

Philosophical Perspectives on the Humanities
HUMA 11600 Section 07
Tuesday and Thursday 1:30-2:50PM
Cobb 104

Winter 2005

Syllabus

Instructor: Jay Elliott (jelliott@uchicago.edu)
Instructor's Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00 - 5:00pm Cobb 514
Writing Intern: Adam Shapiro (adams@uchicago.edu)

Course Description

Can we have knowledge of ourselves? How is knowing oneself a way of knowing God, nature, and humanity? What part of our experience is due to us and to how we experience things? This course examines the development of philosophical and literary self-examination in medieval and modern Europe. We will consider the effect of self-examination on men, women, sex, and love.

The following books have been ordered at the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore:

Augustine, *Confessions*. H. Chadwick, tr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays: A Selection*. M. A. Screech, tr. (London: Penguin)
Rene Descartes, *Meditations and other Metaphysical Writings*. D. Clarke, tr.
(London: Penguin)
William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*. F. Dolan, ed. (London: Penguin)
John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* P. H. Nidditch, ed.
(Oxford: Oxford University Press)
David Hume, *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. C. Hendel, ed.
(Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall)

The following materials are on e-reserve:

The Letters of Abelard and Heloise (excerpt) Betty Radice, tr. (Harmondsworth: Penguin)
The Life of Saint Teresa of Avila by Herself (excerpt) J. M. Cohen, tr. (London: Penguin)
Rene Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, parts 1-3 from J. Cottingham et al, eds.
Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
Rene Descartes, "Early Writings", from J. Cottingham et al, eds. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (2 excerpts) P. H. Nidditch, ed.
(Oxford: Oxford University Press)
David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (excerpt) P. H. Nidditch, ed.
(Oxford: Oxford University Press)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions* (excerpt) C. Kelly et al., eds.
(Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England)

Film Screenings

In addition to the readings, we will be watching and discussing two films this quarter: *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze, dir., 1999) and *The Awful Truth* (Leo McCarey, dir., 1937). The film screenings will take place from 7:00 to 9:30pm on January 18 and February 15,

respectively. Even if you have seen the film many times before you should come to the screening because you will see the film differently when you see it in the context of our class. At the screening I will hand out a sheet giving some quotations from the film as a way of getting us started thinking about it in the context of our class. I apologize if you cannot attend the screening because of a prior commitment. Watching the film is part of the class, so if you can't come to the screening make sure to make other arrangements to see it. Please speak with me if you want any help making those arrangements.

Class Discussion

This is a discussion course. Putting things in your own words and conversing with your peers are a major part of learning in this class. I will begin and guide the discussion with questions, but you should come prepared each day with thoughts and questions that have arisen for you in the course of doing the assigned reading. I will treat everyone's contribution with respect and I expect everyone else to do the same.

Assignments

Your written work for this course will consist of three papers. Each paper is to be 5 pages long. Paper topics will be suggested. You are not required to write on one of the suggested topics. However, if you do not choose to write on one of the suggested topics, you must meet with either the instructor or the writing intern and have your topic approved. Furthermore, if you decide to devise your own paper topic, your paper must have the following format: a close reading of a line, a sentence, a few sentences, or at most a paragraph from one of the texts we have discussed in class. **In no case, whether you are writing on an assigned topic or on a topic of your own, are you to make use of any texts or materials other than ones assigned for our class.**

You are welcome to submit your papers by email; please send them both to the instructor and to the writing intern. If you are not submitting your paper by email, then please submit two copies to the instructor's mailbox in Classics 17. Papers are due by 5:00pm on the days indicated on January 31, February 21, and March 16.

Grading

Each of your papers will be read by both the instructor and the writing intern. Your grade is, however, ultimately the responsibility of the instructor. If you have a question about your grade please speak to him.

