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LS 151.07: Introduction to Western Humanities

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Introduction to Western Humanities

Liberal Studies 151, section 7

Lorina Quartarone
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⁹
Autumn 1997
MWF 2:10-3:00
LA 201

Office Hours:

MF 11:10-12:00, TR 9:10-10:00, W 1:00-2:00

and by appointment

Plenary Lectures:

R 11:10-noon, ULH

or R 7:10-8:00, ULH

Required texts:

Homer. *The Odyssey*. R. Fagles (translator). Viking Press.

Sappho. Mary Barnard (transl.). U of California Press.

New Oxford Annotated Bible. Oxford U Press.

Sophocles. *Antigone, Oedipus, Electra*. Kitto (transl.). Oxford U Press.

Euripides. *Three Plays of Euripides*. Roche (transl.). W.W. Norton & Company.

Plato. *Five Dialogues of Plato*. Grube (transl.). Hackett.

St. Augustine. *Confessions*. Warner (transl.). Mentor.

"Faculty Pack."

Course Objectives: to explore the formation and transformation of some western world views (ways of understanding nature, society, the self and the transcendent, good and evil, justice, etc.). Revolutions in thought and society, encounters between peoples and cultures, and perspectives on "us" and "them" will constitute major objects of study. The emphases of the course are engaging in close readings of the primary texts, discussing and writing about those texts.

Please make note of the following important dates:

Monday, 6 September

Monday, 20 September

Monday, 11 October

Thursday, 11 November

Wednesday-Friday, 24-26 November

Labor Day Holiday -- no class

Last day to drop by Dial-Bear (w/refund)

Last day to drop by petition (w/o refund)

Veteran's Day Holiday -- no class

Thanksgiving Break -- no classes

Daily Questions: Please purchase a package of 4 x 6 note cards; you will answer the DQs on these. Write your response **on one side only**, and hand it in at the beginning of the class hour. I will accept these cards from the hand of the author only -- if you are

absent, that's unfortunate. I will not accept late DQs, nor will there be any "make-ups." They will be graded on a scale of 0 to 10 points. I will drop the three lowest grades at the semester's end. The cumulative score of these is a significant element in determining your final grade; I consider your performance on the Daily Questions to be indicative of the consistency of your activity in this course.

DQ's on the Plenary Lectures: In addition to the DQ's pertaining to the reading assignments, you will also respond to each Plenary Lecture (occurring each Thursday) by responding to the general question "In what specific manners or elements does this lecture enhance your understanding of the pertinent text(s)?" You should be sure to include from two to four elements in your response, linking the lecture detail to the reading. Thus, on Fridays you will submit two separate DQ cards, one concerning the Plenary Lecture and one responding to the DQ in the syllabus for that day's reading assignment.

Papers: Papers are also a major component in determining your grade. I have indicated paper topics, specifications and due dates in this document. For more specific details on what I expect from you in your essays, please read my Paper Guidelines (attached). If at any time you receive a grade of 'C' or lower on a paper, I require that you make an appointment with me to review either that paper or a rough draft of your next paper assignment.

Notes & Notebooks: While I insist that you do NOT take notes during class (since this generally hinders class discussion), I do advise that you keep a binder in which you keep all of your papers, DQs, handouts, and any notes which you may jot down just at the end of the class session (when I will try to leave a few moments for reflection upon the day's discussion). You will find this notebook enormously helpful when you compose the final essay, and for reviewing readings both during this semester and next.

Attendance: Attendance is crucial. It is important for you to be present at each class meeting in order to hand in DQs and other written assignments as well as to participate in the discussion. Three unexcused absences will result in the reduction of your final grade by 1/3; each unexcused absence thereafter will produce the same result.

