TEXTS AND IDEAS: ANTIQUITY AND THE RENAISSANCE

CORE-UA 402-10
Mon-Wed 3:30-4:45
Cantor Center room 101

Professor Gilman
eg4@nyu.edu

Office Hours M-W 2-3
English Department
244 Greene Street, room 405

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 as moderns—by reinventing the past. The texts we read are listed below. The themes to be explored over the course of the term include, first of all, “antiquity” and “the Renaissance,” and then such fundamental themes as those of the self, community, language, tradition, history, gender, ethics, and the divine. One overarching idea of the course will be the idea of the idea itself: that is, what is an “idea,” what can we know, how can we know it, and what can (and cannot) be known.

Required texts (at the University Book Store):

Note that you may substitute other editions of the Bible or of Shakespeare if you have them. Except under special circumstances to be approved in advance by the instructor, electronic texts (Kindle, Ipad) are not acceptable, as they lack the editorial materials you will need—introductions, notes—and are often based on older, inferior translations. Books should be brought to lecture and to recitation. Computers, tablets, and smart phones may not be used in class.

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 and evaluation:

Two 6-8 page essays (20% each)  
Participation in Recitation (20%)  
Midterm exam (20%)  
Final exam (20%)  

Letter grades will be given for each requirement. The final course grade will be computed according to the official NYU grading scale appended to this document.

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 not be taken in lecture. It’s ungainly to do so in a large class. More importantly, your instructor is committed to teaching those students who want to learn. Most importantly, you should keep in mind that the midterm and the final examinations will be based heavily on material covered in lecture. “Getting the notes” from another student is rarely an effective substitute for being there and participating actively.

Attendance will be taken in recitation. You have a maximum of two unexcused absences in recitation—no excuses needed or explanations required. However, with the sole the exception of absences for serious and documented medical or family emergencies, every absence beyond the allotted two will automatically lower your final grade by one-half grade (for example, from a B to a B-). The point is to regard your two “free” absences as a bank for sick days or personal issues, and to use them—or rather, save them—appropriately. Absences for observance of religious holidays should come out of the bank. Work missed because of any absence must be made up. If you know that you will need to be absent for any reason, you should inform your recitation instructor in advance.

3. Academic integrity:

Any instances of academic dishonesty, cheating or plagiarism (including e-plagiarism) will be reported to the Director of the CORE curriculum program and, if confirmed by him, may result in an F in the course and a letter of notification to the Dean of your school. There can be no appeal to the instructor, 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, or if you have other problems with your writing such that you might be tempted to listen to the devil on your shoulder, it is your responsibility to consult your section leader for help. All papers will be submitted in hard copy and electronically by a Word document, which will then be submitted to turnitin.com for verification.
4. Examinations:

Examinations are to be taken when scheduled. The final exam cannot be administered in advance or “made up” afterwards except in the case of a documental medical emergency. It is your responsibility to check the date of the final exam and make your travel plans accordingly. Those who have been qualified for special accommodation should present their documentation to the instructor at the beginning of the term.

5. Devices:

The use of cell phones, laptops, and tablets is not permitted in lecture or in recitation. Exceptions are made only in cases of documented special needs.

Tutorial assistance:

Your instructor and your recitation leaders are available (and very willing) to help during office hours. 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 Residence Hall. 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](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/clc). They can also be reached at 212.998.8008.
Schedule of Lectures:

January
22: Introductory: “Texts” and “Ideas”
24: The Book of Genesis (up to Chapter 23)
29: The Book of Exodus (up to chapter 21)
31: The Gospels of Luke and John

February
05: The Acts of the Apostles
07: Homer, Odyssey (Books 1-12)
12: Homer, Odyssey (Books 12-24)
14: Odyssey, continued
19: Presidents’ Day: No class
21: Sophocles, Antigone
26: Plato, Phaedo
28: Plato, Symposium [First Paper Due in Lecture]

March
05: Virgil, Aeneid (Books 1-6)
07: Virgil, Aeneid (Books 7-12)
12: Spring break: No class
14: Spring break No class
19: MIDTERM EXAM
21: Augustine, Confessions, Books 1-4
26: Augustine, Confessions, Books 5-8

28: Bridge Lecture 1: Antiquity to the Renaissance

**April**

02: Bridge Lecture 2: What is the “Renaissance”?  
04: Bridge Lecture 3: What is the "Renaissance"? (continued)

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

11: Machiavelli, The Prince

16: Machiavelli, The Prince (cont’d)

18: More, Utopia

23: Erasmus, Praise of Folly


30: Shakespeare, The Tempest

**May**

02: Shakespeare, The Tempest (Continued)

07: Conclusion and Review

09: **FINAL EXAM (4:00 – 5:50)**
NYU Grading Scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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Note that grades of A and A- will be earned by students who have done really *excellent* work throughout. The average grade for this course falls between a B and a B-