Course Title: SLE SEMINAR
Department Code: 999
Course Number: 092
Units: 09
REQUIRED TEXTS

Barrow, R.H., The Romans. (Penguin).
Castiglione, Book of the Courtier. (Doubleday).
Cervantes, Don Quixote. (Penguin).
Dante, The Inferno. (New American Library).
Descartes, Meditations. (Bobbs Merrill Co.).
Gay and Webb, Modern Europe to 1815. (Harper & Row).
Galileo, Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo. (Doubleday).
Hobbes, Leviathan. Parts I & II. (Bobbs Merrill).
Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. (Chicago).
Machiavelli, Mandragola. (Bobbs Merrill).
__________, The Prince and the Discourses. (Modern Library).
Marlowe, Dr. Faustus. (New American Library).
Rabelais, Gargantua and Pantagruel. (Penguin).
Shakespeare, King Lear. (New American Library).
Smart, The Renaissance and Mannerism in Italy. (Harcourt Brace).

Cover: Facsimile of a wood engraving depicting the discovery of Santo Domingo by Christopher Columbus. It is based on a sketch attributed to Columbus.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Paper Assignments

Please re-read the "SLE Style Sheet" in the Autumn syllabus (p. iv). Papers this quarter should be 6-8 pages in length, and should be submitted according to the same procedure followed during the autumn quarter. Consistent lateness will be penalized.

Topic #1: Dante - Due on Monday, January 28, at 5:00 P.M. (Week IV)

Write an essay on the Inferno which considers the poem primarily as a literary and imaginative creation, not merely as versified philosophy or theology. You are free to choose whatever aspects seem most interesting to you, but you should work on topics which have not been discussed in lecture or discussion. Choose your examples accordingly. Do not try to cover the whole poem, but select relevant parts for analysis. Remember that close reading and explication are extremely useful. If you are looking for suggestions, you might consider the relationships between Dante's poem and the Aeneid.

Topic #2: Machiavelli - Due Monday, February 18, at 5:00 P.M. (Week VII)

Although The Prince and The Discourses were written practically at the same time, The Prince apparently supports monarchy or princely government while The Discourses favors Republican government modeled largely on ancient Rome. How do you reconcile this manifest divergence?

Topic #3: Galileo - Due Monday, March 10, at 5:00 P.M. (Week X).

Write an essay on some aspect of the relation between Galileo and earlier scientific thinkers (e.g. Aristotle, Plato, Copernicus) which will illuminate the issue of continuity or discontinuity of thought (especially of scientific theory) raised, for instance, by Kuhn. Choose concrete examples to help you approach the question of the nature of the development of scientific thought, and the relationship between changing scientific theories and "the real world".

Final Examination

A take-home final examination will be distributed at the end of the quarter and will be due Monday of finals week. Information on the nature of the exam, and further details will be given during the quarter.
Week I: 7-11 January

TOPIC: Rome and The Middle Ages

SCHEDULE:

Tue 3:15 Plenary Session: "The Roman Experience & The Impact of Rome." Prof. Nicols, Classics, Jon Reider.

Wed 9:00 "Christianity: A Historical View". Prof. Nicols. Cubberley, Room 128.

3:15 Plenary Session: "Christianity". Prof. Robert Brown

Thu 9:00 "St. Augustine". Prof. Freccero, Italian. Cubberley, 128.

3:15 Discussion Sections

7:00 Film: Seventh Seal.

Fri 9:00 "Judeo-Arabic Transmission". Arvin Levine. Cubberley 128.

REQUIRED READING

Review Barrow, The Romans.


Continue Reading Dante, Inferno.

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

Augustine

1. What is Augustine's purpose in reviewing his infancy and youth in Book I?

2. How does Augustine interpret the role of his parents in Book III? What are his attitudes toward sex?


4. Does Augustine resolve the problem of evil? (Book VII, 3-5).

5. As distinct from the writings of the Platonists, what does Augustine discover in reading the apostle Paul? (Book VII, 18-21).

