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ENG 3100G-001-002: Cultural Foundations I

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Course Description:

These team-taught, core-curriculum course centers on three segments, introducing distinctive cultural foundations by studying primary texts. The first segment examines the foundations of Western culture in classical Greece. Among the themes to be discussed are the differences in mythic and rationalist worldviews, relations between mind and body, concepts of reality versus appearances, and the development of tragic dimensions in humanity. Readings from the Greeks will be taken primarily from Homer, Sophocles and Plato.

The second segment will examine Jewish and Christian foundations for Western culture, drawing on readings from the Hebrew Bible and continuing to trace the development of Judaism. As the segment unfolds, the foundations of Christianity and its development in the Medieval Church, in the Protestant Reformation and in the modern period will be discussed, with readings drawn from the New Testament.

The third segment introduces Sub-Saharan African cultural foundations in contrast to the earlier emphasis on Western culture. The segment introduces traditional African culture by examining late 19th C. Ibo culture in Nigeria through a reading of the novel Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe. To conclude the segment, a long poem by Ugandan Okot p’Bitek will enable students to explore the relationships between colonizing and colonized cultures, and selections from Harold Scheub’s The African Storyteller will allow them to reflect on the myths and folktales of various African cultures.

Requirements and Grading:

The course format will be informal lecture and exploratory discussion; course requirements will consist of three essay examinations (20% each, including the final) and two five-to-six page essays (15% each) [90%] as well as attendance and participation (10%)—consisting of discussion, quizzes and written responses to reading assignments.

To encourage preparatory reading, regular (on average, once a week) short writing assignments on the assigned reading or short quizzes will be given. These will be several paragraphs in length and will address some aspect of the reading assignment, will be due (or given) at the beginning of class and will not be accepted on a make-up basis. Quizzes will generally consist of one or two paragraphs on a straightforward question based on the assigned reading. Both will be returned marked with a check to show acceptable performance or an X to indicate unacceptable performance. These assignments/quizzes will not be factored directly into the final grade percentage, except as an element of participation. They are, however, a required part of the course, and a student who does not complete them will not have met the course requirements. Students will be allowed three missed assignments or inadequate quizzes.

All course materials to be graded will be divided equally between the instructors, rotating sets for subsequent assignments until the end of the term.
Course Format: As instructors in a team-taught interdisciplinary course, we shall provide introductory contexts for our readings through lectures and responses that we hope will provoke your questions and comments so that discussion can become an integral aspect of our time in class. Exploring these traditions in reference to Western philosophical issues and literary themes whenever appropriate, we encourage you to relate your questions and perceptions to your own experiences and beliefs by focusing on differences and similarities. What are the implications for these systems of thought? Do these cultural ideas and traditions help illuminate current socio-political and cultural events?

Office Hours: Dannie Otto/Phone: 581-6947/Home: 365-9674/Office: Lawson 319 email: dlotto@eiu.edu; TR 8:00-9:15 & 2:00 - 3:00, or by appointment

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General Policies:

Attendance: We do take roll and we evaluate attendance in the context of your participation in the course.

Conferences: These are at your request unless we ask to see you. Please ask for help as soon as you feel you need it; please don't wait until the last couple of weeks of class.

Submission of work: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper only, titled and indicate the following: name, date, course and section number. Exercises and quizzes must be legible.

Late Essays: For each day that the essay is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an A essay due on Friday will be an F by the next Thursday. If there are particular difficulties, please see one of us.

A = 100% - 90%
B = 89% - 80%
C = 79% - 70%
D = 69% - 60%
Fail = 59% - 0%

Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP): English/Philosophy 3100G is a writing intensive course. This means that you may need to submit an essay from this course for your EWP. If so, you must bring the original graded essay along with all required
paperwork to Professors Otto or Panjwani no later than the last week of class. See http://www.eiu/~assess for more information and to download submission forms.

**Plagiarism:** The English Department Policy:
Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. If we discover an act of plagiarism, we shall exercise the right to the fullest extent possible. (See http://www.eiu/~judicial/code.html for more information.)

**Please note:** If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
Course Syllabus

August

T 21: Course Introduction

Segment 1: The Greco-Roman Tradition

R 23: Introduction to Greek Epic
   Homer, Iliad, Bk 1

T 28: Iliad, Bks 6, 18, 22
R 30: Iliad, Bk 24

September

T 4: Introduction to Greek Philosophy
R 6: The Trial and Death of Socrates (in Plato, Dialogues)

T 11: The Trial and Death of Socrates (in Plato, Dialogues)
R 13: Introduction to Greek Tragedy, Sophocles, Oedipus The King (in Greek Tragedies)

T 18: Sophocles, Oedipus The King (in Greek Tragedies)
R 20: Plato, The Euthyphro

T 25: Plato, The Euthyphro
R 27: Review for Mid-term Exam I

October

T 2: Examination 1

Segment 2: The Judeo-Christian Tradition

R 4: Introduction to Semitic religions and the Hebrew Bible.

T 9: Readings TBA in Genesis (New Oxford Annotated Bible.
R 11: Further readings in Hebrew Bible TBA.

T 16: Various conceptions of the gods in the Hebrew Bible.
R 18: Introduction to the Christian Bible

T 23: Readings from the Gospel of Matthew TBA
R 25: Early Christian origins; Readings TBA

T 30: Essay 1 DUE; The Formation of Creedal Christianity

November

R 1: Review for Mid-term Exam II
Examination 2

Segment 3: The African Tradition

R 8: Introduction to Chinua Achebe, Achebe’s Things Fall Apart, Part I
T 13: Achebe’s Things Fall Apart, Part II
R 15: Achebe’s Things Fall Apart, Part III

Thanksgiving Break

T 27: Okot p’Bitek, Song of Lawino Song of Ocol
R 29: Continued

December

T 4: Selected Stories from Harold Scheub’s The African Storyteller
R 6: (continued; Review for Exam III; Essay 2 DUE

Examination III will be held during the Final’s Week and will cover only the African Tradition.