Texts and Ideas
Antiquity and the Enlightenment: Spring, 2011

This is a very ambitious course. It includes a great deal of reading on many critical issues and problems of Western culture. These issues spanned the centuries and concerned diverse communities. They help us understand why our society looks like it does today, where many of our values come from, and why certain tensions characterize our culture. But our primary focus is not our society today, but the great authors, philosophers and religious leaders of the past who influenced the different cultures that preceded and informed our own. Our first task is to understand the authors in their historical situations. Although we study the perennial problems of Western culture, every moment in history is comprised of unique events, circumstances and peculiarities.

The first half of our course explores the “Judeo-Christian” and Hellenistic traditions. The former tradition emerged from the civilization of Ancient Israel, the second from the civilizations of Greece and Rome. Already in antiquity the traditions collided, and both the Christian Scriptures and Augustine are products of that encounter. The second half of our course jumps to the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries. Enlightenment thinkers grappled with the fusion of these traditions that they had inherited, subjected both to serious criticism, and tried to revise them based on recent scientific advances. In a way we will see the Judeo-Christian and Hellenistic traditions merging together in the first half of our course and splitting apart in the second half, as a new tradition—science and technology—rises to prominence.

Required Texts: (Note: Except for the Bible, you must purchase these editions, and not rely on online texts.)

1. Oxford Study Bible.
3. Plato, Apology and Crito in The Trial and Death of Socrates, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett)
4. Plato, Symposium, trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff (Hackett)
5. Augustine, Confessions (Penguin)
7. Alexander Pope, Essay on Man (Dover)
8. Voltaire, Candide and Other Stories, trans. Roger Pearson (World’s Classics.)
10. Denis Diderot, Encyclopédie (blackboard).
Requirements

(1) Reading and Participation: This is most important. You will not learn unless you read the texts, think about them and struggle with the ideas. Lectures will help you to understand the texts, but you will gain the greatest rewards by analyzing, thinking critically, grappling with the writings yourself and participating in discussions. “Reading and Participation” includes several elements:

   (a) Attending discussion sections. Too many absences will adversely impact your grade: 6 absences will entail failure of the course; 4 or 5 absences will result in an F for the “participation” component of the course, i.e., 20%. Please always come to discussion sections (and lectures) with your text for that day.
   
   Attendance is mandatory at lectures, although attendance will not be formally recorded. However, since discussion sections will often take up issues raised in lectures, failure to attend lectures will impact the quality of participation in discussion.
   
   (b) Keeping up with the reading and participating in the discussion sections.

   (c) Selection of passages for discussion sections. Each student will select for each discussion section a passage from the text for that day that s/he judges to be important and intriguing. You should be prepared to explain to the class why you found this passage to be important and interesting. The passage can be one with which you agree (and explain why) or with which you disagree (and explain why you disagree, and why the author found his perspective compelling). Or you might select a passage that you don’t completely understand but that you believe is important and wish to attempt to puzzle out with the class. The goal is to focus on specific passages, not the text as a whole.

   Some texts might strike you as strange or offensive. You are welcome to choose such passages for discussion. But your approach should be to try to understand why the author proposes an idea that you find alien. For example, you might find that the depiction of God in the Bible clashes with how you conceive of God, or that Plato’s celebration of homoerotic love strikes you as immoral. Avoid this type of reaction: “The picture of God in Exodus killing the Egyptians is primitive and silly? How stupid to portray God as if he is on a power trip....” “Plato must have been a lecherous and disgusting pedophile to celebrate the love of boys....” Rather, you should approach the passages as follows: “The portrayal of God in Exodus as punitive and warlike differs radically from my conception of God. I have always been taught that God is merciful to all his creatures. What could have motivated the author of Exodus to conceive of God in this fashion? Perhaps the Israelites were constantly fighting battles with the surrounding nations and it inspired the soldiers to think that their God fought on their side in war etc.” I am asking you not simply to react, but to try in each case to understand the author within his world and to share that with the class.

   You will not be asked to hand in a paper about your selection. But you should have notes to consult so that you will be prepared when called upon to share your selection with the class.

   (d) Two 4-6 page papers, assigned in sections. And occasional minor writing assignments.

(2) A midterm exam

(3) A final exam
Grading

Participation in discussion sections: 20%
Two papers 15%
Midterm: 30%
Final: 35%

NOTE: Additional 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

Schedule

Jan 24: Introduction
Jan 26: Genesis 1-11
Jan 31: Genesis 12-50
Feb 2: Exodus 1-34, Deut 29-30, Jonah
Feb 7: Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* (entire play)
Feb 9: Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*
Feb 14: Sophocles, *Antigone*
Feb 16: Plato, *Symposium*
Feb 21: --No Class--
Feb 23: Plato, *Symposium*
Feb 28: Plato, *Apology, Crito*
March 2: Matthew
March 7: Matthew / Galatians
March 9: John 1; Acts 1-11
March 21: Midterm
March 23: Augustine, *Confessions*
March 28: Augustine, *Confessions*
March 30: Enlightenment: Introduction
April 4: The Philosophes: Denis Diderot, *Encyclopedie* (on blackboard)
April 6: Deism and Optimism: Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*
April 11: Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*
April 13: Encounter with Other Cultures: Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*
April 18: Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*
April 20: --No Class--
April 25: Interlude: The American Enlightenment
April 27: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*
May 2: Rousseau, *Second Discourse / Voltaire, Candide*
May 4: Voltaire, *Candide* *
May 9: Conclusions
For each text I have prepared study questions. These will help guide your reading and focus you on important passages. When I lecture I will assume that you have paid close attention to the questions and the passages to which they refer. The questions may also serve as the basis of discussions in the discussion sections.
Dr. Jeffrey Rubenstein

Conversations with the West: Enlightenment Track:

Questions on Genesis

Note: A general outline of Genesis is as follows: (1) Chapters 1-11: Primeval history, Adam - Abraham; (2) Chs. 12-36: Patriarchal narratives, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. (3) Chs. 37-50: The Joseph saga.

(1) Creation: Gen 1:1-2:4. (a) What is the biblical view of creation? What is God's relationship to nature and to the world he creates? (b) Try reading this passage out loud. What feeling do you get? What words recur in the story? What point is conveyed?

(2) Compare the creation of human beings in Gen 1 and Gen 2. What is the order of creation? What is the reason for the two genders in each chapter?

(3) What is the biblical view of mankind? Are human beings good or bad, divine or bestial, noble or base? What does "the image" of God mean?

