Syllabus for V55.O402 Conversations of the West: Antiquity and the Renaissance Fall 2007 Cantor 102
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Preceptors: Andrea Cooper, sections 15 and 16, andrea.cooper@nyu.edu; Dirk Hartwig, sections 13 and 14, ddh229@nyu.edu, and Zachary Levine, sections 11 and 12, zpl202@nyu.edu.

Meeting times: Lectures on M and W from 2-3:15pm in Cantor 102 (at 8th St. and University). Check your section for its time and place.

The course assignments and readings are listed below. The books have been ordered through the NYU Book Center and should be available under the course heading on the lower floor. (Note that books for later assignments sometimes come in late.)

Please check this Blackboard site from time to time to keep up with notes, writing assignments, and additional texts and images--as well as changes or additions to assignments.

Grading for the course will be apportioned as follows: 1. Fifteen percent each for three short papers on topics to be assigned in class and on Blackboard, due at your third, seventh and eleventh section meetings; 2. fifteen per cent for attendance, preparation and participation in class, including the lectures at which short quizzes and polls will often be required; 3. forty per cent for the final examination.

Often in this class you will be asked to do some short writing at the lecture or in your section. Submissions of this kind will be read by your preceptor but graded on a check, check plus or check minus basis: that is, acceptable, more than acceptable or less than acceptable. These grades will count as a significant portion of your class participation. They will also allow us to identify strengths and weaknesses in your writing and organization so as to prepare you for the completion of the longer papers and the exam.

Each of you should participate actively in your section discussions. I will use a seating chart in the lectures and call on you for participation in them as well. Should you have a medical or personal emergency you should communicate as soon as possible with your section leader. All other absences (and lateness) will count against your grade. Late submission of work will also count against the grade.

The assignments for the 28 class sessions are as follows:
1. Heraclitus, fragments.
2. Homer, The Odyssey, I-VI
3. VII-XII
4. XIII-XVIII
5. XIX-XXIV
6. Plato, Republic I.
7. Republic II-IV
8. Republic V-VII
9. Republic VIII-X
10. Sophocles, Antigone.
11. Vergil, Aeneid I-IV
12. V-VIII
13. IX-XII
15. Exodus.
17. Acts and first and last verses of John.
18. Augustine, Confessions I-VI.
19. Confessions, VII-XIII.
20. Dante, Inferno 1-16.
21. Inferno, 17-34.
22. Montaigne, Essays and some images from Leonardo.
23. Montaigne to end.
25. Selected Sonnets cont'd.
26. Shakespeare, Lear
27. Lear cont'd.
28. Review.

Books and texts:

You should purchase new or used copies of assigned books and print off all web-based materials so as to have texts or images with you at the lectures and in the sections. Always bring texts to class so that we can discuss specific lines. Shakespeare and the Bible are well marked by verse in all editions; Plato usually is too. The other books are not: if you buy the wrong edition it will be hard for you to identify the passage under discussion.

1. Heraclitus, fragments, in the file Course Documents here on Blackboard.
6. Augustine, Confessions, Sheed tr., Hackett.
7. Dante, The Inferno, Pinsky tr., Farrar Straus
You will, of course, need to have the Bible texts for class. I leave it to you which translations you will use. Differences in translation may well be informative. The New Oxford edition, which is available new and used in the Book Center, is the one I will use. Materials on Leonardo da Vinci will be identified later in the semester from the many websites available on his work, including some of his writings.

Please do not hesitate to call or email me or the preceptors throughout the semester. The three of us will make ourselves available to meet with each of you--or groups of you--for discussion outside of class. During the second week I will poll the class to determine whether or not fixed office hours will be helpful. But I hope you will email me to request a meeting time whenever you feel it might be helpful. Simply identify three or four times when you are free and I will respond by picking one of them or by offering some other times.