

Humanities 3303: Challenges of Modern Culture

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Worrell 305

Office hours: Thursdays 3-5 pm, and by appt.

I. Course Description

Recommended Prerequisites: Humanities 3301 or 3302

For thousands of years now, humans have used philosophy, literature, history, etc. to understand and record our world. These subjects all fit under the greater Humanities umbrella. Awareness and study of the past and present human experience gives us the opportunity to feel a sense of connection to those who have come before us, as well as a deeper meaning to our present day occurrences. This semester, we will focus on intellectually and culturally relevant issues associated with European and North American cultures between 1792 and the present. Texts for this course were selected because they reveal issues and concepts vital to the shaping of Western cultural beliefs, institutions, and practices. At first glance, our reading list may appear intimidating, but each class session will include the essential dialog to help you succeed in this course. However, I cannot stress enough the importance of setting aside the allotted time necessary to dedicate yourself to the assigned texts. Wikipedia or other such internet conveniences will NOT be reliable substitution for actual reading.

The goal of this course is to expose you to some of the influential ideas and works which essentially helped shape not only Western culture as we know it, but very likely some of your own perspectives as well. By thoroughly examining and seeking to understand these texts in their original context, you should begin to see their significance in our modern day world. My goal is that you will leave this semester with a greater understanding of where many commonly held views have stemmed from, while holding a fresh perspective on your surroundings and worldview.

II. Required texts:

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*

Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* Suggested text: Marx, Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

III. Course Requirements

Successful study of the required texts requires both quiet study and active engagement. Students in this course will be expected to complete readings before class and participate in class discussions and activities. You will not be asked to repeat what you read in the PowerPoint

presentations or in the lectures, but I do ask that you take what you are presented with as a starting point from which you may develop your own insights and understanding.

Assignments have been selected to assist you in meeting course objectives. For the most part, we will cover one book about every 3 weeks to a month. Grades for the course will be earned by accumulating points in the following manner:

1. 2 Essays 100 points each (200 points total)
2. 10 Pop Quizzes 20 points each (200 points total)
3. Assignments point variation (200 points total)
4. 3 Exams 100 points each (300 points total)
5. 1 Final Presentation (100 points total)

TOTAL POINTS = 1000 divided by 10 = grade

Points will be added together at the end of the semester to receive the following letter grades:

90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; under 60=F. Make-up exams will not be given without a legitimate excuse. Cheating will result in an automatic F.

IV. Policies and Procedures

Regular attendance is imperative to your success in the class. After three absences, I will deduct ten points from your total point accumulation for every missed class unless it is a rare exception such as field duty or other such circumstance. On days that essays are due or exams are given and in emergency situations, it is your responsibility to contact me in a timely manner—not after the absence. Otherwise I do not need to be notified of absences. Leaving class early counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ of an absence. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what was missed. Please ask your peer contacts for missed material, as I will not respond to emails asking what was missed in class unless peer contacts do not respond. Late homework assignments and late essays will only be accepted if prior arrangements have been made before the day of your absence. No exceptions. Quizzes cannot be made up.

Of significant importance is an understanding that courtesy in the classroom is a requirement. I encourage active discussions and feedback in class, but it should always be done in a respectful manner. Disrespect toward the instructor or other students will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, not doing one's own work, plagiarism, and unacceptable collusion. Not doing one's own work may involve copying from or providing information to another student, or possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person as one's own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to

commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

ADA statement

As per Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. You may call [915-747-5148](tel:915-747-5148) for general information about the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you have as a UTEP student with a disability. Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and The Disabled Student Services Office at The University of Texas at El Paso

V. Calendar

Subject to change at the instructor's discretion:

August

22 - Course introduction

24 - *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*: Dedication, Introduction, and Chapters 1 and 2

29 - Chapters 3-4, 6-9

31 - Chapter 13, Sections 2-6

Introduction to Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: Introduction, Prologue

September

5 - No class

7 - Of Reading and Writing - The Dance Song

- 12 - The Dance Song - Of the Apostates
- 14 - Of the Apostates - The Shadow
- 19 - The Shadow - End
- 21 - *Civilization and Its Discontents*: Introduction - Part III
- 26 - Part III - End
- 28 - **Exam 1, Essay 1 due**

October

- 3 - *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*: Part One - Part Three
- 5 - Part Three - Part Four : 22
- 10 - Part Four : 22 - Part Five:17
- 12 - Part Five:17 - End
- 17 - *Slaughterhouse-Five*: One - Three
- 19 - Three - Six
- 24 - Six - End
- 26 - **Exam 2**
- 31 - *Beloved*, I - “Red heart. Red heart.”

November

- 2 - “Red heart. Red heart.” - II
- 7 - II- End
- 9 - *Between the World and Me*: pgs. 1- “I needed more books.”
- 14 - “I needed more books.” - “...if only to preserve the sanctity of your mind.”
- 16 - “...if only to preserve the sanctity of your mind.” - End
- 28 - Begin Final Presentations
- 30 - Final Presentations Cont’d.

December

- 9 - **Final Exam, Essay 2 due** - 10 am - 12:45pm

Peer Contacts:
