STRUCTURED LIBERAL EDUCATION

SYLLABUS

WINTER QUARTER, 1977-78

Course Title: SLE Seminar
Department Code: 999
Course Number: 092
Units: 9
REQUIRED TEXTS


Kearney, H. Science and Change, 1500-1700, McGraw-Hill.


TOPIC #1: "Dante" — Due on Monday, January 23 at 5:00 p.m. (Week IV)

The Inferno is a poem, not a theological or philosophical tract. Dante therefore uses a variety of poetic means to give imaginative form to his vision of the world of lost souls. Write a paper in which you show how he represents, through his characterizations and imagery, the increasing horror and evil he encounters as he descends deeper and deeper into the infernal pit.

You may choose to discuss only one kind, or if you wish several kinds, of imagery or other literary devices employed by Dante to convey to the reader the sense of ever-increasing loss and confusion: for example, his use of similes and other comparisons, the punishments of the various kinds of sinners, the different qualities of the four rivers of hell, the physical stresses and discomforts experienced by Dante, etc. In your paper, to avoid mere summary, you are expected also to evaluate whether the particular poetic means you have chosen to write about do render effectively the quality of the experience of human corruption.

(6 - 8 pages)

TOPIC #2: "Machiavelli" — Due on Monday, February 13 at 5:00 p.m. (Week VII)

Machiavelli's attitude toward the ideas of the classical writers on politics is ambiguous. On the one hand, he clearly admired much of ancient thought and hoped for a revival of classical civic virtue. Yet, at the same time, he created a decisive break with the past by divorcing politics from ethics.

Write an essay analyzing this ambiguity in detail, and evaluate whether Machiavelli's contribution is a positive or negative step in the history of political thought. In particular, you should consider the possible benefits and drawbacks of "scientific" realism and moral neutrality when applied to the study of social and political life.

(6 - 8 pages)

TOPIC #3 "Galileo" — Due on Monday, March 6 at 5:00 p.m. (Week X)

(see copied selections, Dialogues by Galileo, page 760)

"I grant that these conclusions proved in the abstract will be different when applied in the concrete and will be fallacious to this extent, that neither will the horizontal motion be uniform nor the natural acceleration be in the ratio assumed, nor the path of the projectile a parabola, etc."

Does this admission mean that Galileo's theory is false? If not, why not? How would you (and how does he) justify his "abstract" conclusion if its application to the "concrete" doesn't hold true?

In your essay, suppose that this gap between the abstract theory and the concrete is generally true of science. On this supposition what would you conclude about scientific theory?

(7 - 8 pages)

FINAL EXAMINATION

A take-home, final exam will be given out at the end of the quarter. The nature of this exam will be explained and the due date determined after the beginning of the Winter Quarter.
WEEK I: 5 and 6 January

TOPIC: Introduction and Dante

SCHEDULE: Thurs 3:15 Plenary Session, Main Lounge Flo Mo
"Dante I" - L. Ryan
Fri 9:00 Lecture, Room 300 (back outer quad)
"Empire: Roman and Holy Roman" - A. Raubitschek (Classics)

Trip to Legion of Honor, San Francisco

REQUIRED READING:
Sinclair, T.A. (trans.) Dante, Inferno, Cantos 1-6, 34

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's 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 in 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 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?
TOPIC: Dante and Aquinas

SCHEDULE:  
Mon 9:00 Lecture, Room 300  
"Neoplatonism and St. Augustine I" - J. Goheen
9:00 Lecture, ESMB B67  
"Neoplatonism and St. Augustine II" - J. Goheen
3:15 Plenary Session - "Aquinas I" - J. Goheen
4:15 Plenary Session - "Dante II" - L. Ryan
7:00 Films: The Great Thaw and Romance and Reality
3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Writing tutorials
3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Lecture, Flo Mo Main Lounge  
"Germanic Foundations of Europe" - T. Andersson (German Studies)

REQUIRED READING

Sinclair, T.A. (trans), Dante, Inferno, Cantos 10 - 15
Aquinas, St. Thomas, Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas, Pegis, Anton G. (ed.)  

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's use of Aristotle faithful to Aristotle's own philosophy? 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 these 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. 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's superiority consist?

5. Aquinas speaks of evil in negative terms as a deprivation of being rather than some positive force, as a lack of something one ought properly to possess. 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's 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 any meaningful way?

