

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES 101

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Office hours: Before and after class, by appointment, etc.

Texts to be purchased:

Rosemary Fisk and John Mayfield, eds., *Cultural Perspectives: A Sourcebook Vol.1*
St. Augustine, *Confessions*
Vergil, *The Aeneid* (transl. by Allen Mandelbaum)
Sophocles, *Antigone*
Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*
William Shakespeare, *King Lear*
Miguel Leon-Portillas, ed., *The Broken Spears*

Course Objectives: *Cultural Perspectives* is a two-semester sequence that views the Western intellectual tradition within a global context. Through interdisciplinary study, students will increase their awareness of cultural, literary, philosophical, and religious influences upon the development of civilization.

Absences, Make-ups, and Other Policies: I will overlook three unexcused absences. This is the limit.

Academic Dishonesty: All papers should be original and written specifically for this class. Students may not plagiarize. Plagiarism is the act of taking the words or ideas of another person and passing them off as your own. Close paraphrasing by changing a word or two or the tense of the verbs is plagiarism when you do not acknowledge the source. Ergo, cite any quotes or paraphrases properly.

It is okay to discuss your paper ideas, seek advice, get a proofreading from a friend, etc. But use common sense. *Don't filch things off the web*, and don't let other people do the work for you.

Evaluation:

There are several types of evaluation in this course, including:

(1) *Two synoptic papers* answering questions about the materials discussed in class. These papers will be 4 pages long and will be written in a formal style. These papers are worth 30% of your grade each; total, 60%. Each paper may be rewritten (this is not required), in which case I will average the grades on the original paper and the rewrite.

Probable due dates: First synoptic paper: September 22

Second paper: Oct.27

Papers are due at the beginning of class. Late papers are penalized one full letter grade per day up to two days. Written work turned after the second day fails.

(2) *Class participation and miscellaneous written assignments.* For **each** reading, you are to bring to class about three questions, which we can use as the basis for discussions. These questions will be collected, but not returned. There may be additional short writing assignments. I also value class participation. Participation includes attendance, speaking in discussions, responding to presentations, and general interest in the course. Total: 10%

(3) *Optional Film Review:* You may do a critical film review of *The Mission*, under guidelines I will discuss at the appropriate time. Length, 3-4 pages. This will be factored into your total grade, not to exceed 10%. Due, December 8.

(4) *Final examination*, worth 30% of the final grade. The final will be all essay.

Note: *The final for this class is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 10:30. This is the only time the final will be given. Remember that when planning your Christmas travel.*

Grading Scale: This course follows the letter grading system explained in detail on p.27 of the current university catalog. All grades are letter grades.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Note: Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are from the *Sourcebook*.

Readings marked with a plus (+) are xerox selections to be distributed in class.

The dates below are due dates. We may or may not be able to conform to this schedule exactly, but stay up with the pace.

I: A Matter of Perspective

In which we consider the nature of knowledge and the uses of reason.

8/30: Plato, *Allegory of the Cave**

9/4: Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics**

9/8: St. Augustine, *Enchiridion**

II: Heroic Ideals

In which we consider heroes, and the ideals they embody.

9/11: Vergil, *The Aeneid*, Books 1, 2, 4, & 6

9/18: *The Book of Job*+

9/20: Sophocles, *Antigone*

9/25: *Passions of Sts. Perpetua and Felicity**

*The Book of Margery Kempe**

III: Crossroads and Crosscurrents

In which we consider other influences, and their evolution.

10/2: St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 1,2,7,8

St. Augustine, *The City of God**

10/6: Buddha, *Meditations**

10/9: *The Holy Q'uran*, "The Imrans"*

IV: New Perspectives

In which we study how new knowledge and expectations begin to wear away old assumptions.

- 10/18: Video: “In Light of the Above”, by James Burke (from *The Day the Universe Changed*)
- 10/20: St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica**
- 10/23: Pope Innocenti 3, *On the Misery of the Human Condition**
Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man**

V: Still Other Perspectives

In which women finally get a word in edgewise, and someone begins to take “love” seriously.

- 10/30: *The Lais of Marie de France**
Andreas Capellanus: *The Art of Courtly Love**
Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer, *The Hammer of Witches**
- 11/3: Video: “Point of View”, by James Burke (from *The Day the Universe Changed*)

VI: Political Animals

In which we wrestle with power.

- 11/6: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*
- 11/13: **Film:** *King Lear*
- 11/16: William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

THANKSGIVING BREAK: November 22-24

VII: Looking Outward

In which we confront the possibility that cultural perspectives are often subject to radical change from the most unexpected directions, often with surprising results.

- 11/27: Michel de Montaigne, *On Cannibals**
- 11/29: Miguel Leon-Portillas, ed., *The Broken Spears*
- 12/4: (at 3:30 in Brock Forum): Film: *The Mission* (R)
- 12/6: Juan Genes de Sepulveda, *Democrates Secundus, or the Treatise on the Just Causes of War Against the Indians**
Bartolome de Las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians**