



## TEXTS AND IDEAS: ANTIQUITY AND THE RENAISSANCE

Mon-Wed 3:30 -4:45

Professor Gilman

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Office Hours M-W 2-3

English department

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### 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 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. The overarching idea of this edition of “Texts and Ideas” 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 sources to be cited. 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)

Machiavelli, *The Prince* tr. Robert Adams (Norton Critical)

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. Note that grades in the “A” range are awarded for “excellent” work. “B” means “Good,” and “C” means “Fair.”

## 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 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*.

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 students is rarely an effective substitute for being there and participating actively.

### 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, will result in a failure 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. Those who have been qualified for special accommodation should present their documentation to the instructor at the beginning of the term.

**5. Grading standards:**

Grading guidelines for the CORE curriculum are attached to this syllabus.

**6. Devices:**

The use of cell phones, laptops, and tablets is *not permitted* in lecture or in recitation.

**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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>. They can also be reached at 212.998.8008.

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**Schedule of Lectures:****SEPTEMBER**

- 02: Introductory: “Texts” and “Ideas”
- 07: No class: Labor Day
- 09: The Book of Genesis
- 14: The Book of Exodus
- 16: The Gospels of Luke and John
- 21: The Acts of the Apostles
- 23: Homer, Odyssey (Books 1-12)
- 28: Homer, Odyssey (Books 12-24)
- 30: Sophocles, Antigone

**OCTOBER**

- 05: Plato, Phaedo
- 07: Plato, Symposium [**First Paper Due in Lecture**]
- 12: No Class: Fall Recess
- 13: Virgil, Aeneid (Books 1-6) [Legislative Day: Monday schedule]
- 14: Virgil, Aeneid (Books 7-12)

**19: MIDTERM EXAM**

- 21: Augustine, Confessions, Books 1-4
- 26: Augustine, Confessions, Books 5-8
- 28: Bridge Lecture: Antiquity to the Renaissance

**NOVEMBER**

- 02: Bridge Lecture (continued)

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

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

25: No Class: Thanksgiving

30: Montaigne, Essays ("Of Repentance," "Of Cannibals," "Of Experience") [**Second Paper Due in Lecture**]

## **DECEMBER**

02: Shakespeare, The Tempest

07: Shakespeare, The Tempest (Cont'd)

09: Conclusion

14: Review

23: **FINAL EXAM (4:00 – 5:50)**

## NYU Grading Scale:

A	Excellent	4.0
A-	Excellent	3.7
B+	Good	3.3
B	Good	3.0
B-	Good	2.7
C+	Satisfactory	2.3
C	Satisfactory	2.0
C-	Satisfactory	1.7
D+	Minimum Passing Grade	1.3
D	Minimum Passing Grade	1.0
F	Failure	0.0
IF	Incomplete-Failure	0.0
IP	Incomplete-Passing	0.0
I	Incomplete	0.0
P	Passing	0.0

<http://www.nyu.edu/registrar/transcripts-certification/grades-information.html>