PROGRAM IN STRUCTURED LIBERAL EDUCATION (SLE)

SYLLABUS

SPRING QUARTER, 1977-78

COURSE TITLE: Structured Liberal Education

DEPARTMENT CODE:

COURSE NUMBER:

UNITS: 009
REQUIRED TEXTS


Balzac, H., Pere Goriot, NAL-Signet.

Brecht, B., Mother Courage, Random House.

Dostoevsky, F., Notes from the Underground, E.P. Dutton Co


Eliot, T.S., The Wasteland and Other Poems or Selected Poems, HarBray


Joyce, J., Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (text, criticism and notes), Anderson, (ed.), Viking Press.

Kafka, F., The Trial, Signet

Nietzsche, F., Birth of Tragedy, Kauffman (tr.)

Pirandello, L., Naked Masks, E.P. Dutton.

Polanyi, K., Great Transformation, Harper and Row

Tucker, R., The Marx Engels Reader, Norton

Weber, M., The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Scribner

Various authors, copied selections, will be available at the beginning of the quarter.
Spring Quarter Course Requirements

The written work for SLE in the Spring Quarter consists of a term paper of 15-20 pages on a subject of your own choice. The topic should be developed with the help of your tutor and any members of the SLE faculty you wish to consult. It should deal with some aspect of questions raised and materials read during the Spring Quarter. It may refer back to subjects of the first two quarters. In all cases, your topic must be approved by your tutor and your discussion section leader.

The paper should demonstrate your ability to treat a complex intellectual problem with thoroughness and sophistication. It is important to think about it from the beginning of the quarter and to work on it steadily rather than to try to cram it toward the end of the quarter, for it is expected that you will work on your paper on a regular basis.

A successful term paper should try to achieve an appropriate balance between your own intellectual creativity and a scholarly appreciation of the literature relevant to your particular topic. Your personal contribution is probably the most important part of the paper. Although the topic should be of general intellectual interest, it should also be of personal concern to you. How you select it, define it, and investigate it are crucial aspects of this intellectual experience. The most significant problem that tends to develop is that of limiting the topic to a reasonable scope. You should try to bear this in mind, though the judgment of what is a reasonable topic is never a simple one.

We also suggest that a thoughtful paper should reflect on what others have thought on a topic. This kind of reading implies an intellectual conversation with the ideas of others rather than an attempt to read everything ever written on a subject. Some papers will involve secondary research, others intensive reading of primary sources. Your choice of topic and approach will determine the kind and extent of reading that you will do. Each paper should strive for an appropriate balance, though each one will differ in the degree and type of research involved. All papers should fall somewhere between the two extremes of a purely personal meditation, involving little or no reference to other sources, and a pure research report, involving only a review of the secondary materials with little or no analysis of your own.

Schedule: On Sunday, April 30, at 5 p.m., a one-page précis of your paper is due. This should briefly describe your work up to this point, giving an idea of the issues you are interested in, the scope of your topic, the materials you have already consulted or are about to consult, and the major intellectual problems you foresee. It should demonstrate that you have already made substantial progress on your paper. It should be typed. You need hand in only one copy, which is for review by the faculty, since your tutor should already know where you stand.

On Tuesday, May 3, two copies of your term paper are due. One is for your tutor, the other for the faculty. A standard bibliography should be used.

Final Exam

The final for the course will be an oral exam of about half an hour, to take place on Friday, June 9, Saturday, June 10, or Sunday, June 11 (Sunday only if necessary). Each student will be examined by a small group of the faculty and tutors, randomly assigned. The exam will cover the entire range of materials read during the year, with the greatest emphasis falling on the Spring Quarter reading. Of particular interest will be questions of how different kinds of periods treated similar questions or how they formulated traditional problems in new ways. A list of sample study questions will be distributed in advance to help you prepare for this exam. You should also be prepared to talk about the relationship between your term paper and the course as a whole, though this will not necessarily be the main focus of the exam. Students are not expected to have completely polished answers to questions; the emphasis should be on the quality of the ideas expressed, not the ease or glibness with which they are expressed.
TOPIC: Origins of Capitalism

