

Program in Cultures, Civilizations, and Ideas
Humanities 111: Antiquity
General Syllabus for all Sections
2014-2015

Course Description

This course, the first of a year-long sequence, is a reading course in ancient and classical civilization. We will be reading a number of texts that are considered essential in the study of civilization and its later development. The course will range over a broad selection of topics, perhaps beginning with the idea of civilization itself. What is civilization, what values do we place upon it and how can we study it? Since Humanities 111 deals with the ancient world *per se*, we will then move on to texts produced in the ancient civilizations of the Near East and the Mediterranean. We will study literary texts that ancient societies produced in order to give shape to their thoughts on the nature of human existence, ranging from the important genre of heroic epic, to drama and philosophy.

Throughout all of these different texts, a few central questions and ideas will demand our attention. Among these, we might mention: “How does the ancient individual situate himself or herself in the external contexts which make life either meaningful or meaningless?” These include his or her natural world and the forces of nature themselves, in contrast to the culture in which he or she lives. These questions will be viewed as of central importance in many of the texts we will read together. They are questions that bother Gilgamesh, Achilles, Antigone, Plato and Freud, and each text has different points to make about them.

In addition to the question of the individual and society, another interesting topic of study one may consider is the founding and reformation of a “tradition”. This is a point that is most clearly seen in studying the texts from the ancient Greco-Roman world we will be looking at. Homer’s poetry, even to the ancient Greeks themselves, was seen as the first and defining moment of their culture. This vision of a culture, we will see, is then carried forward, modified and reacted to in later works. As a culture progresses, it sees itself as going beyond the limitations of the traditional, and “new” forms of social organization and expression emerge. How such a tradition is built up over time, how and in what ways it is modified as time passes, are also issues we will be able to trace, both in the texts of this course and in Humanities 112.

The course has a few central objectives, and it may be of use to comment on these from the outset.

First: it is hoped that you will read the texts we have selected, not in short excerpts, or through the filter of some paraphrase, but rather to read them for yourselves: to learn to evaluate them and appreciate them on their own terms, and to discuss their significance intelligently with your classmates and your instructor. Thus this course demands from you the employment of certain skills: careful reading, critical thinking, and intelligent expression (both verbal and written). Your own active engagement with these texts is thus essential to your success in this course.

Second: you will be reading, perhaps for the first time, works that have for better or worse been given the label of “classics”. These texts and the ideas they contain have influenced generations of thinkers throughout the centuries. They are, in short, worth reading, and are an essential part of any university student’s program of study. It is hoped that by reading them and following the connections between them, CCI students will benefit by developing a clearer sense of how and why the modern world developed.

Third: reading of major thinkers and discussion of challenging questions goes beyond providing a merely professional training. The skills you will develop by thinking, talking and writing about the materials in this course are obviously not job specific, but are certainly crucial for a successful career

in any field and, more importantly, for a fulfilling life. Hopefully, your work in this course will help you deal critically, effectively, and creatively with the cultural, political, ethical, social and economic issues that you will confront in your own lives.

Books

The following books are required for this course. **If you are enrolled in this course, you must purchase these books at the university bookstore. Other editions or translations will not be accepted. You may not be admitted to class if you do not have a copy of the text with you.**

1. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, George (tr.), Penguin, 2003
2. Homer, *the Iliad*, Fagles (tr.), Penguin, 1990
3. Sophocles: *The Three Theban Plays*, Fagles (tr.), Penguin, 1984
4. Plato, *Republic*, Grube (tr.), Hackett, 1992
Or (check with your professor)
4. Plato, *Last Days of Socrates*, Tarrant/Tredennick (trs.), Penguin 2003

Some sections may be required to read:

5. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Strachey (tr.), Norton, 1961

Additional Readings

In addition to the primary texts listed above, you will also from time to time be assigned additional texts. These texts have been assembled for you in your instructor's personal *CCI III Course Reader*, which you may be required to photocopy. Please ask your instructor for specific details as to where to find the course reader materials, as each instructor's packet and preparation will differ.

Requirements

Midterm 25%, Course Project 20%, Final 25%, Regular Quizzes and Short Assignments 20%, Participation 10%

Regular Quizzes and Short Assignments

Every instructor of CCI will give regular short assignments or reading quizzes throughout the semester. Students can expect a quiz one every two weeks. These assignments or short quizzes will be used to ensure students are doing the assigned course readings and are prepared to discuss the course material. The quizzes are also a useful way for students to monitor their progress in the course throughout the semester.

Participation

It will be very difficult to do well in this course if you do not participate; that means not only preparing for class and handing in all required assignments on time, but also doing your best to share your knowledge in class, both through writing and speaking. Last but certainly not least, participation also includes regular attendance. Missing classes will adversely affect your grade, and will make it difficult to do well in the other components of the class.

Midterm

In addition to your short writing assignments, all students will write a substantive examination or thematic paper on texts and subjects covered in class. Topics and/or guidelines will be distributed by your instructor at a suitable time during the semester.

Course Project

One of your major assignments this semester will consist of a course project, the conditions of which will be determined by your course instructor. Your CCI professor will make the details of this project known to you in class at the appropriate time, and certainly with enough fair warning for you to complete it.

Final Examination

There is, again, a final examination in this class: a two-hour, sit-down format, and essay based. The final exam will be comparative and comprehensive, based on all of the texts and lectures from the beginning to the end of the semester.