(4) Why are Adam and Eve exiled from the garden? What are the consequences of this? (This will be discussed in the discussion sections.)

(5) A number of failures, evils, and sins are recounted in Gen 1-11. What are these? (See especially 6:5-8) Why do they occur? How does God respond? Note Gen 8:21-9:11. Does this mean God is changing his policy?

(6) God makes covenants with Noah (Gen 9) and Abraham (Gen 17; see too Gen 15) and later, in Exodus, with the entire people (Exod 19-24). (And you could see Gen 1:27-29 as a covenant with Adam.) What is a covenant? (Look it up in a dictionary or encyclopedia.) What does this imply about the relationship between God and humans?

(7) Compare Gen 18 and Gen 22. How can one understand these two chapters? Why does Abraham act so differently, protesting in one case and obeying in the other? Why does God command the sacrifice of Isaac?

(8) In Gen 18:25 Abraham says to God, "Should not the judge of all the earth do what is just?" How can he talk to God like this? What does this show about the divine-human relationship?

(9) Jacob steals the blessing and extorts the birthright from Esau. But he suffers a great deal in the rest of his life. What happens to Jacob that can be seen as punishment for what he did? See especially Gen 29:25-26 and 32:14-22 and 37:29-35. See too 27:13, 31:32-33 and 35:16-17. (In general are the patriarchs perfect or morally flawed; are they semi-divine or human?)
(10) Follow the character development of Joseph and his relationship with his brothers. Note repeated themes in the story: dreams, clothes, ascents and descents (the pit, prisons) etc. What does Joseph learn in life? What is the role of God in the story?

The crucial question is the ordeal that Joseph puts his brothers through. Why does he do this? Is it pure revenge? Do the brothers (and father) deserve the ordeal? We will discuss this in class.

(11) How is God portrayed in Genesis? How does he relate to human beings? What does he want from them? What does he offer?

(12) EXERCISE on the FLOOD: To appreciate the uniqueness of the Bible it is necessary to understand it in its context. Much of biblical thought is a reaction to, and rejection of, values in the surrounding cultures. I have provided you a translation of the Babylonian story of the Flood. Compare this to the biblical account (Gen 6:5-9:17.) Make a list of all the similarities and all the differences, and think about the significance of the differences. For example, think about the reasons for the flood in both stories, who is saved, why, how etc. We will go over these in class.

(Note: in the Babylonian story, Ut-napishtim, the survivor of the flood [=Noah] is relating his story to Gilgamesh, the hero of the epic.)

(13) EXERCISE on biblical style: The literary style of the Bible is brief, communicating only the essential details, lacking long and complex descriptions. Whatever information is provided should therefore be considered essential. This makes the job of the reader both easier (since there is less to read) and harder (since the reader must ask what the purpose of each detail is, and must also fill in the gaps in the text.) Carefully read Genesis 22:1-19 and pay close attention to what is narrated and what is not. For example, 22:4 suddenly begins “On the third day....” Why are we not told what happened up to that point? What would you like to know about this time? Then why does the narrator not tell us? Note all repetitions and consider why those phrases are repeated. We will read this section closely in class or in discussion sections.

Note: In your response papers on the Hebrew Scriptures (and later, on the Greek Scriptures), please try to avoid simplistic oppositions such as “The God of Wrath vs. the God of Love.” This idea actually has no basis in the texts. It is a product of the Christian-Jewish debate in later times over which is the true or better religion.
OLD TESTAMENT PARALLELS

Thus justice is done for the righteous and punishment to the disobedient. Thus life is granted to the calm in heart and death to the lawless one. Thus all tools are created, all activities of hands and feet. All these things according to the command of the tongue and the decision of the heart.

As it is said of Ptah:

He made all and created the Gods. He is the one who gave birth to the Gods and from him comes forth all things. He is the mightiest of the Gods. Having done all these things, and being satisfied with them all, Ptah rested content with his work (Gen 1:1–22).

The Story of Gilgamesh

"The Story of Gilgamesh" celebrates the mighty deeds of Gilgamesh, Enkidu, Utnapishtim and others. Some characters in the story are human, some divine, some are both. For example, Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk, is one-third human and two-thirds divine. After his best friend—Enkidu—dies, the king sets out on a quest for immortality. The story tells of all the mighty deeds which Gilgamesh performs on his journey to Dilmun, where the once mortal Utnapishtim and his wife now live as immortals.

In 1872 archaeologists found a copy of "The Story of Gilgamesh" at Nineveh in Iraq. It was written in cuneiform on twelve baked clay tablets. On the eleventh tablet, Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh how he and his wife became immortal by surviving a great flood in a giant cube-shaped barge. When The Divine Assembly discovered some mortals had survived the flood, they voted to change Utnapishtim and his wife from mortals into immortals in order not to violate their own decree that no mortals survive the flood.

In the Babylonian telling of the story, Atrahasis is the protagonist; in the Sumerian version, Ziusudra is the hero. Ancient Israel retells the Utnapishtim episode of "The Story of Gilgamesh" in "The Story of Noah and the Ark" (Gen 6–8). The similarities and the differences in these stories emphasize the similarities and differences between Israel and her ancient Near Eastern neighbors.

Tell me, Utnapishtim, how did you and your wife become immortal and join The Divine Assembly?

Well, Gilgamesh, let me tell you the story of a divine conspiracy, a secret plot which The Gods devised to exterminate humanity.
Fig. 16. The demon Kumahba, who guarded the sacred Cedar tree of the gods, and whom Gilgamesh and Enkidu slew. Enkidu was condemned to death for such deeds, which triggered Gilgamesh's search for immortality.

The Gods decided to flood the Earth. But Ea, God of Fresh Water, whispered to the reed walls of my house the plans of Enlil, leader of the Divine Assembly.

Listen to me, Wall!
You Reed Wall, pay attention to me.
Pull down your house,
Build a barge.
Abandon all your possessions,
Save only your life!

Take specimens of every living thing on board. Make the ark as wide as it is long (Gen 6:11–21), with a roof like the dome of the heavens.

I told Ea that I would obey his orders, but then asked: "What shall I tell the people and the elders of the city?" He said: "Tell them: I have learned that Enlil has sentenced me to death, so I cannot stay here in Shuruppak, his city, but must move to the coast where Ea is lord."

First, I built the hulls of the ark one-hundred seventy-five feet high, and the decks one-hundred seventy-five feet wide. I constructed a top deck and six lower decks, separated into compartments by nine bulkheads. Then I caulked the ark with bitumen and asphalt thinned with oil (Gen 6:14–16). I fed my workers as if it were festival time and the ark was completed in seven days. We had a difficult time launching the ark, but we finally managed to get it into the water using log rollers.

Then I loaded all my gold and silver, my entire family, domestic animals, wild beasts, and all kinds of craftsmen into the ark (Gen 7:2–4 + 7–9). Finally, at the precise moment set by Shamash, God of the Sun, I boarded the ark, batted down the hatch and turned command of the ark and its manifest over to Puzur-Adda, the navigator (Gen 7:13–16).

At dawn . . .
The Horizons turned black with clouds,
Adad, God of Thunder, roared.
Shullat and Nadin—The Divine Messengers—
Flew over hill and plain.
Nergal, God of the Underworld, unlocked The Cosmic Dam.
Nimurta, Son of Enlil, opened The Dikes.
The Gods strafed the Earth with lightning,
Adad turned The Day into Night.
Throughout the day . . .
The Winds attacked like soldiers,
The Waters drowned the mountains and the people (Gen 7:14–17 + 17–23).

Fig. 17. The second figure from the right is probably the god Anu holding the waters of life, which he passes in a vase to a naked Gilgamesh. The small animals and objects represent the constellations of stars.
One person could not see the other.
The Heavens could not see The Earth.
The Waters ran The Anunnaki into The Heavens,
Frightened The Gods like stray dogs against city walls.
Ish-tar, Goddess of Love and War, shrieked.
Cried out like a woman in labor (Mic 4:9):
"How could I kill my own people, 
Conspire with The Gods against those 
to whom I gave birth?
Their bodies float on the sea, 
Swell like schools of dead fish."
The Anunnaki sat humbled.
The Gods wept.

For six days and six nights the winds blew. On the seventh day, 
the raging storm subsided and the sea grew quiet. I felt the stillness 
and then realized that everyone else had drowned in the flood. I 
opened the hatch, and sunlight fell on my face. I bowed my face to 
the deck and wept with tears running down my cheeks (Gen 7:24—
8:3).
The ark ran aground on Mount Nisir (Gen 8:4). It remained 
grounded for six days and, then, on the seventh day I released a 
dove. It flew back and forth, but came back without finding a place 
to rest. Then I released a swallow, but it also returned without find-
ing a place to rest. Finally, I released a raven. Because the flood 
waters had begun to subside, the raven fed, circled, cawed and flew 
away. Immediately, I released the rest of the creatures from the ark 
and they scattered to the four winds (Gen 8:5-17).

I prepared a sacrifice,
I poured a libation on the mountaintop.
I set out my sacred vessels.
I kindled a sacred fire of reed, cedar and myrtle.
The Gods smelled the aroma,
They swarmed like flies around the sacrifice 
(Gen 8:20).

When Ish-tar arrived, she removed her necklace of lapis-lazuli 
and took this oath:
"By my necklace, I swear, 
I shall never forget these days.

Let every god enjoy this meal.
But let Enlil eat no sacrifice mortals prepare.
Enlil thoughtlessly created a flood.
He drowned the mortals who fed The Gods!"
(Gen 8:21-22 + 9:12-17).

But, when Enlil did arrive and saw the ark, he was furious:
"Have some mortals escaped? 
Every last one was to be destroyed!"

Consequently, Ninurta convened The Divine Assembly and 
indicted Ea for obstructing Enlil's plan to flood the earth. Ea 
opened his defense by declaring that he only wanted to control the 
human population with wild animals, famine, or plague; not 
destroy every last mortal with a flood. In closing, Ea testified:
"I did not tell Utnapishtim of Enlil's plan.
I did not warn him of the impending doom.
Subpoena Utnapishtim,
Let the mortal speak.
He dreamed a dream alone, 
He interpreted the divine conspiracy for himself."
Eventually, based on the decision of The Divine Assembly, Enlil boarded the ark and told me and my wife to kneel on either side of him. He laid his hands on our heads and decreed:

"Unapapishtim and his wife have been mortal. Henceforth they shall be immortal. They shall live in a far away land. They shall dwell at The Mouth of the Rivers!" (Gen 9:1-17).

So, the Gods resettled us in this far away land, They brought us to The Mouth of the Rivers.

So, this concludes the story of how we became immortal. Now, Gilgamesh, you have to tell my wife and me the story how you are going to become immortal and join The Divine Assembly.

Fig. 19. A statue of Gilgamesh holding a lion cub (Louvre). Fig. 20. A nude statue of the goddess Ishtar from the early Babylonian period.
Dr. Jeffrey Rubenstein

Conversations with the West: Enlightenment Track:

Questions on Exodus, Deuteronomy and Jonah

Note: Exodus contains three major themes: (1) Chapters 1-15: Slavery and Redemption from Egypt. (2) Ch. 16-24, 32-34: covenant at Mt. Sinai, revelation, sin of molten calf. (3) Ch. 25-31 (35-40): Building of the Tabernacle and consecration of the priests.


(2) What is the effect of all the miracles and plagues? Why are they necessary?

(3) Why do both Moses and the Israelites have to be “introduced” to God? (see e.g. Exod 3-4, 6:2-9.) Why are they all so reluctant? Note especially 6:3. What does this mean?

(4) What is the function and meaning of the Passover (Exod 12-13)?

(5) Follow Moses’s birth, education and development. What kind of a leader is he? What is his character?

(6) God appears in a burning bush to Moses, and then as a pillar of fire and cloud in the camp of the Israelites? Why these forms? (Cf. Exod 20:4)

(7) How does God reveal himself to the people at Mt Sinai? What is the people’s reaction? Why is God so worried they will “break through” (Exod 19:18-25)?

(8) In Ch. 19 the Israelites enter into a covenant with God (also 24:3-8). Chs. 20-24 record the content of the covenant. Why so many laws? What subjects are treated? What do the people have to do? What does God have to do?

(9) What is the attitude to the “stranger” or non-Israelite? What are the repercussions of not being part of the covenant? (see Exod 22:21-24, 23:9)

(10) Chs. 32-34 narrate the sin of the molten calf. What is the sin? What is God’s reaction? How does Moses speak to God (32:10-14, 32:30-34)? Why does God change his mind?

(10a) God says he will destroy the people (32:9-10) but then Moses asks for forgiveness (32:11-14, 32:30-35, 34:9) and God forgives them (after some punishment—32:35) and re-affirms the covenant (34:10 ff.). What does this tell you about the covenental relationship?