8. The "intellect naturally desires always to exist. But a natural desire cannot be in vain. Therefore, every intellectual substance is incorruptable." 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 a "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 laws?"

11. How are men and beasts distinguished from each other: by their reaction to sensual pleasure, or by other criteria as well?
WEEK III: 16 - 20 January

TOPIC: Dante and Aquinas

SCHEDULE: Tue 3:15 Plenary Session - "Dante III" - L. Ryan
         4:15 Plenary Session - "Aquinas II" - J. Goheen
         Wed 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
         "Monastic Culture vs. Civic Culture in the Middle Ages"
         G. Brown (English)
         3:15 Discussion Sections
         Thu 5:15 Discussion Sections
         9:00 Lecture, Room 300
         "Byzantine Culture" - W. Vinchich (History)

REQUIRED READING
Sinclair, T.A. (trans), Dante, Inferno, Cantos 17, 24-27, 31-33
Burckhardt, Jacob, Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy. Begin reading for next week.

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS
1. 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?"

2. Dante makes use of a number of ancient myths and figures from classical mythology in his Comedy, but what difference do you find in the way he uses them in the Inferno from the way they are treated in, say, Homer?

3. How does Dante's account of the fate of Ulysses (Odysseus) differ from that in the Odyssey? (Dante, by the way, was not familiar with Homer's epic, but knew about Ulysses from other sources.) What is Dante's apparent attitude toward Ulysses, and why does he place him in the Eighth Circle of the Inferno?

4. 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?
WEEK IV: 23 - 27 January

TOPIC: Castiglione and Burckhardt

SCHEDULE:

Mon 5:00 First Paper Due ("Dante")

Tue 3:15 Plenary Session - "Burckhardt" - J. Reider
        4:15 Plenary Session - "Castiglione" - L. Ryan
        7:00 Plenary Session - "Renaissance Art" - L. Ryan

Wed 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
        "The Northern Renaissance" - L. Ryan

Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections

7:00 Films: Man, The Measure of All Things and The Hero

REQUIRED READING


Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier. Try to read the entire book, omitting the long digression on wit and humor in Book Two (pp. 142-197). If you are hard pressed for time, concentrate on the following passages:
        pp. 1-74 (Book I, Sections 1-46); pp. 95-126 (II, 5-30); 201-221 (III, 1-19); 244-273 (III, 42-67); 281-282 (III, 76); 285-319 (IV, 1-35); 334-360 (IV, 49-73).

TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. Is it possible to write objective history? Is there an implicit theoretical perspective in any work of history? How do you look at it? How do you tell good history from bad?

2. 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 certain time? Does history go in a certain direction? Is it circular? Is it meaningful?

3. What is the relationship between social, economic, political, intellectual and religious factors in history? Is it possible to tell them apart? Are any of them more important than the others? If you choose one of them to be primary, what consequences follow from that choice? For example, would a belief in the primacy of economic factors lead to any particular philosophy of history?

4. How does a work of history reflect the times in which it was written? Does each generation have to rewrite its own history? Is later, that is, more recent, history usually better and more objective? What examples of the rewriting of history are you aware of? How might later historians rewrite the history of our own time?

5. 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?
TOPIC QUESTIONS, cont.

6. How were Renaissance "states" different from our 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 the life in Renaissance societies?

7. What is, or 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 lives at Stanford University?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

CASTIGLIONE

1. Castiglione believes the idea of an "ideal" Courtier important enough to write a book about it. Why? Could a modern author publish a similar book today?

2. Why does Castiglione turn what might otherwise have been a didactic manual on manners into an entertaining dialogue? Why does he set that dialogue in Urbino, and people it with such varied characters? What would Plato or Aeschylus think of Castiglione's skills as a philosopher and dramatist?

3. 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?

4. Should the Courtier be of noble birth? Why? What would Plato or Aristotle have thought of such class distinctions?

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

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

7. Is the ideal courtier a superficial human type? Does Castiglione's book give any insight into the needs and condition of twentieth-century people as well as of aristocrats in Renaissance Italy?

8. Would Aristotle recognize any of his own ethical or political ideals in Ottaviano's discourse in The Courtier, Book IV?

9. What role do princes play in Castiglione's social scheme? Would Plato have approved of such "benevolent" rulers? Would he, indeed, have found them "benevolent" at all?