6. What is the significance of sexuality in Augustine's conversion? What is his relation to Alypius in his resolve to become a Christian?
WEEK II: 14-18 January

TOPIC: Dante and Aquinas

SCHEDULE: Mon 9:00 "Dante I", Prof. Freccero. Cubberley 128
Tue 9:00 "Dante II", Prof. Freccero, Cubberley 128
3:15 Plenary Session: Aquinas, Prof. Goheen.
7:00 "From Feudalism to Capitalism Through Art", Prof. Mancall
3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Tutorials
Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Film: Civilization. Kenneth Clark, Parts I&II.

REQUIRED READING
Dante, Inferno
Virgil, Aeneid, Books III, IV, VI. (Copied Selections).
Aquinas, Summa Theologica (Copied Selections).

TOPIC QUESTIONS
1. In what sense can theology be called a "science"?
2. Is revelation a source of knowledge?
3. How is myth related to religion? to revelation?
4. What is the relation of natural, human knowledge to religious "truths"?
5. Does one have to presuppose religious doctrine to claim that the soul is immortal?
6. Do human laws derive their authority from a theological source? Is this what is meant by the assertion, "we hold these truths to be self-evident...?"
7. How would you interpret Pascal's remark that man is "half-ape, half-angel" in the light of this Thomistic synthesis?
8. Is Aquinas' use of Aristotle faithful to Aristotle's own philosophy?
TOPIC QUESTIONS Cont'd.

Why doesn't Aquinas use Plato?

9. How has Christianity interpreted its classical heritage? Why has it chosen these particular elements of that heritage to stress?

10. What are the differences in structure and style between classical poetry and medieval poetry? Between classical philosophy and medieval philosophy? Are those differences parallel in any way?

11. Is the medieval world-view as systematic and all-encompassing as that of Plato and Aristotle?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

1. If the great classical philosophers and poets are within Dante's scheme of hell, how do you account for the fact that the reprehensible group of souls he meets outside its gates are not even allowed to enter? Does Aquinas' doctrine of the nature of choice shed any light on this strange encounter in Canto 3?

2. Generally, souls are positioned in Dante's hell according to the nature of their failure of moral virtue. How, then, does one explain the presence in Canto 4 of such virtuous persons as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Homer, Virgil, etc.?

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

4. Why should sins of violence and malice (or fraud) be punished more severely in Dante's hell than are sins resulting from sensual appetites? What might Plato have said about Dante's ordering of the different kinds and degrees of evil? Aristotle? Do you find the punishments in Dante imaginatively satisfying? Do they always seem to "fit the crime?"

5. Dante makes use of a number of ancient myths and figures from classical mythology in his Comedy, but what differences do you find
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS Cont'd.

in the way he uses them in the Inferno from the way they are treated in Homer?

6. 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?

7. Although Dante said that his poem represents "the state of souls after death," what evidence do you find that in it he is deeply concerned with mankind's personal and political life here and now?

AQUINAS

1. Why does Aquinas need to prove the existence of God? Would he otherwise not believe?

2. What does Aquinas mean by "proof"?

3. Are his proofs convincing? Would they satisfy Aristotle? Do they convince you?

4. The English poet John Milton once made a statement implying that poetry is more effective than theology or philosophy in teaching people how to live. Would you say that in this respect Dante is superior to Aquinas? If so, what features of his poem make him so? If not, in what does Aquinas' superiority consist?

5. Aquinas speaks of evil in negative terms as a deprivation of being rather than some positive force. In what ways does Dante apparently try to give imaginative form to this principle in the Inferno?

6. How does the moral geography or pattern of Dante's hell reflect Aquinas' ideas on the different qualities of good and evil in human acts?

7. What is a "soul"? Is it independent of body—that is, can it exist alone? If so, why do men need physical bodies? If not, how can we speak of souls and spiritual things in a meaningful way?

8. The "intellect naturally desires always to exist. But a natural desire cannot be in vain. Therefore, every intellectual substance is incorruptible." Is this a good argument to prove that the soul is immortal? Is this a logically sound argument?

9. Aquinas states that "happiness" is the proper end of man. What is "happiness"? Is it merely physical pleasure, or is it some form of intellectual excellence? Is it attainable by men in groups? If not, why does Aquinas speak of "common good"?

10. Does Aquinas draw a clear distinction between eternal law and natural law? Would the pre-Socratic philosophers have drawn a similar distinction? Would Plato or Aristotle? If eternal law is valid for all individuals and peoples, why do men also need human law?

11. How are men and beasts distinguished from each other? By their reaction to sensual pleasure, or by other criteria as well?
WEEK III: 21-25 January

TOPIC: Renaissance Humanism

SCHEDULE:


Tue 9:00  "Renaissance Humanism: Rabelais", Prof. Brigitte Cazelles, Fr. & Ital. Cubberley 128.


7:00  "Renaissance Art & Music", Peter Pesic

Wed 3:15  Discussion Sections

7:00  Tutorials

Thu 3:15  Discussion Sections

7:00  Film: Civilization. Parts III & IV.

REQUIRED READING

Rabelais, Gargantua & Pantagruel. (Pages to be announced).

Petrarch, "Ascent of Mt. Ventoux". (Copied Selections).

Smart, Renaissance & Mannerism in Italy. pp. 7-107.


Castiglione, Book of the Courtier. pp. 1-74. (To be discussed next week).

TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. Is history continuous or does it have sharp breaks? What is the right way to divide time into historical periods? Does a concept like the Renaissance have any usefulness if it doesn't begin or end at a definite time? Is history meaningful? Does it go in a certain direction? Is it circular?

2. What does the phrase "Renaissance Man" mean to historians and humanists today? What does it mean to you? Can a person live a Renaissance life in our modern world?

3. How were Renaissance "states" different from modern nations? In what way might life in such states have influenced the thoughts of Renaissance philosophers, playwrights, and poets? Do historical differences make it difficult for us to understand life in Renaissance societies?

4. What was a "court"? How did life at court differ from life in modern governmental seats of power (Washington D.C. or Moscow for example)? In what ways would life at court have resembled our own
TOPIC QUESTIONS Cont'd.
lives at Stanford University?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

1. What is Rabelais' attitude toward traditional education? What would he consider a well-educated man? Do the Greek and Roman classics have a value for him? How does this compare with the idea that the Renaissance was a rebirth of the classics?

2. Is Rabelais a humanist? Why then does he write about giants instead of ordinary men? What is the effect of his use of grotesque exaggeration? Why is he so interested in the cruder aspects of human activity?

3. Do Rabelais' characters have any morality? Is "Do what you will" a viable moral code? Is the rest of the book consistent in its assumptions with the ideals of the Abbey of Theleme?

4. What is Rabelais' attitude toward religion? Why is he so critical of monks? Are his ideas consistent with St. Thomas' ideas?

5. What is the structure of Rabelais' work? Why the short, unconnected series of episodes? How does this affect the meaning? Is there any thread that links it all together? What is the effect of alternating humorous scenes with relatively serious ones? What kind of humor is this?
WEEK IV: 28 Jan.-1 Feb.

TOPIC: The Italian Renaissance

SCHEDULE:

Mon 5:00  FIRST PAPER DUE

Tue 9:00  "Florentine Social Structure", Prof. Morris Zelditch
Sociology. Cubberley 128.


4:15  Castiglione, Jon Reider

7:00  "Renaissance Art & Music II", Peter Pesic.

Wed 3:15  Discussion Sections

7:00  Tutorial

Thu 3:15  Discussion Sections

7:00  Film: Civilization. Parts V & VI.

REQUIRED READING


Pico, Oration on the Dignity of Man. (Copied Selections).

Ficino, Commentary on the Symposium (Copied Selections).


Gay & Webb, Europe to 1815. pp. 97-121.

Kristeller, "Pico" and "Ficino" (Copied Selections).

TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the intense interest in Plato as expressed in Pico and Ficino? Does Plato's philosophy fit better with the "dignity of man" as compared to Aristotle's philosophical views?