(11) What is the purpose of the Tabernacle? Why have a Tabernacle?
(12) EXERCISE on LAW: It is also important to understand biblical law in its context. I have provided some laws from other Ancient Near East cultures. Compare these laws to their biblical parallels. What is similar, what is different, and what is the meaning of those differences? We will go over these in class. The following verses should be compared with the laws:

#195 — Exod 21:15
#196-201 — Exod 21:23-27 (and see Leviticus 24:17-20)
#209-214 — Exod 21:22-25
Hittite law #1-2 — Exod 21:12
#53 — Exod 21:35
#54-55 — Exod 21:28-32
#250-251 — Exod 21:28-32

Note: a “seignior” seems to be someone from the middle class.

Deuteronomy 29-30 (p.211)

(13) What happens if the Israelites keep the covenant? Violate the covenant?

(14) How do the Israelites “turn back” (Deut 30:2)? Can they always do this?

Jonah (p. 960)

(15) Note the use of irony in the Book of Jonah, e.g., who is more religious, Jonah or the sailors? Find other examples.

(16) Why does Jonah not want to go to Nineveh? What is your initial assumption, after reading chapter one, of why he does not want to go? What is your understanding at the end?

(17) What does the book teach about the role of the prophet? What is Jonah’s view of the prophet? Does everything a prophet say come true?

(18) IMPORTANT: Why does God care about the Ninevites? (Keep in mind that they are not Israelites.) Why does God forgive the Ninevites? Is this fair?

(19) Why is Jonah upset that God saved the Ninevites? What lesson does Jonah learn? What is the moral of the story?

(20) How is God depicted in the Book of Jonah? How does this compare to Genesis-Exodus?
they shall prove it against her and they shall cut off her breast because she made a contract for another son without the knowledge of his father and mother.

193: If a son has struck his father, they shall cut off his hand.

196: If a seignior has destroyed the eye of a member of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye.

197: If he has broken another seignior’s bone, they shall break his bone.

198: If he has destroyed the eye of a commoner or broken the bone of a commoner, he shall pay one mina of silver.

199: If he has destroyed the eye of a seignior’s slave or broken the bone of a seignior’s slave, he shall pay one-half his value.

200: If a seignior has knocked out a tooth of a seignior of his own rank, they shall knock out his tooth.

201: If he has knocked out a commoner’s tooth, he shall pay one-third mina of silver.

209: If a seignior struck another seignior’s daughter and has caused her to have a miscarriage, he shall pay ten shekels of silver for her fetus.

210: If that woman has died, they shall put his daughter to death.

211: If by a blow he has caused a commoner’s daughter to have a miscarriage, he shall pay five shekels of silver.

212: If that woman has died, he shall pay one-half mina of silver.

213: If he struck a seignior’s female slave and has caused her to have a miscarriage, he shall pay two shekels of silver.

214: If that female slave has died, he shall pay one-third mina of silver.

("Talion"
(From the Code of Hammurabi)

194: When a seignior gave his son to a nurse and that son has died in the care of the nurse, if the nurse has then made a contract for another son without the knowledge of his father and mother,

(From the Hittite Laws)

1: If anyone kills a man or woman in a quarrel, he has to make amends for him/her. He shall give
four persons, man or woman, and pledge his estate as security.

3: If anyone kills a male or a female slave in a quarrel, he has to make amends for him/her. He shall give two persons, man or woman, and pledge his estate as security [43].

"The Ox That Gores"
(From the Laws of Eshnunna)

53: If an ox gores another ox and causes its death, both of its owners shall divide (among themselves) the price of the live ox and also the equivalent of the dead ox.

54: If an ox is known to gore habitually and the authorities have brought the fact to the knowledge of its owner, but he does not have its ox dehorned, and it gores a man and causes his death, then the owner of the ox shall pay two-thirds of a mina of silver.

55: If it gores a slave and causes his death, he shall pay 15 shekels of silver [45].

(From the Code of Hammurabi)

250: If an ox, when it was walking along the street, gored a seignior to death, that case is not subject to claim.

251: If a seignior’s ox was a gorer and his city council made it known to him that it was a gorer, but he did not plaid its horns (or) tie up his ox, and that ox gored to death a member of the aristocracy, he shall give one-half mina of silver.

252: If it was a seignior’s slave, he shall give one-third mina of silver [47].

Egypt and America

Pharaoh’s country was cursed with plagues, and his hosts were lost in the Red Sea, for striving to retain a captive people who had already served them more than 400 years. May like disasters never befall us.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN [48]
Note: “strophe” and “antistrophe” are not characters. They are two parts for the chorus. The words Phocias, Loxias and Pythia refer either to the God Apollo or to Delphi, the location of the oracle and a temple for Apollo.

Also, you are responsible for reading the entire play for the Feb 9th, even though we will spend two classes on the play.

**BESIDES THE RESPONSE PAPER, PLEASE HAND IN, ON A SEPARATE PAGE, an answer, in about 25 words: What is Sophocles’s main point, i.e., the moral of the play?**

1. How would you describe Oedipus? Great? Heroic? Proud? Does he have faults? What are these?

2. What are Oedipus’s feelings for the city? How does he see his role as leader? Is this appropriate?

3. Who does Oedipus get angry at in the course of the play and why?

4. Note the encounter between Oedipus and Teiresias. What does each symbolize? Who is really blind?

5. What are the clues that lead to Oedipus’s discovery of who he is? How is each brought to light?

6. How does the end make you feel? Emotionally how do you react to Oedipus’s end?

7. Why Oedipus? Does he deserve his fate? If not, why does this happen? Could it happen to anyone? How do you know it won’t happen to you?

8. Why does Oedipus blind himself? (See what he says.)

9. Many people in the play are “rescuers” or “helpers.” In what way is Oedipus, Teiresias, Jocasta, the Corinthian messenger and the herdsman a rescuer or helper?

10. What is the role of gods in the play?

11. What is Jocasta’s attitude to oracles and prophecy? (See 707-724, 849-857, 945-47) Why does she say these things? The chorus reacts to this in ll. 863-910. What makes the chorus so upset? What is the real issue here?
Dr. Jeffrey Rubenstein

Conversations with the West: Enlightenment Track:

Questions on Sophocles, Antigone

(1) Why does Antigone want to bury the corpse, and why is Creon against it? Do either Antigone or Creon feel conflicted about this matter? If not, why not?

(2) What is Creon’s character? How would you describe him?

(3) What are Creon’s values? What makes men good/bad/unjust in his eyes? (See especially his first speech, 163, 192-210, 524-25)

(4) What is Creon’s attitude toward the city? What is his conception of his role and responsibility as leader? Note the ode of the chorus, 332-374 What is the chorus saying about human beings and about the city? (Note that the word “wonder” in line 332 has the sense of “awesome,” “terrible,” “dreadful.”)

(5) Does Antigone have any flaws? Or is she perfectly just, good and loving? (Note the judgment of the chorus, 853-58)

(6) In 280-290 Creon makes some assertions about the gods. Is he right? In 450 ff Antigone makes some assertions about the gods. Is she right?

(7) What eventually persuades Creon to yield? What does he mean in 1114-15: “It may be best, in the end of life, to have kept the old, accepted laws.” What did he mean by “established laws” in 481?

(8) What is the unwritten law mentioned in 455 and the “law” mentioned in 663?

(9) Note the use of “honor”/“glory” and “shame.” With what are these associated in the play, and by whom? See e.g. the different opinions in 540-545; 695; 711, 747 and elsewhere.

(10) Read the Chorus’s ode in 943-988. What is the chorus saying about human experience?

(11) Pay attention to images of ships and sailing. What do these images suggest?
Dr. Jeffrey Rubenstein

Conversations with the West: Enlightenment Track

Questions on Plato, Symposium

Please jot down answers to these preliminary questions before you read the symposium, also to be handed in before class, separate from the response paper:

(a) Do you think you will be remembered 3 generations from now? 10 generations from now? 50 generations? Do you care about this or not?

(b) How can you ensure that you will be remembered? (hint: think of some people we do remember from long ago.)

(c) Does being remembered—leaving your mark on history—grant you some sort of immortality? importance?

NOTE: Through the vehicle of homosexual love (including love of younger men or boys), the Symposium investigates love as such and its relations to Plato’s vision of the Good.

1. What is a Symposium?

2. Take careful note of the first speech: Appolodorus tells his friend of a previous conversation he had with Glaucol, in which he told Glaucol of a conversation with Aristodemus, who reported the speeches at the symposium. Why does Plato introduce the events this way? What do we make of this distance, this indirectness?

3. What is Phaedrus’s conception of love? What noble acts does love inspire?

4. Pausanius distinguishes two kinds of love. What are they? Why is one higher than the other?

5. What is Eryximachus’s view of love? Does this move you? (Remember, he is a doctor!) What seems to be missing from his view?

6. What is Aristophanes’s “myth” of the creation of human beings and the origins of love? Is this meant to be taken seriously?

7. For Agathon, how does love relate to the virtues?

8. Socrates (through Diotima) offers a conception of love that differs from all the others. What is his fundamental criticism of the other views?
(9) For Socrates, what are the various things one may love? Why are they arranged in this hierarchy? Which is best? Why? (see next page)

(10) How does love ultimately relate to knowledge for Socrates? To what extent is love "physical" for him? What is the ultimate goal of love?

(11) As opposed to the other speeches, Alcibiades does not praise love but... what? Why?

(12) How does Alcibiades describe Socrates? Why does he fail in his "seduction" of Socrates?

(13) How does the "love" between Alcibiades and Socrates compare to the concept of love in Socrates's speech?

(14) Note the descriptions of Socrates's resistance to physical sufferings, p. 72 (ll. 220A-B). Why do these things not affect Socrates?

(15) Think about the last paragraph. What does it show?
The structure of Socrates's / Diotima's hierarchy (209 ff.)

(209)
Beautiful bodies-- children
Beautiful souls-- immortal children
  1. fame, glory, good name, e.g. Achilles
  2. poetry and crafts, e.g. Homer, inventors
  3. statecraft and law; e.g. Solon, Athens
“final and highest mystery...” (pay attention!!)

(210)
A) Beauty of bodies
   1. individual body (give birth to beautiful ideas)
   2. beauty of bodies in general

B) Beautiful souls (210C)
   individual soul (giving birth to ideas as will make young men better)
   (activities and awes: e.g. Joe's poems, Solon's laws, courageous acts; 210C)

C) Beautiful knowledges (glory itself, poetry itself, law itself, courage itself) (210D)
   (give birth to many gloriously beautiful ideas...philosophy 210E)

D) Beauty itself (give birth to true virtue and almost become immortal 212B)
Dr. Jeffrey Rubenstein

Conversations with the West: Enlightenment Track:

Questions on Plato, *Apology*

(1) What do you think really made the Athenians dislike Socrates? Were they justified? What did Socrates think he was doing? (28a-29)

(2) Note that there are two sets of charges, earlier charges (19b-c, p. 23) and later charges (24b-c, p. 27). What do each consist of?
   (2a) The accusers charge that Socrates "does not believe in the gods in whom the city believes, but rather other spiritual things." What does this show about the concept of the state, and about the relationship between state and religion? Why must everyone who lives in the city-state believe in its gods?

(3) Is this charge (not recognizing the gods) against Socrates correct? What "divinities" does Socrates believe in?

(4) What does Socrates see as his duty to the state? Why? Why did he never take public office?

(5) Socrates claims he never was a teacher and never taught anybody anything (33a-b). But we usually think of him as a teacher. What can he mean by this? Is it irony?

(6) Why is philosophy such a good thing according to Socrates?

(7) Why will Socrates not plead and beg for mercy?

(8) What counter-penalty does Socrates propose? Is he serious or is this irony? Is it obnoxious?

(9) Does Socrates defend himself in his speeches? Or is he trying to accomplish something else? What?

(10) Socrates says "the unexamined life is not worth living" (38a). What does he mean?

(11) Socrates believes he has a mission from god. What is this mission? How does it compare to Abraham's "mission"?

(12) Was the state justified in punishing Socrates for what he did? Why or why not? Note that Socrates does not challenge the legitimacy of the impiety law.

(13) We generally feel sympathy for Socrates and outrage at his trial and punishment. But can we read the dialogue the opposite way? How might you argue that Socrates deserved what he got?
Questions on *Crito*

1. Socrates argues that we must never do evil or injure others, even when they injure or harm us, as this makes us evil. Is this tenable? How would you respond?

2. How would you argue against Socrates’s claim that by escaping punishment and thereby disobeying the laws, the state and its laws would be harmed. How would the state be harmed?