You will be given both a number grade and a letter grade for each paper. Only the numerical grade is taken into account in determining your final grade. Numerical grades correspond to letter grades as follows:

- A 10.0-9.5
- A- 9.4-9.0
- B+ 8.9-8.7
- B 8.6-8.3
- B- 8.2-8.0
- C+ 7.9-7.7
- C 7.6 or below

Your final grade will be determined by your grades on each paper and by your class participation according to the following formula:

First paper	25%
Second paper	30%
Third paper	35%
Class Participation	10%

Class participation can raise your grade but not lower it. Meeting with the instructor or the writing intern outside of class will also be taken into account in your grade under the heading of class participation; it is not, however, a substitute for talking in class. Class participation is not graded on the basis of the brilliance of your insights, but on whether you are genuinely engaging with the material and making an effort to learn.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is strictly forbidden: the words and the thoughts of your paper must be your own. Anything that is not your own must be clearly marked as such. If I believe that you have violated the University's honor code, I will discuss the matter with you privately and decide based on our conversation whether I need to make a report to the College authorities. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask either the instructor or the writing intern.

Schedule

Items with an asterisk are available on e-reserve under HUMA 11600 - 07

Week 1 (Jan. 4 & 6)

T Introduction: each person examines him- or herself for ten minutes.
Discussion of what we examine when we examine ourselves.
Augustine, *Confessions* I.i
Course materials and procedures

TH Augustine, *Confessions* I.i-x
II.i-x
III.i-iii, vi-xii
IV.iv-xii

Focus on: I.i-vi; II.i-ii, iv-vi; III.i; IV.iv-vii

Week 2 (Jan. 11 & 13)

T Augustine, *Confessions* VII.i-v, viii-xviii
VIII.i, iii, vi-ix, xii

Focus on: VII.i, v, viii, x, xii, xvi-xvii; VIII.i, vi, viii, xii

TH Augustine, *Confessions* X.i-viii, x-xi, xxiv-xxx

Focus on: X.i-vi, viii, xxvii, xxix-xxx

Week 3 (Jan. 18 & 20)

M **Film Screening 7:00-9:30pm:** *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze, dir., 1999)

T *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*: "Historia calamitatum"(excerpt)* and "Letter 1.Heloise to Abelard"*

Focus on: pages 57, 65-77, 113-118

TH *Life of Saint Teresa of Avila* prefatory note, chp. 1-4, 9-13*

Focus on: chp. 4, 11-13

First paper topics distributed

Week 4 (Jan. 25 & 27)

T Montaigne, "To the Reader"
"On idleness"
"That it is madness to judge the true and the false..."
"On the inconstancy of our actions"
"On repenting"

Focus on: pages 9-10, 74-76, 124-126, 128-129, 131, 232-234, 239, 241-242

TH Montaigne, "On some lines of Virgil" 301-325
"On experience" 374-394, 413-426
Focus on: pages 301-307, 317-321, 374-381, 413-418, 423-426

Week 5 (Feb. 1 & 3)

M First paper due

T Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* parts 1-3*
Focus on: pages 20-21, 23-25, 27-29, 31-33
Descartes, "Early Writings"*

TH Descartes, *Meditations* 1-2
Focus on: pages 18-19, 21-22, 23-24, 29-30

Week 6 (Feb. 8 & 10)

T Descartes, *Meditations* 3-4
Focus on: pages 30-32, 38-43, 44-48

TH Descartes, *Meditations* 5-6
Focus on: pages 55-57, 59-63

Second paper topics distributed

Week 7 (Feb. 15 & 17)

M Film Screening 7:00-9:30pm: *The Awful Truth* (Leo McCarey, dir., 1937)

T Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*
Focus on: I.2.1-349, II.1.36-200, III.2.21-214

TH Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*
Focus on: IV.1.1-32, IV.4.77-97, V.2.10-100, V.3.14-128

Week 8 (Feb. 22 & 24)

M Second paper due 5:00pm

T Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding* Epistle to the Reader (excerpt), I.i.1-7, II.viii*
Focus on: I.i.1, 3, 4, 7; II.viii.8-22

TH Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding* II.xxvii*
Focus on: II.xxvii.9, 10, 17, 18, 25, 26

Third paper topics distributed

Week 9 (March 1 & 3)

T Hume, *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding* I, IV.i, V.i, XII
Focus on: pages 15-19, 40-45, 54-57, 158-164, 168-173

TH Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* (excerpt)*
Focus on: pages 251-255, 259-262
Hume, "My Own Life" (pages 3-11 in Hendel ed. of *Inquiry*)

Week 10 (March 8)

T Rousseau, *Confessions* (excerpt)*

Focus on: pages 5-9, 13-18, 190-191, 194-197, 202-205

Week 11

W Third paper due 5:00pm March 16