2. Is Platonism as interpreted by Pico and Ficino a departure from the Christian attitude of Dante?

3. Is the attempt by Pico and Ficino to find a common philosophical view in the ancient authors and their compatibility with Christian doctrine a weakening or strengthening of the tradition as expressed by Aquinas?

4. Is the Platonic conception of love the same as the "love of God"?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

I. Castiglione believes the idea of an "ideal" courtier important enough to write a book about it. Why?

2. Could a modern author publish a similar book today?

3. Why does Castiglione turn what might otherwise have been a didactic manual on manners into an entertaining dialogue? What turns the dialogue in The Book of the Courtier into a didactic work?

4. What forms of affectation and allegiance does the courtier owe in the daily affairs of the courtier? Could he have performed all these satisfactorily in a didactic work? Which do you think he would have found the most important?

5. What intellectual skills should the courtier possess? Which social skills? Is the ideal courtier first and foremost to be a man of peace or war?

6. How seriously is the role of women taken in The Book of the Courtier?

7. What is sprezzatura? Why is it one of the most important concepts in The Book of the Courtier? How is the courtier guided by sprezzatura in his actions at court, at games, in intellectual discussions, in battle?

8. Would Plato or Aeschylus think of Castiglione's characters as real people, as well as of Aristotle's and Plutarch's? Book IV of The Book of the Courtier is largely devoted to the intellectual life of a courtier. How does Castiglione's book reflect the intellectual climate of the Renaissance?

9. How does Plato's role play in the daily affairs of the courtier?

10. What is Castiglione's view of the nature of beauty? More important to a courtier, physical beauty or spiritual beauty?

11. Why would Plato have recognized and admired the didactic elements in Bembo's discourse? What are the didactic elements that Castiglione would point out in Bembo's discourse? What forms of affectation and allegiance does the courtier owe in the daily affairs of the courtier?

12. What is Pico's glorification of man? What does he mean by saying that man is the "messenger between the things Castiglione's characters discuss?" Why would Plato have objected to such benevolent rulers? Would he have found the scheme Castiglione's social scheme "ideal"?

13. Does The Book of the Courtier and Castiglione's characters agree that the courtier would do all the things Castiglione's characters agree he would do?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS Cont'd.

3. How can man compete with the angels in dignity and glory? Why is Plato so important in Pico's conception of man's ability to compete with angels?

4. Are there no limits to what man can become? Is this a repudiation of the doctrine of original sin? Of the need for grace?

FICINO

1. Does Ficino find in Plato's Symposium a basis similar to Pico's for the dignity of man?

2. Are the two Venuses in Ficino's interpretation of the Symposium necessarily in conflict?


4. Both Ficino and Pico emphasize the power of will to attain the good and active life as opposed to an emphasis on the contemplative. What might be the appeal of this emphasis to the Florentines?
WEEK V - Feb. 4-8

TOPIC: Machiavelli and the Reformation.

SCHEDULE:

Tue 3:15 Plenary Session: Machiavelli, Jon Reider.
7:00 Renaissance Art & Music III, Peter Pesic.

Wed 3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Tutorials

Thu 9:00 "The Reformation", Prof. Clebsch, Religious Studies, Cubberley 128.
3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Film: Mandragola.

REQUIRED READING

Machiavelli, The Prince.
Book III, Ch. 1-8.


Smart, The Renaissance in Italy. pp. 197-244.

Gay & Webb, Europe to 1815. pp. 123-160

TOPIC QUESTIONS: Machiavelli

1. Is it possible to study politics scientifically? How would you go about it? What are some of the ways to minimize personal bias?

2. Do all states or political systems follow certain rules of political behavior? Are examples drawn from past societies useful in comparison with our own time?

3. Is politics an amoral or immoral activity? Is it possible to be an effective politician and a morally good person at the same time? Does politics contribute to the general welfare, or is it just a struggle for power?

4. 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?

5. Why do some kinds of governments tend to be unstable? Are democratic ones more stable than undemocratic ones? What social conditions promote popular governments?

