L'ABOLITION DES TITRES DE NOBLESSE
INTRODUCTION

This syllabus contains the academic calendar for the Program in Structured Liberal Education, the weekly reading assignments, lectures, discussions, films, etc. It should be used as a guide in preparing your work for the Program. By studying it earlier rather than later, you can pace your work to ensure proper preparation for discussion participation. You should prepare the assigned texts before the first lecture of each week.

The syllabus also contains Study Questions which deserve your attention. These questions are intended to stimulate your thinking about the topics and texts for each week. They do not require specific answers and are at times purposefully broad. They will not appear on the final examination, nor will they necessarily be used during discussion. They are meant, rather, to illustrate the kinds of questions you should be asking yourself about the topics and texts. You should think about them not only because they are valuable and relevant in and of themselves, but also because they are a means to learn how to generate questions. The question itself and how one asks it are equally as important as the answer offered.

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SLE FACULTY

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REQUIRED TEXTS

Bible, Holy Bible New Revised Standard with Apocrypha (Oxford)
Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, ed. and trans. Starkie (Penguin)
Dante, *The Inferno*, ed. and trans. Mandelbaum (Bantam)
Defoe, D., *Robinson Crusoe*, (Bantam)
Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Rubin
The Koran Interpreted, ed. and trans. Arberry (Macmillan)
Locke, J., *Second Treatise of Government*, (Hackett)
Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, (Hackett)
Shakespeare, W., *Tempest*, ed. Langbaum/Signet (Penguin US)
Shelley, M., *Frankenstein*, (Penguin US)

SLE Course Reader II
THE SLE PLAYERS

Because of the overwhelming success of Lysistrata in the Autumn, SLE will undertake the second of its three productions planned for this year. As in the Autumn, the scope of this production will depend entirely upon student interest and enthusiasm. We have not chosen a play for this quarter and, instead, will rely on thespian students to select the work which will best display their talents, as well as illuminate some facet of this quarter's intellectual project. If you would like to be a part of this production in any way, whether on stage or behind the scenes, please place your name on the sign-up sheet on the SLE bulletin board in Florence Moore Main Lounge. The organizational meeting for this quarter's production will be held soon after the beginning of the quarter. We encourage ALL students to participate. The performance date is set for Thursday, March 5th, 1997.
WEEK 1
Christianity and Empire

Tuesday, January 6th
3:15pm Lecture: History and Resurrection in Jewish and Early Christian Hopes
Prof. Robert Gregg, Religious Studies and Dean of Memorial Church
6:00pm Lecture: Jesus versus Paul
Prof. Maud Gleason, Religious Studies

Wednesday, January 7th
3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Lecture: St. Augustine
Prof. Maud Gleason, Classics
Discussion Seminars

Thursday, January 8th
3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Film: Jesus of Montreal

Reading:
The New Testament:
The Gospel according to Mark and John, Acts 8, 9, 10, The Letter of Paul to the Romans and First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, The Letter of Paul to the Galatians, The First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians
St. Augustine, Confessions Books I, II, IV, VII-VIII, X (Sections 6-39)

Study Questions
1. Compare the two Gospels. Do they describe the same Jesus? The same events? How do they differ? Does each book have a distinct tone, emphasis, or style?
2. Are the Gospels history, eye-witness accounts, legend, myth, fiction, and/or theology?
3. Do you find the theology of Paul consistent with the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels?
4. Does it make sense to talk of a “Judeo-Christian” heritage? In what ways is the New Testament continuous with the Hebrew Bible? In what ways is it discontinuous?
5. In what ways and to what extent are Christianity and Platonism compatible?
6. How can the Christian “other-worldly” be reconciled with the “real-world” needs of political and social life?
7. Why is Augustine writing his Confessions? To whom, besides God is he addressing them?
8. What is his analysis of sin? Why are the senses so important in sinning? What role does the pear tree episode play in his life?
9. Why does Augustine convert? Why does it take him so long to make up his mind?
10. How does Augustine’s Confessions reflect the decay and disintegration of the Roman Empire?
11. What changes did St. Augustine have to make in Platonism in order to make the two compatible? Is it possible to be both a rationalist and a believer?
12. Is Christianity more naturally a religion for an empire, a monarchy, or some other form of government? Is there any form of government with which it is totally at odds in principle?
WEEK 2
Dante

Tuesday, January 13th
3:15pm Lecture: Inferno I
Prof. Edward Steidel, English
6:00pm Lecture: Inferno II
Prof. Edward Steidel, English

Wednesday, January 14th
3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Lecture: The Gothic
Prof. Barry Katz, California College of Arts and Crafts

Thursday, January 15th
3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Film: The Seventh Seal

Reading:
Dante, The Inferno

Study Questions

1. Why should the first sinners to whom Dante speaks in the Inferno be the lovers Paolo and Francesca? Why is it appropriate for Dante to respond as he does to Francesca’s story? What does his reaction signify about the nature of their love affair?

2. Why would sins of violence and malice (or fraud) be punished more severely in Dante’s hell than sins resulting from sensual appetites? What might Plato have said about Dante’s ordering of the different kinds of sins? In what order of severity would you rank sins? Why order them at all?

3. How does Dante’s account of the fate of Ulysses (Odysseus) differ from that in the Odyssey? What is Dante’s apparent attitude toward Ulysses, and why does he place him in the Eighth Circle of the Inferno?
WEEK 3
Islam

Tuesday, January 20th

12:00pm  PAPER #1 DUE
3:15pm  Lecture: The Muslim World
        Ahmad Rahman, SLE
6:00pm  Lecture: Conversion and Polemics
        Ahmad Rahman, SLE, and Prof. Kathryn Miller, History

Wednesday, January 21st

3:15pm  Discussion Seminars
6:00pm  Lecture: The Arab Transmission of Greek Thought
        Prof. Kathryn Miller, History

Thursday, January 22nd

3:15 pm  Discussion Seminars
6:00pm  Film: To Be Announced

Reading:
The Koran
   I. Opening
   VI. Cattle
   XI. Hood

XXI. The Prophets: 34-91
XXIII. The Believers: 1-11
XXXVI. Ya Sin
LXXXI. The Darkening

Readings on medieval Islam (copied selections)

Study Questions

1. What is the nature of revelation?
2. How is the relationship between God and people mediated by prophets?
3. How is Muhammad's relationship to other prophets conceived in the Koran?
4. What are the social roles of the prophets?
5. How do the stories of Joseph and Mary compare to the Biblical versions?
WEEK 4
Buddhism

Monday, January 26th
Tuesday, January 27th

5:00pm PAPER #2 DUE
3:15pm Lecture: Buddhism I: An Introduction
Mark Mancall, SLE
6:00pm Lecture: Buddhism II: Zen
Prof. Carl Bielefeldt, Religious Studies

Wednesday, January 28th

3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Lecture: Buddhism III: Literature and Culture
Mark Mancall, SLE

Thursday, January 29th

3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Film: Rashomon

Reading:
Readings on Buddhism (copied selections)
Boccaccio, The Decameron (copied selections)

Study Questions

1. How might Buddhist mystical theology reflect and support particular social orders?
2. How might a shift in Buddhist theology from spatial to temporal models affect its sense of the person?
3. Is Zen a “medieval” religion? “Modern” therapy? “Post-modern” criticism? All (none) of the above?
4. What do Saikaku’s stories tell you about the relationship of Buddhism to worldly relationships?
5. What is Saikaku’s attitude toward the life of religious contemplation?
6. What is Boccaccio’s attitude toward religion, the Church, priests, etc.? Why does he show them being hypocrites so frequently?
7. What insights into daily life, customs, and social structure does Boccaccio provide? What is his attitude toward women?
8. What are Boccaccio’s positive values that emerge underneath the humor? Is Boccaccio a humanist? In what sense?
9. How do Saikaku and Boccaccio reflect an increasing emphasis on an emerging secular world?
WEEK 5
Tradition and Change

Tuesday, February 10th
3:15pm Lecture: The Reformation
Prof. Brad Gregory, Religious Studies
6:00pm Lecture: Machiavelli
Prof. Robert Harrison, French and Italian

Wednesday, February 11th
3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Lecture: Utopias
Jon Reider, SLE

Thursday, February 12th
3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Film: A Man for All Seasons

