machiavelli, The Prince

9: More, Utopia

11: More, Utopia

16: Erasmus, Praise of Folly

18: Montaigne, Essays
"Of Repentence"
"Of Cannibals"
"Of Experience"

23: Shakespeare, The Tempest

25: Shakespeare, The Tempest

30: Conclusion and Review

MAY 2-9: Finals period: Date and time of final exam TBA.