6. Is there any difference between politics within a state and politics between states? Are the rules for survival the same?
TOPIC QUESTIONS

7. Is there a fixed human nature? Does the study of politics depend on the idea of some kind of human nature? Is it fair to reason from examples of political action to principles of human nature?

8. What makes Renaissance art different from medieval art?

9. How does Renaissance art reflect developments in other fields like politics and philosophy? Does art play a different role in society than it did in the classical period?

10. What is the relationship between art and science? Do they share any common ideas?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Has Machiavelli broken with the political thought of St. Thomas? of Plato? of Aristotle? What would he think of Thrasymachus' arguments in the Republic, Book I?

2. How do you explain the apparent contradiction between the autocratic values of The Prince and the republicanism of the Discourses, keeping in mind that they were both written about the same time?

3. Is Machiavelli's advice to the prince cruel and immoral, or is it coldly realistic? Is his distinction between "good" cruelty and "bad" cruelty valid? Do you think his advice is good advice for the most part?

4. Does Machiavelli have any idea of justice? How does he decide what is right and wrong? Is success or failure all that matters to him?

5. How scientific is Machiavelli's approach to the study of politics? Is it fair to call him the first political scientist? Is he more or less scientific than Aristotle? Do any of his biases show?

6. How is Machiavelli a Renaissance man? Why is he more influenced by Roman history than by Greek philosophy? Does he derive his classification of the types of states from Aristotle? Are there any similarities between Castiglione's courtier and Machiavelli's prince?

7. How do you explain the last chapter of the Prince? Is the utopian nationalism there consistent with his cynical advice elsewhere in the book?

8. What is Machiavelli's attitude toward religion? Are his reasons justified? What kind of religion has value for him?

TOPIC QUESTIONS: REFORMATION

1. It has been said that the Renaissance humanists laid the egg that Luther hatched. What do you think is the relationship between the Renaissance and Reformation?
TOPIC QUESTIONS Cont'd.

2. While the Catholic Church insists that it loves all its saints, there nevertheless has often been an ambivalent feeling toward St. Augustine, who is seen as lying at the root of most heresies. What was the Augustinian influence on Martin Luther?

3. In response to the medieval theology of such thinkers as St. Thomas Aquinas, Luther once snarled that "Aristotle was a pagan pig". How does the theology of Luther and Calvin differ from that of Aquinas, the church's most revered theologian? Pay close attention to their sources and methods for expressing religious truths.

4. Despite its doctrinal uncertainty at the time of the Reformation, the church was generally receptive to what Luther called the semi-Pelagian argument that men can achieve salvation partly through good works. Why does Luther believe that good works cannot be considered in the attainment of salvation?

5. In opposition to the Catholic Church's belief --ultimately settled-on later at the Council of Trent (1563-4)-- that God hopes all men will repent and attain salvation, the Protestantism of John Calvin insisted on a doctrine of predestination; that is to say, God actively selects some individuals for salvation and others for eternal damnation. While this notion of Calvin seems so much at odds with the Renaissance humanist ideal of "men as the measure of all things", his predestination doctrine has occasionally been interpreted by historians as being one of the most significant driving forces behind Europe's rise to modernity. Reflect on how this is possible or not possible.
TOPIC: The Scientific Revolution

SCHEDULE:  
Mon 9:00  "Ptolemy", Peter Pesic. Cubberley 128.  
Tue 3:15  Plenary Session: "Copernicus", Peter Pesic.  
4:15   Demonstration, Prof. Yearian. At Physics tank, building 100.  
7:00   Tutorials  
Thu 9:00  "Brahe and Kepler", Prof. Yearian. Cubberley 128.  
3:15   Discussion Sections  
7:00   Film: Luther.