<u>Course Components:</u>	Daily Questions	30%
	Class Participation	15%
	Paper 1	15%
	Paper 2	20%
	Paper 3	20%

Schedule of Readings

LS 151
Autumn 1999

- 30 Aug M Preliminaries
- 1 Sept W Genesis chapters 1-3. "Epic of Creation" in *FP* ("Fac-Pac"), pp. 5-13.
▶ What specific issues do the creation account in *Genesis* and the Babylonian "Epic of Creation" both address? Find three details which link them. Remember to cite the text(s) in your response.
- 2 Sept R Lecture: "Creation: Myths and Theories." Prof. Pack.
- 3 Sept F Hesiod's *Theogony* (selections -- provided in handout).
▶ What, according to Hesiod, are the principal forces of the Cosmos? How do these forces compare with those in the Babylonian and Hebrew traditions? Remember to cite the text(s) in your response.
- 6 Sept M Labor Day Holiday (no class).
- 8 Sept W Homer, *FP* "Iliad Summary" pp. 15-18; *Odyssey*: Books 1-2.
▶ In what specific manner(s) does Homer develop the character of Telemachus in these books? Cite the text in support of your position.
- 9 Sept R Lecture: "The Odyssey." Prof. Hay.
- 10 Sept F Homer, *Odyssey* 3-4.
▶ How does Telemachus measure up against the heroic, prominent men whom he encounters? Is he "still just a boy" or "a hero in the making"? Remember to cite the text to support your response.
- 13 Sept M Homer, *Odyssey* 5-7.
▶ In what specific ways is Phaeacia an appropriate place for Odysseus to land? Cite the text in support of your position.
- 15 Sept W Homer, *Odyssey* 8-10.
▶ How does Homer characterize Odysseus in these books? Cite specific details.
- 16 Sept R Lecture: "Greek Art." Prof. Todd.

- 17 Sept F Homer, *Odyssey* 11-13.
 ▶ What does Odysseus appear to have learned in these books? Use the text to support your response.
- 20 Sept M Homer, *Odyssey* 14-16.
 ▶ Compare Odysseus' welcome on Ithaca (particularly with respect to his encounters with Eumaeus and Telemachus) to that which he receives on Phaeacia. Which details make it similar? ...different? Why are these details important? Cite the text to support your views.
- 22 Sept W Homer, *Odyssey* 17-19.
 ▶ Why does Penelope discuss her dreams with the beggar? Cite specific details which support your response.
- 23 Sept R Read: *FP* pp.23-47. Lecture: "Women in Ancient Greece." Prof. Gillison.
- 24 Sept F Homer, *Odyssey* 20-22.
 ▶ How does Homer characterize Odysseus' relationships with women in these books? Remember to be specific and cite the text!
- 27 Sept M Homer, *Odyssey* 23-24.
 (not addresses)
 ▶ One could consider Odysseus' return home to be complete since his reunion with Penelope in Book 23; what, then, do these final books achieve? Argue your case using the text. (23.338)
- 29 Sept W Sappho, parts 1-3.
 ▶ In poem 40, what are the relationships between the poet/narrator, Atthis and Anactoria? Remember to cite the text in your response.
- 30 Sept R Lecture: "Greek Lyrics." Prof. Welch and Prof. Dunsmore.
- 1 Oct F Sappho, parts 4-6. *FP* "Archilochus, Hipponax and Solon" (pp. 49-56).
 ▶ Which of the shorter poems of Sappho (i.e., all except 37-43) or the other lyric poets (in *FP*) do you consider to be the most poignant? Why?

****Paper 1 due.** Please see details -- topics and guidelines -- at the end of this syllabus. Remember to refer only to the *Odyssey*; **do not** employ or refer to outside sources -- this is not a research paper.

- 4 Oct M Genesis chapters 4-11.
 ▶ How do you characterize the God of these chapters? In what specific ways is this God similar to/different from the God of the first three chapters (which you may find it fruitful to re-read)? Remember to cite the text in your response. (10pp)
- 6 Oct W Genesis chapters 12-22:19.
 ▶ In the story of Abraham's intercession on behalf of the innocent in Sodom and Gomorrah (18:17-33), Abraham appears to be testing God. How can a case be made that it is God who is testing Abraham? (12pp) (1-22-9-20)
- 7 Oct R Lecture: "Torah." Prof. Kreisberg
- 8 Oct F Exodus 1-14.
 ▶ How is God's relationship to Moses and the Jews different from his relationship to Abraham?
- 11 Oct M Exodus 15-24, 31-34.
 ▶ How are the Israelites characterized in these chapters?
- 13 Oct W Ruth; FP "Lilith," pp. 59-63.
 ▶ How do these two readings compare in their representations of women?
- 14 Oct R Lecture: "Prophets." Prof. Kreisberg.
- 15 Oct F Hosea.
 ▶ How does Hosea characterize the relationship between mortals and God? What is at the core of this relationship?
- 18 Oct M Amos.
 ▶ What, according to Amos, constitutes justice?
- 20 Oct W Job (Mitchell translation) pp. 5-37. (Chs. 1-14)
 ▶ What is the source of Job's suffering?
- 21 Oct R Lecture: "The Bible and Islam." Prof. Kia.

22 Oct

F

Job (Mitchell translation) pp.41-65.

► How do Job's and his friends' understanding of his suffering differ? What is at the core of their disagreement?

21-42

25 Oct

M

Job (Mitchell translation) pp.69-91.

► How has Job's understanding of his suffering changed?

is the tale similar (if, does the lesson SATS for you?)

27 Oct

W

Sophocles' Oedipus (pp. 49-99).

► How, specifically, is Oedipus similar in character to Job?

28 Oct

R

Read: FP pp. 65-73. Lecture: "Job." Prof. Clark.

29 Oct

F

Sophocles' Oedipus.

► Since we have learned all we need to know at line 1286, the play could terminate there. What is significant about the final appearance (after this point) of Oedipus to the people of Thebes?

1 Nov

M

Sophocles' Antigone (pp.3-45).

► Is Antigone really concerned with what is right, or is she more concerned with her own reputation?

****Paper 2 (if on the Hebrew Bible) due.** Please see details at the end of this syllabus.

3 Nov

W

Sophocles' Antigone.

► Defend Creon's actions in this play. How do his reasons for acting as he does compare with Antigone's reasons for her behavior?

4 Nov

R

Lecture: "Greek Tragedy." Prof. Bigley.

⇒ 5 Nov

F

Euripides' Bacchae (pp. 78-126).

► Select a quotation (write it, not just the line numbers, on your card!) which you consider representative of this play's meaning and explain how it is integral to the text as a whole.

8 Nov

M

Euripides' Bacchae.

► Since plays are often named for their central figure, why is this play not entitled "Pentheus"?

F 11 Andie - Dawn*
T 9³⁰ Brock ✓
9⁰⁰ Tiffany ✓
Th 9⁰⁰ Colton
F 1¹⁵ Dawn ✓
T 2nd 9⁰⁰ Heath 9³⁰ Pete

- 10 Nov W Plato, FP "Plato's Cave," pp. 97-99; Euthyphro (in Five Dialogues of Plato, pp. 5-22).
 ▶ In his conversation with Socrates, Euthyphro offers several definitions of piety (5e, 7a, 12e, 14b). What sort of progression can you detect in his responses?
- 11 Nov R Veteran's Day Holiday (no class).
- 12 Nov F Plato's Apology (23-44).
 ▶ If you were a juror at Socrates' trial, would you vote for acquittal or conviction? Use the text to explain your response.
- 15 Nov M Plato's Phaedo (93-155).
 ▶ How, specifically, is Plato's account of what happens to the soul after death in concord or conflict with earlier Greek texts (e.g., *Odyssey*, *Antigone*, et al.) and their representation of mortality?
- 17 Nov W Plato's Phaedo.
 ▶ How does Plato's "theory of Forms" oppose or conflict with earlier Greek representations of immortal figures (the Gods)? Why is this important?
- 18 Nov R Lecture: "Plato." Prof. Perrin.
- 19 Nov F Luke 1-18:34.
 ▶ How is Luke's depiction of Jesus similar to Plato's portrayal of Socrates?
- 22 Nov M Luke 18:35-end.
 ▶ According to Luke, why is Jesus put to death?