SCHEDULE:  
Tue 9:00 Lecture--"The Modern Period: An Historical Precis" (Mancall) Room 121 (front of main quad)  
3:15 Plenary--"Industrial Revolution and Origins of Capitalism" (Mancall) Flo Mo Main Lounge  
7:00 Simulation Game--"Star-Power" (Cohen and Reider)  
Wed 9:00 Lecture--"Science as a Theme of the Modern Period" (Cohen) Room 121  
3:15 Plenary--"Adam Smith and Economic Liberalism" (Ted Mitchell)  
4:15 Plenary--"Liberalism: Theory and Ideology" (Reider)  
Thu 9:00 Lecture--"Balzac and the Bourgeois Novel" (Giraud) Ra. 121  
3:15 Discussion Sections  
7:00 Film: The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe  
Fri 9:00 Lecture--"What is Economics" (Prof. Gurley) Room 121

READING
Smith, Adam and Bentham, Jeremy, Voices of the Industrial Revolution (copied selection)
Balzac, Pere Goriot

STUDY QUESTIONS
1. What were the conditions that made the emergence of a new society possible? What were the principal characteristics of the industrial age, compared with the previous one?
2. What were the characteristics of the bourgeoisie as a class? How did they differ from "middle classes" in the past (cf. Aristotle's Politics)?
3. How do Smith and Bentham reflect habits of mind inherited from Bacon? Why was their thought so attractive to the bourgeoisie? In what ways is it and is it not an apology for capitalism?
4. What basic elements of social life does Adam Smith think are important? What does he ignore?
5. How closely does modern capitalism resemble Smith's doctrines?
6. Are passions, for Balzac, human strengths or weaknesses?
7. How does the concern with money of the bourgeois world change the nature of social ties and obligations?
8. How does the city of Paris represent the new social order? How does Balzac's view of Paris differ from earlier cities, such as Athens or Florence?
9. Is hypocrisy essential to the bourgeois world? Do Balzac and Machiavelli depict the same sort of hypocrisy?
10. How does the relatively new form of literature know as the "novel" reflect the new age?
TOPIC: Marxism and Romanticism

SCHEDULE:  

Mon 9:00 Lecture--"Philosophical Origins of Marxism: Kant and Hegel" (Goheen) Room 121  
Tue 3:15 Plenary--"Introduction to Marxism" (Mancall)  
7:00 Plenary--"Romantic Poetry" (Prof. Carnochan)  
Wed 3:15 Discussion Sections  
7:00 Plenary--"Romanticism in Music: Berlioz" (Saffle)  
Thu 3:00 Discussion Sections  
7:00 Film--Metropolis  
Fri 9:00 Lecture--"Terror as a Way of Life" (Michael Carter)

READING  

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the basic theoretical ideas of Marx? What does he see as the defining features of the new system? How does he know that another system is possible?

2. What is the relationship between theory and practice for Marx? How is philosophy a materialistic act?

3. Why does Marx think that the proletariat will rebel? Is this inevitable? Will they need help from intellectuals? What kinds?

4. Is Marx's theory of history deterministic? What does he mean by human freedom? How does this differ from Adam Smith's idea of freedom? Does history come to an end for Marx after the Revolution? How important is this to his theory?

5. Why did reason prove to be an inadequate guide for the Romantic poet? What could Imagination teach that Reason could not?

6. How do Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats use space and movement to define their themes?

7. What image of the artist do these poems create?

8. What relationships do you see in these poems between memory and the imagination?

9. How do the poets treat the theme of quest?
WEEK III: April 17 - 21

TOPIÇ: Marxism, continued

SCHEDULE:  
- Mon 9:00 Lecture--"Utopian Socialism" (Mancall) Room 121
- Tue 3:15 Plenary--"Weber" (Cohen)
- 7:00 Plenary--"Laws in History" (Coheen)
- Wed 3:15 Plenary--"Marxism and Art" (Mancall)
- 4:15 Discussion Sections
- Thu 9:00 Lecture--"Brecht and Epic Theatre" (Prof. Esslin)
- 3:15 Discussion Sections
- 7:00 Film: The Organizer

READING  
- Hempel, Function of General Laws in History (copied selection)
- Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
- Brecht, Mother Courage and A Short Organum for the Theatre (copied selection)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the "laws" of capitalism that determine its development? Are these general laws of history, or specific to capitalism?