10. Is physical beauty or spiritual beauty more important to a Courtier?

11. What role does love play in the daily affairs of the Courtier? What forms of affection and allegiance does the Courtier owe to his lord? his mistress? the "common" people?
12. What four steps on Bembo's "ladder of love" lead the Courtier from concern with mundane affairs to an understanding of something Divine? Would Plato have recognized any of his ideas in Bembo's discourse?

13. Does The Book of the Courtier end convincingly? Are you convinced an ideal Courtier would do all the things Castiglione's characters agree he would do? Why?

BURCKHARDT

What kind of history is Burckhardt writing? What kinds of questions is he trying to answer? What is his method of doing history? How does it differ from more conventional history, such as a textbook?

2. What does he see as the defining characteristics of the Renaissance? Why do you think he picked these particular characteristics? How does the Renaissance compare to the Middle Ages in his view? Is one period "better" in some way than the other?

3. How does he describe the relationship between the Renaissance and his own time, the middle of the 19th Century? Is there a sharp break between the two, or is history fairly continuous since the Renaissance, according to him? What trends in his own time might have influenced the development of his ideas of the Renaissance?

4. Can you tell if he has a conscious philosophy of history? Does he think that history has a purpose or a direction? Does this affect his view of the Renaissance at all?

5. How else could you interpret the Renaissance? How would you interpret it if you were a devout Catholic? or a Marxist? or if you believed that the modern world were a dehumanized, totalitarian, technological nightmare? What is there about Burckhardt's interpretation that has made it so popular?
WEEK V: 30 January - 3 February

TOPIC: Machiavelli

SCHEDULE: Mon 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Social Structure of Florence" - M. Zelditch (Sociology)
3:15 Plenary Session - "Machiavelli" - J. Reider
7:00 Dramatic Reading of Mandragola

9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"The Renaissance Economy" - L. Spitz (History)
3:15 Discussion Sections
3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Film: Mandragola

REQUIRED READING


Mandragola

TOPIC QUESTIONS

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 times?

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?

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?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Has Machiavelli broken with the political thought of St. Thomas? of Plato? of Aristotle? What would he think of Thrasymachus's arguments in 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 at 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 the 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?
WEEK VI: 6 - 10 February

TOPIC: Pico, Ficino, and Michelangelo

SCHEDULE:

Mon 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Exploration and Discovery" - M. Mancall

Tue 3:15 Plenary Session - "Pico and Ficino" - J. Goheen
7:00 Plenary Session - "Renaissance Architecture and City Planning" - K. Forster (Art History)

Wed 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Technology in the Renaissance" - W. Vincenti (Engineering)
3:15 Discussion Sections

Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Plenary Session - "Michelangelo" - L. Ryan

REQUIRED READING

Michelangelo, copied selections of poems
Pico della Mirandola, On the Dignity of Man and On Being and the Unity
Ficino, Five Questions Concerning the Mind and Commentary on Plato's Symposium (copied selections)
Kristeller, P.O. Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance, "Ficino" and "Pico" (copied selections)

TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. What makes Renaissance art different from medieval art? from classical art?

2. 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?

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

4. 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?

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

6. 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?

7. Where does the idea of the "One" ("Unity") come from? Has the social situation in 15th century Florence anything to do with this idea?

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

1. What can you tell from Michelangelo's poems about his theory of artistic creation?

2. What evidence is there in the poems that his views about art and the activity of the artist are Platonic in origin?

3. What other Platonic echoes do you find in his poems, and where in your readings from Plato last quarter do similar ideas or statements occur?

4. To what extent are the views about love in Michelangelo's poems similar to views expressed in Plato's Symposium? In what respects do they resemble views about love expressed by Bembo toward the end of The Book of the Courtier?

5. Several of Michelangelo's poems express a tension between his longing for death and salvation, and his passion for creating beauty through his art. Why should such a conflict have existed within him? Do you see it as perhaps a conflict peculiar to Renaissance man (remember your Burckhardt)? Would Plato have understood such an internal conflict? In what way might Michelangelo's predicament, as expressed in several of his poems, be a recurring one for the creative artist?

PICO, On the Dignity of Man

1. Would Dante have any objections to Pico's glorification of man?

2. What does Pico mean by saying that "man is the messenger between creatures"?

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?
PICO, On Being and the Unity

1. What is Pico's purpose in this work? Why is the "concord" of Plato and Aristotle of such importance?

What in Plato's Republic would seem to distinguish between Being and the Unity?