****Paper 2 (if on later Greek thought) due.** Please see details at the end of this syllabus.

THANKSGIVING BREAK (24 - 26 November)

- 29 Nov M John 1-21.
 ▶ What effect does John's use of ordinary words (e.g., bread, water, word, door) in a metaphorical sense have in this text?

- 1 Dec W Augustine, Confessions, books 1-2.
▶ Why does Augustine think that babies are not innocent? Why does he refer to things that babies and others do ("...we sinned by doing less than was demanded of us in writing or reading or studying literature" I.9) as "sin"? What does he mean by "sin."?
- 2 Dec R Lecture: "Gospels." Prof. Dunsmore.
- 3 Dec F Augustine, Confessions books 3-4.
▶ How does the death of his unnamed friend (book 4) affect Augustine? What realizations emerge as a result of this event?
- 6 Dec M Augustine, Confessions 5-6.
▶ How are notions about speech and silence central to these books?
- 8 Dec W Augustine, Confessions 7 & 9.
▶ In what specific ways are some of Augustine's notions Platonic? How does he deal with the potential conflict between these notions and his ideas which are non-Platonic?
- 9 Dec R Lecture: "Confessions." Prof. Vanita.
- 10 Dec F Synthesis and Evaluation.

1-4
5-7

Essay Assignments

PAPER 1. 3-4 pages. (due 1 Oct F).

Of the many major themes of the *Odyssey* [e.g., journey, homecoming, universal/moral order, understanding the natural/physical world, societal order, good and evil, revenge, like-mindedness, encounters with other cultures, wisdom, justice, the mortal relationship to the divine/transcendent, identity/self-discovery), hospitality, community, et alia], which do you consider of crucial importance to understanding the poem? Use the text to support a well-constructed argument for that theme which you decide to pursue. {**Nota bene:** the theme you select for this essay will be the theme you pursue in later readings in the course, so be sure to choose one which is meaningful and important to you.}

PAPER 2. 6-7 pages. (due 1 Nov M OR 22 Nov M).

This essay will be a composite project. In it, you will re-write your first essay (on the preceding topic) and continue to include a discussion of your chosen theme with respect to the Hebrew Bible (due 1 Nov M) OR 5th century Greek thought (the tragedians & Plato, due 22 Nov M). Take special pains to ensure that the two portions of your essay are well integrated and consistent.

PAPER 3. 6-9 pages. Select ONE of the following essay topics: (due 13 Dec M, by 3pm)

1. Do you agree or disagree that St. Augustine manages to create a synthesis of the Greek, Hebrew and Christian components of the Western tradition? Construct your argument employing texts selected from each culture as support.
2. Which culture (Greek, Hebrew or Christian) do you find most (and/or least) misogynistic? Which do you find most generous to women? Construct your argument employing texts selected from each culture as support.
3. How is the necessity of conflict in human life expressed in the works which we have read? Select at least one work from each tradition and discuss how conflict is an essential element of the human condition.

PAPER GUIDELINES

Liberal Studies 151

Via the papers in this course I will encourage you to explore certain points, develop a logical argument, and express yourself articulately. It is my hope that you will view these papers as opportunities to reflect and to create, and that you enjoy these forays into new territory rather than slavishly completing the assignments or viewing them as simply a means to a grade. Grades are, unfortunately, a necessary evil; in fact, I suspect that I dislike assigning them even more than you do receiving them. Thus, I set forth the following guidelines so that you may know what I expect from you and what I value in your work.