Reading:
More, Utopia
Machiavelli, The Prince

Study Questions

1. In what ways is Thomas More a “Renaissance” thinker? What aspects of his thought are more medieval in emphasis?
2. Why would a close advisor of the King of England write a book that was by implication so critical of the society of his own day?
3. What is the purpose of creating a Utopia that, by definition, may never be realized? What does he borrow, and not borrow, from Plato?
4. What arguments does More make for the elimination of private property? What potential does More see for the individual without the burden of private property? Do you agree? Is More a forerunner of modern socialism, as Engels argued?
5. Why does More, a devout Catholic, create a utopia without Christianity?
6. Is politics a moral, amoral, or an immoral activity? Is politics about the public good or about power? Is it possible to be an effective politician and a morally good person at the same time?
7. What is the role of violence in politics? Is it always bad? Can evil means be used to achieve good ends? Do governments have a right to use violence when citizens do not?
8. Does Machiavelli’s idea of justice go beyond “might makes right?” What would he think of Thrasymachus (Plato)?
9. What would it mean to study politics scientifically? Is this what Machiavelli does? How do his methods compare with those of other political writers such as Aristotle?
10. What is Machiavelli’s view of human nature? How might Machiavelli’s personal experience in an environment of severe political disorder have influenced his thought?
11. What does Machiavelli mean by “civic virtue”? Is it more or less important to a nation than the concrete institutions of government? What causes the corruption of civic virtue, and what can be done to reverse this corruption?
WEEK 6
The New World

Tuesday, February 3rd
3:15 pm  Lecture: The Tempest
          Prof. Ronald Rebholz, English
6:00 pm  Lecture: Indigenous Voices from the New World
          Prof. Carolyn Chappell, History

Wednesday, February 4th
3:15 pm  Discussion Seminars
6:00 pm  Lecture: The New World in the European Imagination
          Prof. Carolyn Chappell, History

Thursday, February 5th
3:15 pm  Discussion Seminars
6:00 pm  Film: The Mission

Reading:
Shakespeare, The Tempest
Bartolome de las Casas, “In Defense of the Indians” (copied selection)
Michel de Montaigne, “On Cannibals,” “On Coaches” (copied selection)

Study Questions
1. How would Shakespeare have us respond to the suffering and weakness of mankind?
2. What evidence is there that the actions of various characters violate Shakespeare’s understanding of natural law? Consider the relationship of people to each other, to the state, and to the gods. What is the role of the fool (Ariel) in this presentation of the upsetting of order?
3. In Act I, Scene I of The Tempest, how are the relationships among the characters defined? Who professes power? Who is in visible control? Which authority appears to be more “rational”? What may the storm itself symbolize?
4. What is Caliban’s attitude toward nourishment, work, and sexual promiscuity? How do he and Ariel describe pleasure and freedom? How would their utopian dreams differ from that of Gonzalo?
5. In his actions and in his advice, how does Gonzalo display considerate behavior towards others in Act I, Scene I? Is this behavior political as well?
6. At the beginning of the play, what relative value does Prospero attach to his learning? By the end of the play, has he amended or maintained the same belief?
7. Why was the existence of the American Indians a problem for the Spanish? Why was Aristotle relevant to attempts at solving the problem?
8. How would you apply other philosophers we have read: for example, Plato or St. Augustine, to this issue? Could you use Aristotle differently than Las Casas did in his response to Sepulveda?
9. What is the hypothetical problem in our own era which is equivalent to the Indian problem for the Spanish, and how should we as a civilization confront it? What authors would you use to understand it?
10. Do you think Las Casas has a good argument? How would you support his reasoning but on other grounds?
11. How does Montaigne reflect a new skepticism about the values of Renaissance Europe? How does he use the idea of the New World to develop this theme? How does his attitude compare with those of Las Casas and Shakespeare toward “savages”? How does Columbus’s attitude compare to that of Montaigne?
WEEK 7
Things Fall Apart

Tuesday, February 17th
12:00 pm PAPER #3 DUE
3:15pm Lecture: The Scientific Revolution
Andrew Aisenberg, SLE
6:00pm Lecture: Don Quixote
Prof. Jurgen Hahn, Spanish and Portuguese

Wednesday, February 18th
3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Lecture: Descartes
Prof. John Perry, Philosophy

Thursday, February 19th
3:15pm Discussion Seminars
6:00pm Film: The Return of Martin Guerre

Reading:
Cervantes, Don Quixote
Part 1: Prologue, Chs. 1-8, 18-22, 52, pp. 515
Part 2: Prologue, Chs. 1-4, 22, 23, 26, 30-33, 41, 74
Descartes, Meditations

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Study Questions

1. What causes Don Quixote to leave his home and embark upon his quest? What is it about his manner of life that causes him to leave?
2. What clues does Quixote's physical appearance provide about his character?
3. Why is it important that Don Quixote receive the knighthood from somebody else? Why does he need social recognition of his knightly status?
4. What roles do the various secondary characters play? In what ways do they encourage Don Quixote in his quest? In what ways do they try to stop him?
5. In chapters 11-14, Cervantes presents the pastoral world. What characterizes it? What makes his view of it pessimistic? Is his treatment of it in Don Quixote a rejection of the pastoral world?
6. What is Cervantes' attitude toward Books of Chivalry? What forms the basis for his opinion? Is it possible to view Don Quixote as just another Book of Chivalry?
7. In what ways is Don Quixote's love for Dulcinea essential to his quest for the knightly ideal?
8. Does Don Quixote really renounce the Chivalric Code on his deathbed?
9. It has been said that what separates a classic work of art from ordinary works is its ability to "live" and continue to grow long after its creation. Is Don Quixote a classic work of art? Does it live for you today?
10. Would "I doubt, therefore I am" be as indubitable as "I think, therefore I am"? Why is the latter question so crucial to Descartes?
11. Why does Descartes find it difficult to know that physical objects exist?
12. How does Descartes know that the mind and the body are two distinct "substances"?
13. Why does Descartes find the "geometrical method" so attractive?
14. Suppose you are asleep; does the "I" no longer exist?
15. Is Descartes' doctrine of innate ideas the same as Plato's "theory of ideas"?
Study Questions

1. Robinson Crusoe was written in a period of British imperial expansion. How does this narrative present colonization?
2. Robinson Crusoe is a kind of salvation narrative, as well as a history of one man’s colonial adventure. How are these two aspects of the text related?
3. Defoe as a novelist has generally been credited with pushing the novel in the direction of realism. What kind of effects does Defoe introduce that you would describe as realistic? What is a working definition of realism?
4. What is the significance of Robinson Crusoe’s discovery at the midpoint of the novel of the footprint on the beach?
5. Does Locke define “human nature”? What are the basic psychological principles of Locke’s view of human nature? How do his political principles grow out of his psychology?
6. What is the difference between “liberty” and “license” in Locke?
7. Why does Locke argue we have a private right to property in nature? How does the invention of money affect the right to property? Do you agree that the poorest wage laborer in England is better off than the richest Indian Chief in America?
8. What is Locke’s critique of slavery? of suicide?
9. Locke speaks of the ways we are equal. In what respects does he assume we are not equal? What kinds of inequality are legitimate?
10. What are the traditional elements of Locke’s thought? What is radically new?
11. What does the statement, “All Americans are unconscious Lockeians,” mean? Do you think it is true? Is it a good thing?
### WEEK 9
The Dual Revolution

**Tuesday, March 3rd**
- 3:15 pm  Lecture: The French Revolution
  Prof. Lou Roberts, History
- 6:00 pm  Lecture: Rousseau and Romanticism
  Andrew Aisenberg, SLE

**Wednesday, March 4th**
- 3:15 pm  Discussion Seminars
- 6:00 pm  Lecture: The Industrial Revolution
  To Be Announced

**Thursday, March 5th**
- 3:15 pm  Discussion Seminars
- 6:00 pm  SLE Play

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**Reading:**
- Romantic Poetry (copied selections)
- Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, *On the Social Contract*
- "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen" (copied selection)

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1. According to historian Eric Hobsbawm, the end of the 18th century ushers in the "dual revolution." Explain. What does the Industrial Revolution revolutionize? Were these two "revolutions" mutually exclusive or inextricably bound to one another?
2. To what social and economic conditions are the Romantic poets responding? What kind of value system do they create? What is new about their poetry?
WEEK 10
The Romantic Response

Tuesday, March 10th
3:15 pm Lecture: Utopias
Mark Mancall, SLE
6:00 pm Lecture: Frankenstein
Prof. Barry Katz, California College of
Arts and Crafts

Wednesday, March 11th
3:15 pm Discussion Seminars

Monday, March 16th
10:00 am EXAMS DUE

Reading:
Mary Shelley, Frankenstein

1. Actions traditionally labeled as "feminine" include conception, birth, mothering, nurturing, providing. In what characters and at what times is the feminine manifested in Frankenstein? Does Mary Shelley imply that some activities/beliefs are "masculine"?

2. Is there a monster in Shelley's novel?

3. What is the view of science and technology communicated by this novel? In what sense is Victor Frankenstein a typical "creation" of the modern age? In what sense is Victor an embodiment of Romanticism and Romantic ideals? Is the monster a creature of the future or the past?

4. How is Frankenstein structured? What does each narrator's style of speaking indicate about his own value system? How does the changing point-of-view affect the reader's evaluation of the characters' morality?