

CORE HUMANITIES SEMINAR
ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL, AND RENAISSANCE THOUGHT
CHS 1000-R57 and R70
Fall 2005 / Dr. Paul Wright

Section R57 meets at 8:30-9:45 and R70 at 10:00-11:15 on Tuesdays and Thursdays in SAC 110

General information

My Office: SAC 271

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-3:30, or by appointment.

Email: paul.wright@villanova.edu

Office phone: 610-519-6943 (note that email is generally a better way to contact me than voicemail)

Purpose of the course

What is the source and nature of true justice? From what, where, or whom do we derive the moral authority to make claims on the choices of others? What enables or delimits our own capacity to choose? Is justice found in a transcendent source beyond this world, or merely in our all-too-human conventions? Is justice a matter of dogma, of the wisdom of the ancients, or perhaps merely of our parents? Do we look instead to the mind and reason? What about the heart and the passions? Is justice intuitive, or is it something that must be worked out painstakingly like a legal puzzle or a math problem? Does justice depend on social status, gender, race, or other markers of identity? Does justice permit "double standards"? Does justice depend on time, place, or cultural context? Does justice ultimately have a *content*, and if so, can we ever know it truly? How? This term, we will pay special attention to the ways in which women of the ancient world encountered, embodied, and in some cases, challenged the standards of justice given to them by men.

As is no doubt clear, these are infinitely rich themes and increasingly problematic questions. Rather than try to raise and answer every possible question, we will allow our conversations to unfold naturally according to the interests of those in the class and according to the issues raised by the books we read. As part of the O'Dwyer learning community, you'll have a unique chance to carry your conversations beyond the classroom, and also to enrich classroom conversation through the relationships you develop while living and studying together.

Structure of the course

This course is not a lecture, but a seminar, which is likely to be a new approach to learning for most of you. Unlike a lecture, in which the teacher explains and the student takes notes, a seminar proceeds primarily through conversation among the students. The teacher's main role is to raise questions to provoke good conversation. *This means that the students have a special responsibility to read closely and carefully, to take initiative and participate in an active way.* In a seminar, we don't follow a set course and reproduce information; instead, we "think out loud" together. We try to come to insights by building on one another's observations and by challenging one another with questions. *Thus, whether class is boring or exhilarating depends largely on your involvement.* While the responsibility may be somewhat intimidating at first, a good seminar can be one of the most rewarding university experiences you will have.

General expectations

This course is:

Reading-intensive: The amount of reading assigned for each class varies, but can be heavy at times, either in terms of length, difficulty, or both. It is absolutely essential to be faithful in completing these assignments—the success of the class depends on it. *If you come to class without reading, you will be wasting your own time, and that of your classmates.* The first rule in developing good

reading habits is to give yourself a lot of time to do it, more than you think you need, and to find a place to read in which you won't be distracted. A second rule is to read with a pencil or marker in hand: underline things that strike you, make notes in the margin when you have questions or want to react to something. Bring your book to class all marked up.

Writing-intensive: It is often said that you don't understand something until you can write about it. Learning to write better helps us to think and speak better; and these in turn help us in our writing. In addition to occasional un-graded assignments, you will have to write *three 5-page essays* and *three 2-page reaction papers* over the course of this semester. The first major paper will, moreover, require a rough draft, which you will turn in to be discussed with me in one-on-one meetings. Thus, you can expect to do a writing assignment of some form on a regular basis. The specific nature of the assignments will be explained as they arise. You will be asked to keep all of your writing assignments and papers in a portfolio, and you will turn in the whole portfolio with every assignment. This will give both you and me a chance to see how your writing is progressing. The final exam will be a *comprehensive oral examination* whose format will be explained later in the term.

Discussion-intensive: For the seminar to work, students have to take initiative. This means coming to every class with specific questions in mind or specific observations that you think might provoke discussion. Marking up your book while you read will help you point to texts and passages to back up what you want to say. *Because of the high value placed on participation, if you don't find yourself contributing something to discussion in every session, it will be impossible to get a good grade in the course, regardless of the quality of your written work.* You will also be responsible for *one in-class presentation* on our reading, a presentation to be scheduled in the weeks to come.

Attendance and grading

Attendance is mandatory. There will also be certain events scheduled outside of class which are likewise obligatory and will be announced in the weeks to come. You are entitled to miss two classes without penalty; more than two will lower your participation grade. More than four absences results in failure of the course.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- 60% Papers and writing assignments (5% for each of the short papers, and 15% for each of the longer papers)**
- 15% Final exam**
- 25% Participation (15% for your day-to-day contributions, and 10% for your presentation)**

Miscellanea

Plagiarism is a serious offense; students who plagiarize or otherwise commit academic integrity violations will incur failure for the course.

You will each meet with me individually at least twice over the course of the semester. Please also feel free to schedule an appointment with me, or to stop by my office if you are passing by, to talk about any other matters, or even just to say hello.

You are encouraged to make full use of the Writing Center, which is an excellent resource when you are having difficulties with your writing. It is located in the Dalton Room of Old Falvey; call 519-4604 to set up an appointment. (It is good to set up an appointment at least a week in advance; if it is not an especially busy time, however, they also take "walk-ins".)

It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified

individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and wish to request accommodations to complete your course requirements, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss the request. If you would like further information or are uncertain whether you are eligible for such accommodations, contact the Office of Learning Support Services at 519-5636, or visit the office in Geraghty Hall. Note that disabilities can include learning impediments as well as physical limitations.

Required texts

Note: these books can be found at the university bookstore. Please acquire the edition listed (make sure the ISBN matches), unless otherwise noted.

1. Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. Fourth edition. St. Martin's Press, 1999. ISBN 0312260377.
2. Sophocles. *Antigone*. In: *Sophocles I: Three Greek Tragedies*. Trans. Grene and Lattimore. University of Chicago Press, 1992. ISBN 0226307921.
3. Euripides. *Medea*. Dover, 1993. ISBN 0486275485.
4. *The Catholic Study Bible*. Oxford University Press, 1990. ISBN 0195283910.
5. St. Augustine. *Confessions*. New City Press, 2002. ISBN 1565480848.
6. St. Augustine. *City of God*. Penguin, 2003. ISBN 0140448942.
7. Epictetus. *Enchiridion*. Prometheus Books, 1955. ISBN 0879757035.
8. Machiavelli. *Mandragola*. Waveland, 1981. ISBN 0917974573.
9. Shakespeare, William. *The Poems*. Cambridge, 1992. ISBN 0521294118.

In addition to these texts, students are asked to purchase a folder, which will be used as a "portfolio" to hold all of their writing assignments over the course of the semester.

Schedule

Please note: this schedule may be modified over the course of the semester as needed.

8/25 Introduction: Machiavelli's Letter of 10 December 1513 (sent to you by email)

8/30 Sophocles, *Antigone*
9/1 *Antigone*

9/6 *Antigone*
9/8 Euripides, *Medea* (shortened class, St. Thomas Day)

9/13 *Medea*
9/15 *Medea* (**Reaction Paper #1 Due**)

9/20 *Medea*
9/22 *Judith* (in *Catholic Study Bible*)

9/27 *Judith*
9/29 Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (in *Catholic Study Bible*) (**Essay #1 Due**)

10/4 Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

10/6 Epictetus, *Enchiridion*

MID-TERM BREAK

10/18 *Enchiridion*

Wed. 10/19: Film in Falvey Viewing Room (Details TBA)

10/20 *Enchiridion*

10/25 Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 1-2

10/27 *Confessions*, Books 3-4 (**Essay #2 Due**)

11/1 Augustine, *City of God*, Book 1 (focus esp. on the Sack of Rome, and on Lucretia & Regulus as models of Roman virtue)

11/3 *City of God*, Book 2, chs. 17-22 (Augustine on the Roman state) (**Reaction Paper #2 Due**)

11/8 *City of God*, Book 9, chs. 4-5 and 13-15 (on the Stoics); Book 14, chs. 1-7 and 12-18 (on love, sin, and the body)

11/10 *City of God*, Book 22, chs. 24-30

11/15 Machiavelli, *Mandragola* (Acts 1 and 2)

11/17 *Mandragola* (Act 3)

11/22 *Mandragola* (Acts 4 and 5) (**Reaction Paper #3 Due**)

THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/29 Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*

12/1 *The Rape of Lucrece*

Thurs. 12/1: Film in O'Dwyer (Details TBA)

12/6 Semester Review

12/8 Semester Review (**Essay #3 Due**)

Final Oral Examination: R70—Friday, December 16, 1:30-4:00

R57— Friday, December 16, 4:15-6:45

Important Note: According to strict university policy, final examinations *cannot* be re-scheduled; *please make all travel plans accordingly*. The *only* exception occurs when a student has three or more exams scheduled for one day; if this is the case for you, please let me know.