2. Is it fair for Marx to generalize about capitalism from the British example of 1860? How much of his critique is still valid today? How would you be able to verify this? Does it matter if the revolution has not come about in the specific manner he seems to have predicted?

3. What does Marx mean by "scientific socialism"? How does this compare with other ideas of science? How does Hempel's article implicitly criticize Marx's theory of history?

4. How can Marxism be applied to a specific historical situation, such as the debate over the origins of capitalism? Does a Marxist simply ascribe everything to economic causes? How does a Marxist select evidence and make historical generalizations?

5. In what ways is The Protestant Ethic a critique of Marx? How does Weber define capitalism? What specific ideas of Marx does he reject? Is he more optimistic about capitalism than Marx in the long run?

6. What is Weber's philosophy of history? What is the importance of the metaphor of the 'iron cage'? Is Weber a liberal, i.e. a believer in the individual? How has he changed from Adam Smith?

7. Does Weber think one must be Protestant to be a capitalist? What exactly is the link between religion and economics for him?

8. Why does Brecht oppose the Aristotelian tenets of illusion, empathy, and catharsis in theatre? What does he propose instead? What is the "alienation effect", and how does it work?

9. What does the character Mother Courage stand for? What does she believe in? What are the alternative roles suggested by her children, and why won't she accept them? Could Marx analyze the events of the play?

10. Does Mother Courage "learn" in the play? What is the audience supposed to have learned?
WEEK IV: April 24 - 28

TOPICS: Darwin // Industrialization of Art

SCHEDULE:
Mon 9:00 Lecture--"Social Welfare" (Brody) Room 121
3:15 Plenary--"Introduction to Darwin" (Prof. Woodward)
7:00 Plenary--"Industrialization of Art" (Mancall)
3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Plenary--"Industrialization of Art II" (Saffle)
3:15 Discussion Sections

READING
Benjamin, Walter, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (copied selection)
Day, Lewis Foreman, "Machine-made Art" (copied selection)
Palgrave, Francis, "The Fine Arts in Florence" (copied selection)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What doctrines in Aristotle made the conception of the evolution of man inconceivable?

2. With what traditional views does the theory of evolution conflict? Can they be harmonized with the theory of evolution?

3. After the theory of the evolution of man, is it still possible to declare that man is "half ape, half angel"?

4. Does the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest" have ethical implications? economic implications?

5. Are man and society still in the evolutionary process? Has evolution stopped?

6. How can machines contribute to the process of artistic creation? Is machine-made art substantively different from other kinds of art? Does the value of a work of art inhere in its creation or in its existence as a material object? Why is an "original" worth more than a perfect "copy"? Is there a necessary conflict between the artist's oft expressed fear of industrialization in the reproduction of art and the socially democratic aspirations of our society today? How and why does art become "politicized"? Is there "right-wing" and "left-wing" art? If so, what are their respective characteristics? Can art ever be politically, socially or morally "neutral"?
WEEK V: May 1 - 5

TOPIC: Implications of Darwin // Wagner

SCHEDULE:

Sunday, April 30 5:00 One-page precis of term paper due

Mon 9:00 Lecture—"Modern Art I: Romanticism" (Prof. Eitner) Art Room 4

Tue 3:15 Plenary—"Wagner as Revolutionary" (Saffle) Cummings Art Bldg.

Wed 3:15 Discussion Sections

Thu 9:00 Lecture—"Modern Art II: Realism & Impressionism" (Prof. Eitner)

3:15 Discussion Sections

7:00 Film—Inherit the Wind

READING

Wagner (copied selections)

Appleman, Darwin, pp. 279-292; 299-307; 325-382; 385-422; 489-499; 533-544; 551-570; 629-651.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the "art-work of the future"? Did Wagner really believe that music and other dramatic arts could take part in processes of social protest and change? Why?