3. What is Pico's solutions to the supposed disagreement between Platonists and Aristotelians?

4. What is the significance of Plato's appeal to Dionysius the Areopagite?

5. Do you see any ethical or social implications in Pico's philosophical position?

PICINO, Five Questions Concerning the Mind

1. Why does Ficino discuss motion in nature before discussing the human mind?

2. What is the "end" of "intellectual motion"?

3. Does Ficino find a common agreement between Plato and Aristotle with regard to the "end" of "intellectual motion"?

4. What does Ficino mean by man's "natural condition"?

PICINO, Commentary on Plato's Symposium

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 the active life as opposed to an emphasis on the contemplative. What might be the appeal of this emphasis to the Florentines?
WEEK VII: 13 - 17 February

TOPIC: Ptolemy and Copernicus—Introduction to the Scientific Revolution

SCHEDULE:

Mon 5:00  Second Paper Due ("Machiavelli")
Tue 9:00  Lecture, Earth Sciences Mitchell Building, B67 (ESMB) "Medieval Idea of Nature" - P. Pesic
            3:15 Plenary Session—"Ptolemy" - P. Pesic
            7:00 Plenary Session—"Renaissance Music" - M. Saffle
Wed 9:00  Lecture, "Renaissance Medicine" - M. Perlroth (Med. School) Room 300
            3:15 Plenary Session — "Copernicus" - P. Pesic

Thu 3:15  Discussion Sections

REQUIRED READING

Burtt, Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science, Chs. 1 & (Introduction, Copernicus, Kepler)
Copied selections on Ptolemy, Copernicus

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?

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

8. Is scientific progress inevitable or necessary? Is it good? How does one scientific idea replace another?

9. How does science generate its own internal standards of verification? What brings these standards into conflict with non-scientific ideas?
TOPICS: Galileo and Montaigne

SCHEDULE: Mon Washington's Birthday--School Holiday

Tue 9:00 Lecture, ESMB B67
"Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and Wars of Religion" - M. Saffle

3:15 Plenary Session - "Galileo and the Church" - B. Cohen (Sociology)

4:15 Plenary Session - "Montaigne" - L. Ryan

Wed 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Laws of Falling Bodies" - M. Yearian (Physics)

3:15 Demonstration of Galileo's Experiments - M. Yearian
Physics Tank (near Varian Hall)

3:15 Discussion Sections

7:00 Film: Galileo

9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Reformation and Social Welfare" - R. Brody

REQUIRED READING

Burtt, Metaphysical Foundations . . ., Ch. 3 (on Galileo)

Galileo, Discoveries and Opinions (read Galileo's texts; the commentary is
recommended but not required)

Galileo, Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences (copied selection)

Kearney, Science and Change, 1500–1700, Ch. 5

Montaigne, Essays, Book I, Chs. 7, 8, 19, 26, 27, 28, 31, 47, 50
Book II, Chs. 8, 17, 28
Book III, Chs. 2, 3, 8, 12, 13

TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. What is the relation between reason and experience?
2. Is the self a useful starting point for philosophy?
3. In a world of relative values, how do you decide which
   values to hold?

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?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS, cont.

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"?

MONTAIGNE

1. How does Montaigne use the ideas of the earlier Renaissance humanists of the writers of the classical era? How did his use of the classics differ from earlier writers such as Castiglione, Ficino, and Machiavelli?

2. Why does he write in the form of short essays? What is the relation between form and content in his writing?

3. What does Montaigne think about the use of reason? What are its advantages and limitations?

4. How is Montaigne's idea of a 'gentleman' different from Castiglione's courtier?

5. What would Dante think of Montaigne's ideas on experience?

6. How does Montaigne survive in a world where he is the only thing he knows well? How does he really know anything at all?
WEEK IX: 27 February - 3 March

TOPIC: Shakespeare and Marlowe

SCHEDULE: Mon 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Four New Mythic Figures" - I. Watt

Tue 3:15 Plenary Session - "Marlowe and Shakespeare" - L. Ryan
7:00 Plenary Session - "King Lear" - R. Rebholz (English)

Wed 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Elizabethan England" - P. Seaver (History)
3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Plenary Session - "Lear and Family Structure" - T. Engelsing
    (Palo Alto V. A. Hospital)
Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Film: King Lear

Fri 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Social Welfare in Elizabethan England" - R. Brody

REQUIRED READING
Shakespeare, The Tempest
Shakespeare, King Lear
Marlowe, Doctor Faustus

TOPIC QUESTIONS

SHAKESPEARE

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 plays? 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?