REQUIRED READING  
Galileo, Discoveries and Opinions. (omit pp.125-144, 188-216, 243-256). 
______. Concerning Two New Sciences (Copied selections).  
Ptolemy, Copied Selections  
Copernicus, Copied Selections  

TOPIC QUESTIONS  
1. Is scientific knowledge different from other kinds of knowledge?  
2. Is the process of acquiring and evaluating scientific knowledge different from the process of acquiring and evaluating other kinds of human knowledge?  
3. Is there a "scientific method"?  
4. Does the lay public have any role to play in science? What is the relation of science to other institutions of society?  
5. Is there any necessary conflict between science and religion?  
6. What traditional views were at stake in the controversy over the position of the earth in the solar system?
TOPIC QUESTIONS Cont'd

7. To what extent does knowledge depend on "sensibility"? Which system, the Ptolemaic or the Copernican, is more "sensible"?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

1. What was the significance of the law of freely falling bodies in relation to traditional views and for the future of physics?

2. What is characteristic of Galileo's reply to the argument that the moon couldn't possibly have mountains? How might telescopic evidence be denied?

3. Why did Galileo turn to cultural politics? Can science exist independent of politics?

4. How did Galileo reconcile Copernicanism and dogma?

5. Does the trial of Galileo have elements reminiscent of Socrates?

6. What is the importance of Galileo's distinction between objective and subjective qualities?

7. What is the significance of the Church's warning that it is permissible to teach the Copernican system as a convenient computational device but not as fact?

8. What did Galileo mean by "interrogating nature"?
WEEK VII: Feb. 18-22

TOPIC: Galileo and Marlowe

SCHEDULE:

Mon 5:00 Paper #2 Due.

Tue 9:00 "The Counter-Reformation", Amy Sims. Cubberley 128.

3:15 Plenary Session: "Marlowe and the New Myths" Prof. Ian Watt, English.

7:00 Renaissance Art and Music IV, Peter Pesic.

Wed 9:00 "Galileo and the Church", Prof. Bernard Cohen Sociology.

3:15 Plenary Session: "Kuhn and Scientific Paradigms". Peter Pesic.

7:00 Tutorials

Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections

7:00 Film: Galileo.

REQUIRED READING

Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.

Marlowe, Doctor Faustus.

TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. Is scientific progress inevitable or necessary? Is it good? Does science advance by slow, cumulative steps? How does one scientific idea replace another?

2. How does science generate its own internal standards of verification? What brings these standards into conflict with non-scientific ideas?

3. Why might Dr. Faustus be called the tragedy of Renaissance man as overreacher, as attempter at goals that exceed the capacity of human nature?

4. How would Pico, as author of the famous "Oration", have regarded Faustus' aspirations and his career in Marlowe's play?

5. What is the difference between the kind of error made by Faustus in his tragedy and _hamartia_ in the Greek tragic hero (Oedipus, for example).

6. Why might Dr. Faustus, as well as King Lear, be regarded as tragedies which reflect the crisis of consciousness of the later Renaissance?

7. How does Marlowe's play try to depict the tension, or ambiguity,
TOPIC QUESTIONS Cont'd.

between human creative impulse and fear of presumptuous "exceeding the mark"?

8. Why do you think the Faustian legend came to have such a continuing powerful effect on the imagination of western mankind from the Renaissance to the present?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

1. What is unusual, when one compares Marlowe's play with Greek tragedy, about the manner in which the dramatist portrays his protagonist's initial wrong choice and ultimate tragedy?

2. Some critics have found the scenes of comedy and horseplay in the middle of Dr. Faustus a failure of taste in tragedy. The Aristotle of the Poetics, had he known the play, probably would have agreed with them. Can you find any grounds for justifying such comic scenes dramatically in the play?

3. What additional dramatic values does Marlowe achieve through the rhythms and imagery of the poetry in which his drama is composed?

4. What clues do you find in the language of the opening scene (Act I, Scene I) to suggest that Faustus' aspirations are already wrongly directed even before he makes his compact with Mephistopheles?

5. What is the significance of Mephistopheles' presenting the Renaissance man Faustus with Helen of Troy as his final distraction?

6. In Faustus' long last soliloquy (as his death approaches in the final scene) what ironies do you find in the words of this man who had aspired to become like a god in the opening of the play?
WEEK VIII: Feb. 25-29

TOPIC: Shakespeare and Cervantes

SCHEDULE:

Tue 3:15  Plenary Session: "Shakespeare". Prof. Ron Rebholz, English.
7:00  "Lear and Family Structure", Dr. Engelsing, V.A. Hospital.