2. What are Wagner's principal innovations in the composition of instrumental and vocal (i.e. dramatic) music? How are these innovations reflected in the compositions we listen to this quarter?

3. Imagine you are Wagner or some other nineteenth-century artist. What sort of stand would you take on the problems of music and society facing the contemporary American cultural and political worlds? Why would you take these stands?

4. What criticisms can be made of the attempt to explain social and cultural phenomena in terms of biological phenomena?

5. "The reason that the human brain makes the human way of life possible is that it is the result of that way of life." Why is this quotation not a mere truism? Why do evolving biological systems not lend themselves to simple (unidirectional) causal explanations?

6. "The brain is not an organ of thinking, but an organ of survival, like claws and fangs." How might Darwin try to explain the development of man's symbolizing capacity?

7. What characteristics does a theory of evolution have as a type of explanation? How is it the same as or different from other types of explanation we have seen (e.g. in its interpretation of fossil records, relation of theory and logical reconstruction to evidence, etc.)?

8. Why might the very notion of a "human nature" be suspect?

9. Interpret: "The direction of man's organismic development is socially determined; to this extent it could be said that man is a self-producing being." What are some of the implications of this statement?

*Date and place of this lecture will be confirmed in class on Monday.
WEEK VI: May 8 - 12

TOPIC: Critiques of Rationalism: Nietzsche and Kafka

SCHEDULE:

Mon 9:00 Lecture--"Plato and India" (Mancall) Room 121

Tue 3:15 Plenary--"Nietzsche"

7:00 Plenary--"Kafka" (Candi Wallace)

Wed 3:15 Discussion Sections

7:00 Film--The Trial

Thu 9:00 Lecture--"Picasso" (Prof. Elsen) Cummings Art Bldg. Room 4

3:15 Discussion Sections

READING

Kafka, The Trial
Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is wrong with traditional culture in Nietzsche's view?

2. Does Nietzsche belong to the tradition of utopian thinking?

3. What reactions would Plato have to Nietzsche's thinking?

4. What is Nietzsche's response to the claim that "man is a rational animal?"

5. How does Kafka see the problem of the individual in modern culture? Why does he use law as the dominant metaphor in The Trial?

6. What ideas of Weber's can be found in Kafka?

7. How does Kafka break with the realistic tradition in literature, such as Balzac? What is the new element?

8. What would Kafka think of Nietzsche?
WEEK VII: May 15 - 19

TOPIC: Freud and Joyce

SCHEDULE:

Tue 3:15 Plenary--"Freud" (Reider)
7:00 Plenary--"Joyce" (Ryan)

Wed 3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Film--Freud

Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections

READING

Freud, Outline of Psychoanalysis
Psychopathology of Everyday Life

Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Is man a rational animal after all? Are there underlying sources of human behavior that the conscious mind is unaware of? What kinds of evidence does Freud have for this? Does this constitute proof? Is it reasonable to call psychoanalysis a science?

2. If Freud is right about human behavior, does this contradict Marx? Weber? What does he have in common with Nietzsche?

3. What is Freud's method of explanation? How does he get from observed symptoms to theory?

4. Why should an artist deal so much with his unique concerns of being an artist? What is an "artistic temperament"? In what ways is the artist a hero in the modern world? What is his "quest"? What does he stand in opposition to?

5. How important is the plot of The Portrait? Is Joyce's work like poetry? What is Joyce's "theory of art"? Does the concept of epiphany find parallels in the work of Freud? In the work of Wordsworth? Why are art and religion related vocations? Why are they different?

6. Why should Freudian analysis find Joyce's way of thinking dangerous for weaker persons than he?
WEEK VIII: May 22 - 26

TOPIC: Irrationalism in Social Thought and Art

SCHEDULE:
- Mon 9:00 Lecture--"Freud and Social Thought" (Reider) Room 121
- Tue 3:15 Plenary--"Dostoevsky" (Prof. Todd)
  7:00 Plenary--"Modern Music" (Saffle)
- Wed 3:15 Discussion Sections
  7:00 Plenary and Film--Un Chien D'Andalou
  \"Surrealism\" (Mancall)
  3:15 Discussion Sections
  7:00 Film--The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

READING
- Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents
- Dostoevsky, Notes from the Underground

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How can Freudian thought be applied to the analysis of society? Is there a significant difference between Freud's psychological theories and his social theories?

