

Global Perspectives on Society – Spring 2014

Syllabus

Course Description

In this two-semester course, we will explore a set of timeless questions about how society is, or should be, organized, as those questions have been explored by serious writers from different times and different cultures.

Each week, students will meet once as an entire class with Professor Lehman, once in recitation sections with Global Postdoctoral Fellows, and twice in writing workshops with Writing Faculty.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

The course will introduce students to writings that help to define what it means to be “well educated.” By engaging those writings, students will reflect repeatedly on several overarching questions, including how it is we know things to be “true,” whether ethical duties are universal or defined by context, and why it is certain texts have come to be thought of as “great.”

Over the course of the semester, students should enhance their abilities to read carefully and thoughtfully, to consider questions from more than one perspective, to participate in respectful and serious intellectual explorations of difficult questions, and to write essays that make effective and appropriate use of the ideas of others as they present the students’ own ideas to different audiences of readers.

Grading

50% of the grade will be determined by the Global Postdoctoral Fellows and Professor Lehman, as follows: 20% will depend upon the midterm examination, and 30% upon the final examination. Examinations will be “in-class” and “open book.” Grades will reflect how well students are able to integrate an understanding of the readings and the general course themes into their responses to short-answer and essay questions.

50% of the grade will be determined by the writing faculty, who will assess your writing exercises, final essay assignments, and class participation. See your Writing Workshop syllabus for more information

Students will be penalized in their grades if they fail to attend the large class, recitation sections, or writing workshops, or if they present the ideas or words of others as their own without proper attribution.

Assignments for Second Semester, Part I

1. Introduction (2/10)
2. Women and Men (2/17)
 - a. Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own, Chapter 3 (1929)
 - b. Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, pp. 224-238 (1977)
 - c. Paul Theroux, “Being a Man,” from Sunrise with Seamonsters (1985)
 - d. Catharine MacKinnon, Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law, pp. 21-28 (1988)
3. Women and Men (2/24)
 - a. Qasim Amin, The Liberation of Women, pp. 3-10 (1899)
 - b. He Yin-Zhen, “On the Question of Women’s Labor,” pp. 72-91 (1907)
 - c. Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov, Cultures and Organizations, pp. 135-145 (2010)
4. Gods and Mortals (3/3)
 - a. The Bhagavad-Gita, Barbara Miller Introduction pp. 1-12, and Teachings 7 through 12.
 - b. The Snorr Edda – Anderson Translation, excerpts.
5. Gods and Mortals (3/10)
 - a. Emile Durkheim, selections from Chapter 2 of The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1912)
 - b. Sigmund Freud, selections from Chapter 3 of Totem and Taboo (1913)
6. Ancient Philosophies and Historiographies (3/17)
 - a. Herodotus, Histories, Book I, chapters 1-5; Book II, chapters 15, 35-58
 - b. Sima Qian, Historical Records (1994 edition), pages TK
 - c. Plato, The Republic, Book VII, “The Allegory of the Cave”
 - d. Aristotle, “On Interpretation”
 - e. William McNeill, The Shape of European History (1974), 3-17.
 - f. Dipesh Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference (2000), 3-23.
7. Idealism and Modern Historiography (3/24)
 - a. Charles A. Beard, “History as an Act of Faith,” American Historical Review, 39 (1934), 219-31.
 - b. James Kloppenberg, “Objectivity and Historians: A Century of Historical Writing,” American Historical Review, 94 (1989), 1010-1030.
 - c. Thomas Nagel, The View From Nowhere (1986), 3-12, 19-22, 25-27.
 - d. Charles Larmore, “History & Truth,” Daedalus, (2004), 46-55.

8. Religion and Science (3/26)
 - a. The Bible, Genesis, Chapters 1-9.
 - b. Who Wrote the Bible?, pp. 54-59.
 - c. Benjamin Jowett, selections from Essays and Reviews (1860).
 - d. The Bible, John, Chapter 8, verses 2-11.

9. Religion and Science (3/31)
 - a. Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species, concluding pages (1859).
 - b. International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978).
 - c. Amicus Curiae Brief of 72 Nobel Laureates, et al., in Support of Appellees in Edwards v. Aguillard, excerpts (1986).

MIDTERM EXAMINATION – April 14