4:15  Discussion
7:00  Tutorials

Thu 3:15  Discussion Sections
7:00  Film: *King Lear*

REQUIRED READING

Shakespeare, *King Lear*.

Cervantes, *Don Quixote*. Part I, prologue, Ch.1-22, 45-52. Part II, prologue Ch. 1-10, 60-74.


TOPIC QUESTIONS: *King Lear*

1. Is Aristotle's conception of tragedy applicable to *King Lear*? What, then, do we mean by the word when we call *Oedipus* and *Lear* both tragedy?

2. What is the difference between tragedy and comedy, according to Shakespeare? How is this different from Aristotle?


4. Is there a Greek sense of fate in Shakespeare's play? Are there also Christian elements?

5. How would Shakespeare have us respond to the suffering and weakness of mankind?

6. Why didn't the Italian Renaissance, with its great accomplishments in art, produce a Shakespeare?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

1. What is the contribution of the sub-plots of Gloucester, Edmund, and Edgar to the total effect of *Lear*?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS Cont'd.

2. How are conditions in the world, in the state, and in the individual related to one another in the course of the play? How is Lear a microcosm?

3. What evidence is there that action in the play violates Shakespeare's understanding of natural law? Consider the relations of people to each other, to the state, and to the gods. What is the role of the fool in this presentation of the upsetting of order?

4. What are the most striking reversals in Act III of Lear?

5. One critic writes of Lear's last words: "In his own mind she lives, and it is the discovery that Cordelia is alive, that life is the reality under the appearance, that the reality is good... it is this that breaks his heart at last." Would you attack or defend the thesis that King Lear ends with unbearable joy?

6. Could Machiavelli have used any of the content of Lear in his assumptions concerning human nature? Concerning political power? Do you suppose that the general effects of the Copernican revolution would attack or defend the vision in Lear? Why?

Cervantes

1. What causes Don Quixote to leave his home and embark upon his quest? What is it about his material life, that is, the way he lives, 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 it a pessimistic view? Is it 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 way is Don Quixote's love for Dulcinea similar 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 work of art from other works is its ability to "live" and continue to grow long after its creation. Is Don Quixote a work of art? Does it live?
10. Has Cervantes created real, believable characters, or has he given us symbolized abstractions?
WEEK IX: Mar. 3-7

TOPIC: Bacon and Descartes

SCHEDULE:

Tue  3:15  Plenary Session: "Bacon", Jon Reider
       4:15  "Descartes", John Goheen

Wed  3:15  Discussion Sections

Thu  3:15  Discussion Sections
       7:00  "Nature and Nothing", Peter Pesic.

REQUIRED READING

Bacon, New Organon, Aphorisms. (Copied Selections).

Descartes, Meditations.


Gay and Webb, Europe to 1815. pp. 239-244.

TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. In a world which has lost a basic theological orientation and organization, where can mankind look for a new order?

2. What is the relationship between the new science and nature? Does one approach nature through experience? through previously conceived theories? What is the relation between science and technology?

3. Is there hope for the reorganization of society in the age of scientific knowledge?

4. Does the development of science justify an optimism for man? Is an optimistic view necessary for the development of science?

5. What is the relationship between the individual observer or scientist and nature? Is nature neutral with respect to man?

6. Granted scientific knowledge and its application to control of nature by man, is there any place left for religion?

7. Is there, in addition to "objective" scientific knowledge, some other kind of knowledge?

8. What is the problem of induction?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the sources of doubt, according to Descartes?
2. Where does Descartes find the examples of what does seem true?
3. How can Descartes doubt the truths of mathematics?
4. Where does Descartes find an indubitable truth? Why?
5. What is the status of our knowledge of the physical world once the truth, "I think, therefore, I exist", has been found?
6. How do you interpret the example of the wax?
7. Has skepticism with regard to knowledge been finally answered by Descartes?
8. What does Descartes mean by the "natural light", and what is its function in his philosophy?
9. What does Descartes mean when he claims that God necessarily exists?
10. Why does Descartes have to resort to the idea of God?
11. What is the essence of material things?
12. Why is the existence of the physical world a problem for Descartes?
13. How does Descartes prove the existence of the external world?

Bacon

1. What are Bacon's criticisms of Aristotle? How do they differ from a Platonic criticism? Are they the same criticisms he would make of religion? Is Bacon just an advocate of keeping an open mind, i.e. an anti-dogmatist, or is he more than just that?
2. Why does Bacon write in discreet aphorisms instead of a narrative argument as most philosophers do?
3. How does Bacon differ from most Renaissance humanists in his attitude toward the "classics"?
4. Why does Bacon call the impediments to scientific knowledge "Idols"? What do they have in common? Once you get rid of all the idols, what do you have left? How can you test for the idols, i.e., how do you know when you are affected by them?
5. "We must lead men to the particulars themselves." (Aphorisms 36). Would Aristotle agree with this?
WEEK X: Mar. 10-14

TOPIC: Hobbes and Newton

SCHEDULE:

Mon 5:00 P.M. Paper #3 Due

Tue 9:00 "Newton's Laws of Motion". Prof. Yearian. Cubberley 128.

Wed 9:00 "The Laws of Gravitation and Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion". Prof. Yearian. Cubberley 128
3:15 Plenary Session: "Newton's Impact". Prof. Goheen.
4:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Tutorials

Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections

REQUIRED READING


Part II.Ch. 17-21, 24, 26, 29.


TOPIC QUESTIONS: Hobbes

1. What is the basic building block of society: the individual, the family, or the state?

2. Is it valid to apply reasoning drawn from the physical sciences to politics? Or, is politics a separate subject that calls for its own methods?

3. What are the political and economic conditions that would lead to the emergence of ideas of political individualism? Why did this happen in 17th century England?

4. Is human nature constant? How can we know? Is it legitimate to build a political theory on such an assumption?
TOPIC QUESTIONS: Newton

1. What is the accomplishment of Newton in relation to scientific ideas already established by such scientists as Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler?

2. What was the significance of Newton's discovery of the calculus?

3. Once physical science is established, where is man? society? literature? art? God?

4. Why was the notion of "action at a distance" so revolutionary (in reference, for example, to Aristotelian physics)?

5. What are your reactions to Pope's famous lines:

   "Nature and nature's laws lay hid in the night.
   God said, "Let Newton be, and all was light."

6. Hume, a great admirer of Newton, said:
   "While Newton seemed to draw off the veil from some of the mysteries of nature, he showed at the same time the imperfections of mechanical philosophy; and thereby restored her ultimate secrets to the obscurity in which they ever did and ever will remain."

   How would you interpret this remark?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS: Hobbes

1. What is the difference between natural law and natural right? How does this difference lead to different conceptions of government?

2. What points do Hobbes and Machiavelli have in common? How do their methods and their conclusions differ?

3. What is the difference between Hobbes' idea of reason as calculation and Plato's and Aristotle's ideas of man as a rational animal?

4. How is Hobbes influenced by the scientific and mathematical reasoning of his day? How is he influenced by Bacon and Descartes?

5. How does Hobbes reconcile liberty and absolute sovereignty? Why is he against mixed government or any limitations on sovereignty?

6. How does Hobbes' idea of the social contract compare with Socrates' idea in the Crito?

7. Why would Hobbes be drawn to Thucydides?

8. Although Hobbes was a defender of absolute government, how can he be seen as a radical individualist? How does this compare to Renaissance humanists' ideas of individualism?

Newton

1. What does Newton mean by "principle"? Does one start from assumed principles? from experience?

2. What is the importance of Newton's distinction between "absolute"
time and space, as opposed to "apparent" time and space?

3. How does the law of gravity unify physics and astronomy?
WEEK XI: Mar. 17-21

Finals Week

Mon 10:00 A.M. All Exams Due.
Thu 7:00 P.M. Faculty and Tutors: Grading Session