1. Each paper for this course should be a type-written, double-spaced document with 1-inch margins all around and with pages numbered preferably on the top right. If you do not personally own a computer, I suggest that you take advantage of the school facilities, not only for my sake in reading, but for yours in computer-ease. Please do not hand in papers longer than the allotted number of pages. If your finished project exceeds that length, become adept at editing -- it is a skill which will greatly benefit you both now and later. In fact, I suggest that you **always** edit your papers to make them as tightly constructed and as terse as possible. Finally, a cover page will not be needed; try your best to conserve (and recycle!) paper. Your name, the course, and the date should appear in the top left on the first page, followed by the centered title. Always staple (never paper-clip) your pages together.
2. I consider two of the greatest sins in paper writing to be repetitiveness and generalization. See that you avoid them. Other transgressions, although less grievous, include misspelling and violations of grammar, particularly banal errors such as the split infinitive and dangling prepositions. Such errors do not assure your reader(s) that you are an intelligent and reliable source. Language is a tool; make it work to your advantage. Remember how impressive people are when they wield language well.
3. The value of editing cannot be stressed enough. It is most advisable to write, put it away for a day or two, then return to it fresh and edit. Friends who are good readers and have keen eyes are also very helpful. This of course indicates that you cannot compose the paper entirely on the night before it is due; such papers are easily discerned.
4. Avoid waffling. *The best papers are those that have a point and state it clearly, and employ the appropriate texts for support.* I consider the writing of papers to be practice areas for learning how to **argue convincingly**.
5. Keep re-reading the question or topic to ensure that you do not stray too far afield. Tangents can be tempting and sometimes interesting, but stick to the directed question or essay, particularly since your space is limited. You do not have room to generalize (never generalize!) or to run amuck.
6. While it is always advisable to exercise and expand your vocabulary, avoid overloading on the fifty-cent words. Clarity is the key. Be concise. Learn to consult your dictionary and

thesaurus when necessary. When you do make use of a thesaurus, don't do so blindly; always look up the words in the dictionary to ensure that you are applying them correctly.

7. *Always* use the texts to illustrate your assertions. Page/section numbers are important; make sure that you get them right. I don't have to agree with your position for you to earn a good grade, but your argument must be well-constructed and supported by relevant quotes. The general rule for quotes is as follows: for one less than three lines long, use quotation marks and include it in the body of the text; for a quote longer than three lines, separate it from the body, indent and single space. Choose quotes thoughtfully and concisely. Remember that there is such an error as over-quoting. Do not assume that your usage of the quote is manifest -- **analysis** is necessary.
8. Confer with me. I can be of most assistance if you come with an outline or rough draft. I absolutely refuse, however, to tell you what to think. You will also need to plan ahead, as I cannot guarantee my availability on short notice.
9. Generally speaking, a good paper is the product of continual fine-tuning. I suggest proceeding as follows:
 - Read and re-read the appropriate text(s).
 - Read and re-read the question or topic and develop your thesis.**
 - Construct an outline or write a summary of your ideas, including textual passages for support.
 - Posit your thesis clearly.
 - Write.
 - Allow some interval of time to elapse (preferably at least a day).
 - Read and re-read the appropriate text(s).
 - Read and re-read the question or topic.
 - Read your paper, monitoring carefully to ensure cohesion. Adjust your statements and usage of the texts accordingly.
 - Modify your originally stated thesis to concur with your final position; this may also entail modifying certain points which you make in your paper.
 - Edit. *Edit*. **Edit**.
10. You are to hand the paper to me personally, NOT send it via a classmate or deliver it to the FLL Secretary. I will ignore papers slipped under my door.
11. Finally, the grading. "A" papers are quite rare, but on occasion I find papers so eloquent and poignant that they deserve it. Essentially, an "A-" or "B+" is an excellent grade coming from me. When it comes to the overall course grades, you will find that I am more generous.

thesis: 1. *A proposition that is maintained by argument.* 2. A dissertation advancing an *original point of view* as a result of research, especially as a requirement for an academic degree. **NOT 3. A hypothetical proposition, especially one put forth for the sake of argument or one *to be accepted without proof*.