3. Note that Socrates compares the state to a father and master. Is this a good analogy? What analogies would you use?

4. Socrates then argues that he must obey the laws because he made an agreement with the laws to obey their commandments. To avoid punishment would break that agreement. When did he enter into this agreement? Is this a convincing argument? Would we apply it today?

5. Socrates suggests that he should not think of his life and children first and of justice afterwards, but of justice first. What kind of hierarchy of values is this? To what kinds of people do you think it makes sense? Do you agree with these priorities?

5a. Note that Socrates is arguing that one cannot weigh non-moral goods (his life, children) against moral claims (to act justly). Do you agree with this analysis or is it flawed?

6. Does Socrates’s argument imply a rejection of civil disobedience? Would Socrates ever permit disobedience to the law? When?
Dr. Jeffrey Rubenstein

Conversations with the West: Enlightenment Track:
Questions on Matthew

Outline:
1:1-4:16. Birth and Person of Jesus
4:17-16:20. Proclamation and Teaching of Jesus

(1) In general you should look for two trends throughout Matthew:
(a) Jesus as the fulfillment of scriptures and prophecies of the Hebrew Bible. One way Matthew argues that Jesus is the Messiah is by claiming that Jesus fulfills older prophecies. See, for example, 1:15, 1:18, 1:22-23, 21:1-5. Find other examples throughout the Gospel. (Be sure to refer to the helpful notes on the bottom of the page.)

(b) Symbolic connections to the Hebrew Bible. Matthew connects Jesus to the events, ideas and characters of the Hebrew Bible. For example, the first verse states that Jesus was the son of David and Abraham. Why mention these two figures? What does this tell you about Jesus? Another example: in 2:13ff. Jesus is taken to Egypt because King Herod wants to kill him. What figure in Exodus was born in Egypt and had to hide from a king who wanted to kill him? Contrast Matthew 2:19-20 and Exodus 3:19-20. See too the “transfiguration,” 17:1-13 (Why do Moses and Elijah appear?). Find other examples throughout the Gospel. (And see 12:38-42 on Jonah).

(2) Chs 1-2 give an account of Jesus’s birth. What miracles happen? (Recall the births of Isaac and Moses.)

(2a) What is the purpose of the genealogy in 1:1-18?

(3) Who is Jesus and what is he called? See 1:16, 1:21, 3:17, 4:5, 9:27, 11:27 and especially 17:5. Note the confusion in 16:13-20. Are these consistent?

(4) In 3:13-17 Jesus is baptized and receives the “Holy Spirit.” What is the importance of this?

(5) In chapter 4 Jesus is tempted by the devil. Why these three temptations? What is the point of this scene? Why forty days (see above, question 1b)?

(6) What is the content of Jesus’s (or Matthew’s) teaching? What is his basic message? See e.g. 3:2, 4:17. Why repent? What is the kingdom of heaven? See 4:23. What is the “good news”? (The word “gospel” means “good news.”)

(6a) In Chapter 5-7 Jesus delivers the “sermon on the mount”? Who else went up a mountain and delivered teaching there? What are some themes in this sermon?

(7) What is God’s role in Matthew? What does he do?

(8) How does Jesus convince other people to follow him or that he is the Messiah? What miracles does he do? Why do they believe him? See e.g. 11:1-11; 4:23-25; 8:14-17.

(10) Jesus associates with marginal groups and classes, especially the poor and sick, but also lepers, sinners, women, tax-collectors/centurions, Samaritans and gentiles. Why? Who criticizes him for this contact and why?

(11) Jesus comes into conflicts with various Jewish groups and authorities (Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, chief priests etc.) Who are these groups and what is the source of the conflict? What is Jesus’s criticism of these opponents, both in terms of their relationship to God and their attitude to other Jews? See e.g. 9:1-12; 12:1-14; 15:1-20, 19:1-9.

(12) In 11:25 and 13:10-15, 49-50 Jesus mentions that God has hidden things from some people or that some people are excluded. Who are these people and why? Why does Jesus tell the disciples not to tell others that he is the Messiah in 16:20?

(13) In 24 Jesus mentions “the first birth-pangs of the new age.” What is this age? He also predicts terrible things. To whom will these happen? Why? See too 10:34-39.

(14) In 26:3-4 we learn that the chief priests and other leaders want to destroy Jesus. Why? See 26:57-66.

(15) Death and Resurrection. In 16:21, 17:22-23, 20:17-19, 26:1-2 and elsewhere Jesus says that he must suffer, be rejected and be killed.” Why?

(16) What does Jesus mean by calling bread his “body” and wine his “blood” in 26:26-29?

(17) What is the meaning and importance of the resurrected Jesus in Ch. 28? How does his death save?

(18) Compare the life, trial and death of Socrates and Jesus. What is similar and what is different?

(19) FOR CLASS AND DISCUSSION SECTIONS:

(a) Jesus does much of his teaching in the form of parables. What is a parable? Why does he teach this way? Note what Jesus says in 13:10-15. Does the parable make clear the message or obscure the message or both? In 13:1-58 Jesus explains the parables, but elsewhere he does not. Why bother with a parable if he will give an explanation? Think especially about the parables in 20:1-16, 21:33-43, 22:1-14 and 24:42-51 (we will discuss these in class or sections). What is Jesus teaching in each parable? How do the teaching styles and goals of Jesus and Socrates compare?
Conversations with the West: Enlightenment Track

Questions on Acts, Galatians

(1) Acts 1:1-11 tells of Jesus’s ascension. 1:11 says “This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way you saw him go into heaven.” When does the author think this will happen?
(1a) Meanwhile, where (or how) is Jesus visible (and present) in Acts? (see e.g. 4:31, 10:43.)

(2) What happens in Acts 2:1-3:26? What gives the disciples these powers?

(3) What other powers do disciples have throughout the book? Which of their acts parallels those of Jesus? (see e.g. 5:1-16, 21-23; 9:36-43 etc.)
(3a) Note the role of the “Holy Spirit” in the book. What is this? What does the author mean when he says “the Holy spirit was multiplied” (9:31) and suchlike?

(4) Acts 6:1-6 mentions a conflict between Hebrews (“who spoke the language of the Jews”) and Hellenists (those who spoke Greek”) of the Christian community. What are these two factions?

(5) What provokes the persecution against the Church in 8:1-3? What are the consequences?

(6) Where do the disciples go to preach the message of Jesus in 8:4ff? (See map 14 in the back of the Bible.)

(7) Acts 9:1ff tells of the conversion of Paul (Saul), one of the most important events in the history of Christianity. Why does he accept Jesus? What does Jesus tell him to do (see 9:15)? What is new about this?


(9) Did all agree with the “mission to the gentiles”? See 10:44-48 and 11:1-18. What is the “circumcision party”? Who objects to the mission? Why?

(10) Acts 11:26 reads “It was in Antioch that the disciples first got the name of Christians.” What were they before? What does this change imply?


Questions on Galatians (p. 1475)

Note: Paul is responding to a controversy in the Galatian Christian community. The issue is whether gentiles who wish to become Christians must first become Jews: must they be circumcised, and by extension, must they observe the Mosaic covenant, that is, Jewish law? The larger issue is: who is included in the new religion of Christianity? Is it open to gentiles? If so,
how? The “Letter to the Galatians” is addressed to the members of that community. (On the location of Galatia see Map 14 at the back.)

(1) Note the different style, content and conception of Jesus in Paul as opposed to Matthew. Why does Paul not speak so much about Jesus’s life?

(2) In Gal 1:3-5, what is the meaning of Jesus for Paul?

(3) In Gal 1:1, 1:16-17, 2:7-9, how does Paul define his role? How does this compare to Acts? Where does he get his authority? (Remember, Paul was not one of the twelve original apostles.)

(4) Paul gets upset at the idea that gentiles should be circumcised. See Gal 2:3ff, 5:2ff. Why is he upset at this?

(5) Paul refers to “Jewish Christians” as opposed to “gentile Christians” in 2:11ff. What does this mean? What distinguishes these groups in the eyes of James, Cephas etc.? Note that 2:11-14 tells that Cephas was eating with “gentile Christians” until messengers came from James and, apparently, warned him to stop. He withdrew “because he was afraid of the advocates of circumcision.” What was their reason to stop Cephas from eating with gentiles? What does Paul think about this? What is the “Gospel for Gentiles” as opposed to the “Gospel for Jews” (2:7)?

(6) What is the status of the law? See Gal 2:15-3:14. THIS IS A CRUCIAL SECTION OF THE LETTER. If not law, then what is the covenant based on? How does this compare with Jesus as presented by Matthew?
(6a) What is so bad about the law for Paul (And it is bad!!)? Why was it there in the first place? (see especially 3:19ff.)
(6b) What does Paul mean in 2:19, “I died to law,” and 5:18, “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.”

(7) Paul presents many examples of “dualistic thinking.” For example, Law vs. Gospel; and Law vs. Spirit. What are some other dualisms?
(7a) On the other hand, Paul tries to break down boundaries. See 3:28: “There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and free man; male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus.” What does this mean? See too 6:15: “Circumcision is nothing; uncircumcision is nothing; the only thing that counts is new creation.”

(8) What is the importance of Abraham in 3:6? How does Paul not think of Abraham?

(9) In Gal 4:21ff Paul presents an allegorical reading of a biblical passage. What is an allegory (look it up)? Why is this type of interpretation necessary? Why does Paul not just tell us what he thinks?

(10) If Christians don’t have to observe “the law” can they do whatever they please? See Gal 5:19-25. Why do they have to obey those commandments? Are these not part of “the Law” that Paul rejects?

(11) Note the passage in John 1:1-18. Read it out loud. How does it sound? Does the concept of the “word” remind you of Plato’s forms / ideas?
Questions on Augustine, *Confessions*

Note: This is our longest text. Please read: 1-4, 6, 7:6-27, 8:5-12; 9:1-4, 9-11; 10:31-43. (Ideally you should try to read all of Book 1-9.)


2. Who is Augustine addressing in the Confessions? For whom did he write the book?

3. Augustine focuses a great deal on language in Books 1-4. How did Augustine use language (speech, rhetoric) in his youth? How does he think it should be used?

4. Why did Augustine steal the pears, and why is this incident so important to him? (see 2:4ff.) Have you ever done something similar? Why?

5. Augustine’s friendships are very important to him. But they also cause him great pain. What role do they play in his life, and what does he learn from them? (see especially 2:2, 4:7-9 etc.)

6. Augustine’s relationship with his mother is a constant theme throughout the book. What is she like? What is her role? How does he remember her?

7. Throughout his life Augustine was obsessed with the question of evil: where does evil come from? What are the answers he adopts during his life, and what is his final answer? (Note: Manichaeism was a religion that believed in two gods, a good god and an evil god, who were at war in the universe.)

8. Augustine almost becomes a believer in 7:17-19, but suffers a setback. What kept him back? (Note what Augustine says about the “unchangeable” in 7:17. Who does this remind you of?) What then allowed him to believe? (see 8:12; note where he is when this happens.)

9. What is Augustine’s general answer to why he found God and Christianity? (See 8:12). What implications does this have?

10. What does Augustine believe about free will? (And keep in mind what kinds of things Augustine attributes to God.)

11. What is the nature of the human being Augustine describes in Book 10? Socrates said “Know thyself.” Is this possible for Augustine? (See 10:37).

12. What is Augustine’s attitude toward the body and sex? (see 2:2-3 etc.)
Statement on Academic Integrity
Morse Academic Plan, College of Arts and Science

As a student at New York University, you have been admitted to a community of scholars who value free and open inquiry. Our work depends on honest assessment of ideas and their sources; and we expect you, as a member of our community, likewise to maintain the highest integrity in your academic work. Because of the central importance of these values to our intellectual life together, those who fail to maintain them will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University.

Plagiarism consists in presenting ideas and words without acknowledging their source and is an offense against academic integrity. Any of the following acts constitutes a crime of plagiarism.

- Using a phrase, sentence, or passage from another person’s work without quotation marks and attribution of the source.
- Paraphrasing words or ideas from another’s work without attribution.
- Reporting as your own research or knowledge any data or facts gathered or reported by another person.
- Submitting in your own name papers or reports completed by another.
- Submitting your own original work toward requirements in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors.

Other offenses against academic integrity include the following.

- Collaborating with other students on assignments without the express permission of the instructor.
- Giving your work to another student to submit as his or her own.
- Copying answers from other students during examinations.
- Using notes or other sources to answer exam questions without the instructor’s permission.
- Secreting or destroying library or reference materials.
- Submitting as your own work a paper or results of research that you have purchased from a commercial firm or another person.

Particular emphasis is placed on the use of papers and other materials to be found on the World-Wide Web, whether purchased or freely available. In addition to having access to the same search engines as students, faculty also have at their disposal a number of special websites devoted to detecting plagiarism from the web.

Plagiarism and other cases of academic fraud are matters of fact, not intention. It is therefore crucial that you be diligent in assuring the integrity of your work.

- Use quotation marks to set off words that are not your own.
- Learn to use proper forms of attribution for source materials.
- Do your own original work in each class, without collaboration, unless otherwise instructed.
- Don’t use published sources, the work of others, or material from the web without attribution.
- For further information, consult the Bulletin of the College of Arts and Science, the CAS Academic Handbook, and the Student’s Guide to NYU.

revised 11/2005
Academic Guidelines for Students
Morse Academic Plan, College of Arts and Science

To help foster common academic expectations among students and instructors, the following guidelines for MAP courses are offered to students. While these represent minimum expectations across the curriculum, individual faculty members may set additional course requirements. Students should therefore consult the course syllabus for details of policies in each class.

Attendance
Inasmuch as students have voluntarily sought admission to the University, they are expected to attend all class meetings, including all lectures and all meetings of associated recitation, workshop, or laboratory sections. Students may be excused for documented medical or personal emergency and will receive reasonable accommodation for the observance of religious holidays. In these cases, they should contact their instructors in advance or, in cases of emergency, as soon as is practicable. Students are responsible for making up any material or assignments they miss.

Classroom Decorum
The classroom is a space for free and open inquiry and for the critical evaluation of ideas, and it should be free of personal prejudice. Students and instructors alike have an obligation to all members of the class to create an educational atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in which differences of opinion can be subjected to deliberate and reasonable examination without animus.

As a matter of courtesy to their fellow students and instructors, students should arrive at class promptly, prepared and ready to participate. Students are reminded particularly to shut off all cellular telephones and pagers and, except in cases of emergency, to remain in the classroom for the duration of the lecture or section meeting. If it is necessary to leave or enter a room once class has begun, students should do so quietly and with as little disruption as possible. Under University policy, disruptive classroom behavior may be subject to faculty review and disciplinary sanction.

Completion of Assignments
Students are expected to submit course work on time and to retain copies of their work until a final grade has been received for the course. Instructors are not obliged to accept late work and may assign a failing or reduced grade to such assignments.

Students who encounter sudden and incapacitating illness or an other comparably grave circumstance that prevents them from completing the final examination or assignment in a course may request a temporary mark of Incomplete from the course instructor. To receive an Incomplete, students must have completed all other requirements for the course, including satisfactory attendance, and there must be a strong likelihood they will pass the course when all work is completed.

Questions and Concerns
Up-to-date course information is available on the MAP website: www.nyu.edu/cas/map. Questions, concerns, comments, and feedback may be directed to the following members of the MAP staff, located in 903 Silver Center, 212-998-8119. Complaints will remain confidential.

Director: Prof. Joy Connolly morse.plan@nyu.edu
Associate Director for the FCC: Prof. Vincent Renzi map.fcc@nyu.edu
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Why MAP?
A Guide for Students

What is the MAP?
The Morse Academic Plan is the group of core courses that every student must complete in order to earn a degree from the College of Arts and Science. *It represents the considered judgment of the faculty about what every College graduate should know as a part of his or her liberal arts education.* In other undergraduate divisions at NYU, faculty of those schools have adopted parts of the MAP to provide a core experience in the liberal arts for their students as well. Because it is shared by students across different schools, majors, and programs, the MAP is also sometimes called the *general education curriculum.*

What’s “liberal” about the liberal arts?
“Liberal” comes from the Latin word *liber,* meaning “free.” In ancient Greece and Rome, *liberal* education was the pursuit of *free* men, that is, those with the means and leisure to be able to devote themselves to learning, rather than to labor.

Today when we speak of “liberal education,” we mean an education in the “liberal arts,” *an education for men and women that frees intellectual capacities and the imagination through the study of human endeavor on a broad scale, from music, art, and philosophy, to encounters with nature and with cultures of other times and places.*

What are the “liberal arts”?
Sometimes also called the “arts and sciences” or “liberal arts and sciences,” in the medieval university curriculum they were seven in number: grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

Today, the liberal arts encompass all the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences—all those areas of inquiry that are pursued for the sake of expanding human knowledge, rather than as training for a particular profession.
What's the practical value of liberal education?

*Education in the liberal arts builds your critical, analytic, and communications skills,* giving you the preparation you need to flourish in the world of work and to become a productive member of society.

More than this, however, *education in the liberal arts is preparation for life as a responsible, actively engaged citizen,* equipping you with the open-mindedness and soundness of judgment necessary to reason, act, and lead. Indeed, this University—and the whole enterprise of higher education in the United States—was founded on the belief that college graduates have a special opportunity and responsibility to contribute to the common good.

What are the faculty's specific goals for the MAP?

In designing the MAP, the faculty sought to ensure that students would expand their capacity to communicate effectively, by *improving their writing and gaining proficiency in a foreign language.* This is why every undergraduate must complete *Writing the Essay* or its equivalent, and why the University maintains extensive opportunities for language study both in New York and at the global sites, as well as the non-credit Speaking Freely program.

The faculty also wanted to provide every student with opportunities to build his or her *quantitative skills* and to study the *natural sciences.* These studies give you the knowledge you need to be an independent-minded citizen in a world increasingly shaped by science and technology, where urgent questions of policy require prudent, well-informed judgments. We aim, too, to foster your appreciation of mathematics and the sciences as liberal pursuits.

We likewise believe that students should gain knowledge of the *social sciences,* which study how humans communicate, organize their communities, worship, use language, and engage in trade and diplomacy. Because the *fine and performing arts* connect us in unexpected ways, give pleasure, and reveal new perspectives on the world, the MAP also includes courses in *Expressive Culture.*

Finally, *students should come to think of themselves as citizens of a larger world by gaining the ability to comprehend how people remote from themselves understand, experience, and imagine their lives.* They should also come to know themselves better by engaging critically with the significant ideas that have shaped contemporary culture. For these reasons, all students in the MAP complete a course in *Cultures and Contexts* and a course in *Texts and Ideas.*

Does all this mean that you will take a few courses outside your main interests and comfort zone? That is our intention: Stretching the mind and rethinking old assumptions and beliefs are important preparation for your future. The MAP represents our commitment as a faculty to assuring you an undergraduate education that will equip you for success in your later careers and prepare you for a life of thinking critically and creatively about who you are, who you want to be, and how to better the world we live in.

September, 2010