Grading

All sections of Cultures, Civilizations, and Ideas use the following grading scale: **A = 93-100; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72; D+ = 67-69; D = 66-60; F = below 60.** The lowest passing grade is a D.

Attendance policy

According to university policy, missing more than 20% of taught hours of any class constitutes automatic failure.

Please Note: Approved Medical Reports for class absences entitle a student to make up any assessment given during the time the student was absent. However, Medical Reports **do not** excuse students from attendance requirements.

See: http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent-tr/admission/saglik_raporu_uygulama.html

Madde 5.2. Usulüne uygun olarak rapor alan öğrencinin raporlu olduğu süreler içindeki devamsızlığı mazeret olarak kabul edilmez. Durum bölüm veya birim başkanlığınca ilgili öğretim üyelerine duyurulur. Öğrencinin uzun süreli sağlık mazereti nedeniyle bir veya daha fazla yarıyıl için izinli sayılabilmesi ilgili yönetim kurulu kararına bağlıdır.

Punctuality and deadlines

Students are expected to be in class on time and turn in assignments on the day that they are due. Unpunctuality and missed deadlines are unacceptable.

Academic Honesty

All of the work you do for this class is assumed to be your own. Work that is not your own must be indicated as such. All sources quoted, paraphrased, consulted or used in any way must be cited in keeping with standards of academic honesty. Such sources may include other texts, material posted on the web, or ideas obtained from other students. Bilkent clearly defines what plagiarism is: see “Bilkent University Policy on Academic Honesty” under “Academic Policies and Documents.”

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and is strongly penalized in all sections of Civilization, Cultures, and Ideas. **Any act of plagiarism, no matter how small, automatically means a zero (0%) for the assignment at a minimum. The penalty could be much more severe, however, including failing the course.** In addition, however, every act of plagiarism will be reviewed in accordance with university-wide guidelines, which could mean suspension or dismissal from the university. Students are strongly urged to familiarize themselves now with university policy concerning plagiarism:

Kopya ve İntihal

Madde 4.9- (Değişik, MHK 08.02.2013) Bir öğrencinin sınavlarda, ödevlerde, raporlarda veya diğer değerlendirme etkinliklerinde kopya çektiği, kopyaya teşebbüs ettiği, intihal yaptığı veya disiplin yönetmeliğinde yer alan benzer ihlallerde bulunduğu yönünde şüphe oluşursa hakkında disiplin soruşturması açılır. Soruşturma süresi boyunca söz konusu değerlendirme etkinliği için not verilmez. Disiplin soruşturması sonucu suçsuz bulunan öğrencinin sınavı değerlendirilir ya da telafi sınavı veya telafi etkinliği düzenlenir. Suçlu bulunan öğrenciye, aldığı disiplin cezasının yanı sıra, söz konusu sınav veya değerlendirme etkinliğinden sıfır notu verilir.

Yarıyıl sonu toplam notuna etkisi olan tüm projeler, laboratuvar raporları, ödevler ve benzeri değerlendirme etkinlikleri Öğrenci Disiplin Yönetmeliği bakımından “sınav” olarak kabul edilir.

CLUSTER I: INTRODUCTION: OR, THE IDEA OF CULTURE

Weeks 1-2

Major Text: Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*

Many sections of HUM 111 will begin with a preliminary study of culture as an *idea*. Our text is the highly influential *Civilization and its Discontents*, by Sigmund Freud. This is a work difficult to categorize, simultaneously historical, philosophical, anthropological, and psychoanalytic, and touches upon many of the questions we will be pursuing this semester. In it, civilization is the story of a collaboration or conflict between culture (the community) and the individual (the subject).

CLUSTER II: “FOUNDING CULTURES”: EPIC I

Weeks 3-7

Major Texts: *Gilgamesh*; *Iliad*

When does culture begin? *Does* it begin? *Epic* literature is a genre of writing through which a cultural community represents and relates its origins. We will examine two such “founding” texts from two cultures: Mesopotamian (*Gilgamesh*), and Greek (*Iliad*). The Mesopotamian epic preserved and reproduced for many centuries and in many different ancient Near Eastern cultures and languages, provides a good basis of comparison, from a literary standpoint, of many of the ideas we have discussed in Freud. The *Iliad*, a much fuller and richer epic, stands at the beginning of Greek, Roman, and European literature. The *Iliad*’s art and concepts we will see built upon and reacted to in other texts this semester.

CLUSTER III: POLIS I/TRAGEDY

Weeks 8-10

Major Text: *Antigone* or *King Oedipus*

It is difficult, in classical Greek civilization, to separate the individual from the city or *polis*. But the more the individual appears to enter into conflict with the community, the more the identity of the individual seems to be tied to that community. *Tragedy* may be viewed as an articulation of or response to this tension between the individual and the larger social or political order. As a poetical form, it is interesting to contrast the ambitions and styles of tragic and epic poetry.

CLUSTER IV: POLIS II/PHILOSOPHY

Weeks 10-14

Major Text: *Republic*

Plato’s *Politeia* or *Republic* is a utopian conception, an image of the ideal social order. That order rests in part upon certain recurrent motifs that are central to Plato’s work: the theory of forms, the primacy of philosophical thought, the demands of ethical life, and a critique of the imitative arts (for example, epic and tragedy). Some sections, in lieu of reading the *Republic*, will focus on some short dialogues of Plato, relating to the life and death of Socrates.