

## **Humanities 203-A: Renaissance and Reformation(s)**

Fall 2008

MWF 9:30-10:20 STE 332

### **Overview**

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HU 203 (Honors) is a three-credit course that explores in depth key texts of the early modern period from approximately 1450-1700. We will investigate the defining events of the period—renaissance and reformations (yes, that's reformations with an "s")—through literary, philosophical, historical, and theological works. Key questions that will guide our discussion are: 1) The nature of kingship, sovereignty, and government; 2) The shifting framework of human understanding and ethics; 3) Ideas of family, gender, and society; and 4) The meaning of exploration and discovery for an expanding European worldview. The key objectives of this course are to 1) Deepen student understanding of the early modern "worldview" and broaden students' historical appreciation for the "alienness" of the past and how it relates to the present; 2) Improve skills in critical reading and analysis of primary texts in different genres; 3) Deepen skills in interdisciplinary study, writing, and research; 4) Fulfill an LSR in culture and civilization; and 5) Fulfill an honors program requirement.

### **Format**

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Humanities 203 will center on class discussion of the assigned texts. When we begin a new text (and at other necessary points) there will be a brief introductory, contextualizing presentation. Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to participate, which means completing the day's reading assignment in advance and preparing ideas or questions for discussion. Please note: this is an honors course and is fairly reading and writing intensive. On average you will be reading 50-60 pages per week and writing two pages per week in addition to a midterm exam and final paper. Please take this into consideration as you plan your semester.

### **Required Texts**

N.B. #1: These prices are new, list prices. Better prices can be found online, especially the *Reformation Reader*...but please use the ISBN to get these specific editions, otherwise we'll all be utterly confused.

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1. Janz and Jordon, eds. *A Reformation Reader*. (Fortress, 2002) ISBN 080063473X \$32
2. Boccaccio, *Decameron*. (Signet Classics, 2002) ISBN 0451528662 \$7.95
3. Thomas More, *Utopia*. ed. Clarence Miller. (Yale, 2001) ISBN 0300084293 \$8.95
4. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*. Ed. Mowat. (Washington Square Press, 1995) ISBN 0743484908 (\$5.99)
5. Machiavelli, *The Prince*. (Oxford World Classics, 2005). ISBN 019280426X \$6.95
6. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*. (Hackett, 1993) ISBN 0872201929 \$5.95
7. Montaigne, *Apology for Raymond Sebond* (Hackett, 2003) 0872206793 \$10.95

N.B. #2: We will make numerous references to the text itself during class discussion and you will not be able to fully participate if you do not have the text. I made an effort to find affordable editions that are also available in used copies so that everyone can have the texts with them in class. If you do not bring the text, you will be forced to hear me blather on instead of having a stimulating discussion with your classmates. You have been warned! ;)

## **Requirements**

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1. Class participation (40%): In addition to regular attendance, presentation of your written work, and active participation, your class participation grade will also include your “Commonplace Book” (Reader’s Journal). Renaissance Humanists kept track of important quotes, notes, and reflections in bound notebooks called “commonplace books.” In your “commonplace book” for this course you will complete weekly responses to a question, a passage of text, or anything that strikes you regarding the reading. These will be informal writings—I do not expect a strict form or structure. You will be responsible for turning in **two written responses per week** which will not be graded but will count towards your participation grade. **Due via eCollege dropbox by 8am on the day of the reading assignment. No exceptions!** (You pick which days, but be sure to turn two in per week.) At the end of the semester I will look over all of your responses and give a cumulative grade based on your thoughtfulness and intellectual growth over the semester as part of this requirement.
2. Discussion leadership (20%). 20-min facilitation of class discussion on one day of semester: sign up first week. More details to follow.
3. Midterm exam (20%). Written take-home essay exam due Friday October 10 via eCollege dropbox. More information TBA.
4. Analytical paper (7-10 pp). (20%) Detailed, contextualized analysis of an issue in one of our assigned readings. Details TBA. Due Friday December 5 via the eCollege dropbox.

## **Attendance Policy**

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Your grade in this course will directly reflect your attendance: students who attend class do better. It’s that simple. However, your course grade will also be directly affected by multiple absences. I take attendance at the beginning of class. You may miss two class sessions, no questions asked, without penalty. After that any unexcused absences will result in a 5% drop in your course grade PER absence. (Excused absences include severe, documented illness, a family emergency, or official athletic event, e.g., a family wedding is not an emergency.) Five percent may not seem like a lot but it adds up quickly. We will be covering a lot of text over the semester, and it is difficult to catch up if you miss several classes. Trust me on this!

## **Other relevant tidbits**

### **The Humanities Program Concert Series**

The Humanities Program sponsors two concerts per year. Students are strongly encouraged to attend. Fall concert date TBA

### **eCollege**

eCollege is the web based course management system that we will use for this course. On eCollege you will find the syllabus, announcements about upcoming events, documents, texts, links, questions, and any other communication that I deem important to the management of the course. Please note that course papers will be due via eCollege dropbox. Please familiarize yourself with the process.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. According to the Academic Integrity Policy (St. Michael's College Policy on Academic Integrity), plagiarism is the presentation of "another person's ideas as your own, by directly quoting or indirectly paraphrasing, without properly citing the original source. This includes inadvertent failure to properly acknowledge sources." The penalties for plagiarism can range from receiving a failing grade for the plagiarized assignment to receiving a failing grade in the course. In some cases plagiarism can result in suspension or expulsion from the college. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism please discuss your concerns with me before the assignment is due.

### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center is a valuable resource available for you at any stage of the writing process. Find out more at <http://academics.smcvt.edu/writingctr/index.htm>

### **Documented Learning Disabilities**

Students with documented learning disabilities should feel free to discuss with me whatever special accommodations are necessary regarding assignments and examinations. Special documentation of such needs should be obtained through the office of the Coordinator of Academic Compliance.

### **Student Conduct**

Behavior which interrupts the appropriate work of a college classroom is not acceptable. For example, most adults can sit for an hour without a break, and most adults should know better than to disrupt neighbors with chit-chat or by repeatedly arriving late for class. Also, it hurts my feelings and makes me very cranky if you surf facebook or text message instead of paying attention in class. If you sleep in class, you lay yourself open to mockery and merciless ridicule. I treat you with the respect due a responsible adult and I expect you to treat your classmates and myself with the same respect. Appropriate penalties (which may include confiscating electronic gadgets or asking you to leave the classroom) will apply for repeated disruptions.

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>
M Sept 1	Introductions	
W Sept 3	Italian Renaissance	<i>Decameron</i> , First Day, #2-5 (pp. 38-52); Third Day #1, 10: (pp. 193-200; 276-285)
F Sept 5		<i>Decameron</i> , Day 5 #10; Day 6 #2, 3, 7, conclusion; Day 7 #3 (pp. 432-443; 448-454; 462-465; 478-485; 497-503)
<b>Week 2</b>		
M Sept 8		High Renaissance Art (start reading <i>The Prince</i> )
W Sept 10	Humanism	<i>The Prince</i> , pp. 5-34
F Sept 12		<i>Prince</i> , pp. 35-59
<b>Week 3</b>		
M Sept 15	<b>No Class</b>	Keep up with the reading!
W Sept 17		<i>Prince</i> , pp. 60-90
F Sept 19		<i>Utopia</i> Book 1, pp. 1-50
<b>Week 4</b>		
M Sept 22		<i>Utopia</i> Book 2, pp. 51-94
W Sept 24		<i>Utopia</i> Book 2, pp. 94-139
F Sept 26	Protestant Reformation	Papal bulls on indulgences, <i>Reformation Reader</i> pp. 51-54; Luther, "95 Theses," <i>RR</i> pp. 81-85; Luther, Prefaces to New Testament and Old Testament, <i>RR</i> pp. 106-111
<b>Week 5</b>		
M Sept 29		Luther, <i>On the Freedom of a Christian</i> , <i>RR</i> pp. 98-106
W Oct 1		Luther, <i>To the Christian Nobility</i> , <i>RR</i> pp. 90-98
F Oct 3		Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , <i>RR</i> pp. 226-236
<b>Week 6</b>		
M Oct 6		<i>Institutes</i> , <i>RR</i> pp. 236-253
W Oct 8		<i>Institutes</i> , <i>RR</i> pp. 262-282
F Oct 10	Catholic Reformation	Catholic Ref intro; Music (Palestrina, Victoria, Monteverdi), no reading assign. <b>Take home midterm exam due in eCollege dropbox by midnight</b>
<b>Week 7</b>		
M Oct 13	<b>No Class</b>	
W Oct 15		Council of Trent Decrees, <i>RR</i> pp. 348-368
F Oct 17		Jesuits, <i>RR</i> pp. 368-377; Teresa of Avila (eCollege)
<b>Week 8</b>		
M Oct 20	Kingship & absolutism	King James VI and I, <i>Basilicon Doron</i> (eCollege)
W Oct 22		<i>Measure for Measure</i> Act I
F Oct 24		<i>M for M</i> Act II
<b>Week 9</b>		
M Oct 27		<i>M for M</i> Act III
W Oct 29		<i>M for M</i> Act IV

F Oct 31		<i>M for M</i> Act V
<b>Week 10</b>		
M Nov 3	<b>No Class</b>	I'm out of town at AAR
W Nov 5	Exploration & Colonization	Film: "1492: A Portrait in Music" & discussion
F Nov 7		John Donne, "To His Mistress"; Walter Raleigh, <i>Discoverie of Guiana</i> , Part V (both eCollege) Docs on New World from <i>RR</i> , pp. 377-379
<b>Week 11</b>		
M Nov 10	Skepticism & New Science	Montaigne, <i>Apology for Raymond Sebond</i> , Introduction & pp. 1-14
W Nov 12		<i>Apology</i> , pp. 15-47
F Nov 14		<i>Apology</i> , pp. 48-62
<b>Week 12</b>		
M Nov 17		<i>Apology</i> , pp. 62-89
W Nov 19		<i>Apology</i> , pp. 121-148
F Nov 21		<i>Apology</i> , pp. 148-164
<b>Week 13</b>		
M Nov 24		Descartes intro; empiricism & "natural philosophy" (no reading assignment)
W Nov 26	No Class— Thanksgiving	
F Nov 28	No Class— Thanksgiving	
<b>Week 14</b>		
M Dec 1		Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , pp. 1-24 (preface through meditation two)
W Dec 3		<i>Meditations</i> , pp. 24-35 (meditation three)
F Dec 5		No reading assignment: Descartes discussion <b>Text analysis paper due via eCollege dropbox by midnight</b>
<b>Week 15</b>		
M Dec 8		<i>Meditations</i> , pp. 35-47 (meditations four and five)
W Dec 10		<i>Meditations</i> , pp. 47-59 (meditation six)
F Dec 12		Closure