2. What kinds of institutions does Freud find have psychological principles underlying them?

3. How would you go about reconciling Marx and Freud?

4. Is Notes a work of social criticism?

5. What is rationality, or irrationality, for that matter?

6. What types of social conditions might give rise to the type of consciousness represented in Notes?

7. Who is the narrator in Notes? Is there more than one narrative perspective? Is the narrator a reliable narrator? Can Notes be read literally? Can one legitimately infer authorial meaning or intentions from narrative statements?

8. Compare and contrast Dostoevsky's view of man and society (assuming such views can be inferred) with those of Freud? What might Marx say of Notes?

9. Is the narrator sick, or all-too-sane, or does it matter?
TOPICS: Physics // Literature

SCHEDULE: Tuesday, May 30, Noon Term Paper Due

Tue 3:15 Plenary--"Einstein" (Yearian and Pesic)
7:00 Plenary--"Feynman--Physics I" (Yearian and Pesic)

3:15 Plenary--"Heisenberg and Uncertainty" (Yearian and Pesic)
7:00 Film--Six Characters in Search of an Author
and introduction about Pirandello by Prof. Lyons
9:00 Lecture--"Feynman--Physics II" (Yearian and Pesic)
3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Plenary--"Wallace Stevens" (Prof. Carnochan)

READING

Einstein, Relativity (concentrate on first half of book)

Pirandello, Six Characters in Search of an Author

Stevens, "Sunday Morning"

Heisenberg, "The History of Quantum Theory" and "The Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Theory" (copied selections)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. When he was 16, Einstein considered the following question: You are running at the speed of light. What do you see? How would a beam of light look to you?

2. What are Newton's ideas of space and time? How does Einstein change them?

3. Does "relativity" mean that everything is relative? If not, what things are absolute or invariant?

4. Your roommate says, "A and B are moving past each other. According to Einstein, A says that B's ruler is contracted and B says that A's ruler is contracted. This is obviously contradictory." What is your response?

5. Describe the kind of reasoning used by Einstein in his "thought-experiments". Are they empirical? Merely theoretical?

6. Einstein remarked in later years that he was not influenced by the Michelson-Morley experiment in his development of special relativity: he refers to theories as "free creations of the human mind". Why, then, had no one put forward the relativity theory earlier?

7. Why does the speed of light have such a special place in the relativity theory? Why isn't some other speed so important? (sound, for instance)

8. Your roommate says, "It's absurd to describe an electron as both a wave and a particle. These are contradictory qualities, and it is senseless to apply them to the same object." Your response?
9. What does Einstein mean in saying, "God does not play dice"? How does he know?

10. What implications do relativity and quantum mechanics have for art, literature, politics, and religion?

Since the Renaissance, there seems to be a widening gap between the world of common sense and that of physical theory. Which description is to be believed? How do you reconcile them?

12. How is Pirandello's play radically different from previous forms of drama? What does he have in common with Brecht? What is a "character" to Pirandello?

What is Pirandello trying to say about art? What is its relationship to the theme of illusion and reality? In what sense is art real? In what sense is it realistic?

14. What are the implications of this kind of drama for the relationship of art to moral issues and political problems? What is the relationship between reason and passion in Pirandello? Is it fair to call him a "nihilist"?

15. What is Stevens saying in "Sunday Morning"? What parts of the poem give you any trouble in understanding them? (Be prepared to talk about them.) If you think this is a beautiful poem, why?

WEEK X: June 5 - 9

TOPICS: Physics // Poetry // Summing Up

SCHEDULE: Tue 3:15 Plenary--"Implications of Modern Physics" (Pesic)
7:00 Plenary--"T.S. Eliot" (Prof. Middlebrook)
Wed 3:15 Plenary--Summing it up, review
Fri and Sat Oral Exams

READING

Eliot, The Wasteland