MARLOWE

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

2. How would Pico, as author of the famous "Oration", have regarded Faustus's aspirations and his career in Marlowe's play?
3. What is the difference between the kind of error made by Faustus in his tragedy and the hamartia of a Greek tragic hero such as Oedipus?

4. Why might Dr. Faustus, as well as King Lear, be regarded as a tragedy reflecting the "crisis of consciousness" of the later Renaissance?

5. How does Marlowe's play try to depict the tension, or ambiguity, between human creative impulse and fear of presumptuous "exceeding the mark"?

6. 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

SHAKESPEARE

1. What is the contribution of the sub-plots of Gloucester, Edmund, and Edgar to the total effect of Lear?

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?

7. In Act I, Sc. 1 of The Tempest, how are the relationships among the characters defined? Who professes power? Who is in visible control? Which authority appears the more "rational"?

8. What is Caliban's attitude toward nourishment, work and sexual promiscuity? What is Ariel's? How do they describe pleasure and freedom? How would their utopian dreams differ from that of Gonzalo?

9. In his actions and in his advice, how does Gonzalo display considerate behavior in Act I, Sc. 1, and Act II, Sc. 1? Is this behavior political, too? Would Gonzalo make a good courtier?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS, cont.

10. What relative value does Prospero attach to his learning at the beginning of the play? How does he feel at the end? What has effected the change?

11. Is there a reflection in The Tempest of a world which might be as opposed to a world which is?

MARLOWE

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 a tragedy, and the Aristotle of the Poetics, had he known the play, would probably 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 1) to suggest that Faustus's aspirations are already wrongly directed even before he makes his compact with Mephistopheles?

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

6. In Faustus's 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 to the play?
TOPIC: Bacon and Descartes

SCHEDULE:

Mon 5:00 Third Paper Due ("Galileo")
Tue 9:00 Lecture, ESMB B67
"Nature and Nothing" - P. Pesic
2:15 Plenary Session - "Bacon" - B. Cohen
4:15 Plenary Session - "Descartes" - J. Goheen
7:00 Film: La Beauté du Diable

Wed 3:15 Discussion Sections

Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections

REQUIRED READING

Bacon, Novum Organum, Aphorisms, Book I (copied selections)
Bacon, The New Atlantis, (copied selections)
Descartes, Meditations, I-VI, in Philosophical Essays
Burtt, Metaphysical Foundations..., Chapter 4 on Descartes

TOPIC QUESTIONS

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

2. What is the relation 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 relation 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

BACON

1. What is Bacon's purpose in writing a utopian work?
   What aspect of science does Bacon think has been neglected?

2. What is Bacon's view of the real and legitimate goal of science? Is his view justifiable?

3. What type of institution does "Solomon's House" foreshadow?

4. Is the New Atlantis an equalitarian society? Can science be equalitarian?

5. What in the description of "Solomon's House" throws light on the science of Bacon's own times? On what he sees as possible?

DESCARTES

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 scepticism 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?
WEEK XI: 13 - 17 March

TOPIC: Newton

SCHEDULE:
Mon 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Brahe and Kepler" - M. Yearian
9:00 Lecture, ESMB B67
"Newton's Laws of Motion" - M. Yearian
3:15 Plenary Session - "The Royal Society" - B. Cohen
7:00 Plenary Session - "Hobbes and Locke" - J. Reider
Wed 9:00 Lecture, Room 300
"Laws of Gravitation and Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion"
M. Yearian
3:15 Plenary Session - "Newton's Impact" - J. Goheen & P. Pesic
3:15 Discussion Sections (Hand out final exams)

REQUIRED READING
Burtt, Metaphysical Foundations . . ., Ch. 7
Newton, Principia (copied selections)
March, Physics for Poets (copied selections)
Kearney, Science and Change, 1500-1700, Chs. 6 - 8

TOPIC QUESTIONS
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
1. What does Newton mean by "principle?" Does one start science 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 XII: FINALS WEEK

Monday, March 20  9:00 a.m. Hand in final exams