

AUGUSTINE AND CULTURE SEMINAR

MODERNITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

SECTION V07

Dr. Peter Busch

Spring 2010

Class meetings: TR 2:30-3:45, SAC 103

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and by appointment

Introduction

Welcome to the second semester of the *Augustine and Culture Seminar*!

The year of ACS is devoted to gaining knowledge of who we truly are as human beings. In the fall semester, you sought that knowledge by studying the roots of the Western tradition: biblical religion, classical philosophy, and their diverse combinations in Augustine, Dante, and Shakespeare. The spring semester is a fresh opportunity for you to consider our humanity, this time from a modern perspective.

The course is named “modernity and its discontents.” Every book you read will be a reflection of our modern selves, and while some of those images will be flattering, others will be less so, and a few will be downright disturbing. What really matters, however, is which one, if any, happens to be true. You will be pondering that question throughout the semester – and, I hope, for years to come.

I have selected the best books I can find for investigating our common humanity. Our job is simply to understand those books as best we can in the short time available to us. To this end you will be reading a lot, writing a lot, and – I hope – having some of the most interesting conversations you have ever had.

The Leadership Learning Community

Once again, our class is part of the *Leadership* learning community and is linked with a fourth-hour session devoted to leadership practices. One could say that our whole semester in ACS will be spent talking about leadership, but the authors may or may not say what one would expect from the fourth hour class. That is part of the fun. Any time you see a connection between the two classes, please don’t hesitate to speak up.

Expectations

Over the course of the semester you will 1) read some of the greatest books of western culture carefully and thoughtfully; 2) write and rewrite extensively (about 30 pages throughout the semester); and 3) participate actively and faithfully in class discussions (occasionally leading the discussion or taking part in organized debates). You will also work with other students on group projects and activities outside of class.

Evaluation

Class participation (20%)

This includes consistent attendance, preparation, attention, and active conversation about the texts in class.

3 formal essays (50%)

Drawing on your investigation papers, each of these five-page essays will compare two of the major texts that we are studying this semester.

Final project (20%) and speech (10%)

Your work this semester will culminate in a final project based on *Gulliver's Travels*. In order to complete this project you will need Augustine's *Confessions* and Dante's *Purgatorio* from last semester. You will also be engaging in some travels of your own, around Villanova and beyond. And, finally, you will be giving a speech at the Oreo telling your fellow Villanovans what your travels, literal and literary, have taught you about humanity. Details to follow in coming weeks.

Academic Integrity

I expect all my students to adhere to the most rigorous standards of academic integrity. Please be familiar with the Arts and Sciences academic integrity policy, which is available online. Be advised that any student who plagiarizes or cheats on any assignment will receive either an F for the assignment or an F for the course (depending on the seriousness), and a letter will be filed with the student's dean and with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A second offense either in this course or in any other course at Villanova will result in dismissal from the university with a permanent indication of the reason for dismissal on the student's transcript.

Attendance

ACS is a seminar class, which means everybody participates in class discussions. I will take attendance at every class session. If you miss more than five class sessions, you will fail the course.

Texts

Please purchase the following texts for the course:

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford University Press). ISBN 0199537283

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Penguin). ISBN 0141439491

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (Broadview). ISBN 1551113082

Nietzsche, *Human, All-too-human* (Cambridge). ISBN 0521567041

Washington, DuBois, and Douglass, *Three African-American Classics: Up from Slavery, The Souls of Black Folk and Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Dover). 0486457575

There will also be short readings by Virginia Woolf and other topics available on WebCT.

(*Note: I had originally ordered the Oxford edition of *Frankenstein*, but it was out of stock. If any of you asked which edition to buy and obtained the Oxford over break, it is fine to use that one instead. Be sure to note which edition you are using when you write your paper on *Frankenstein*.)

Schedule of the Course

T 1/11	Introduction	Two frontispieces (handouts)
R 1/13	Thomas Hobbes	<i>Leviathan</i> , Introduction and Chapter 6
T 1/18	Hobbes	<i>Lev.</i> , Chapter 10-11
R 1/20	Hobbes	<i>Lev.</i> , Chapter 13
T 1/25	Hobbes	<i>Lev.</i> , Chapters 14-15
R 1/27	Hobbes	<i>Lev.</i> , Chapter 17
T 2/1	Hobbes	<i>Lev.</i> , Chapters 18, 24
R 2/3	Mary Shelley	<i>Frankenstein</i> , Preface, begin Vol. I
T 2/8	Shelley	<i>Frank.</i> , finish Vol. I
R 2/10	Shelley	<i>Frank.</i> , start Vol. II
Sat. 2/12	<i>Essay 1 due on WebCT</i>	
T 2/15	Shelley	<i>Frank.</i> , finish Vol. II; start Vol. III
R 2/17	Shelley	<i>Frank.</i> , finish Vol. III
T 2/22	Booker T. Washington	<i>Up From Slavery</i> , Chapters 1, 8
R 2/24	Washington	<i>UFS</i> , Chapters 13, 14
T 3/1, R 3/3	<i>No class: spring break</i>	
R 3/3	W. E. B. DuBois	<i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , Chapters 1,3
Sat. 3/5	<i>Essay 2 due on WebCT</i>	
T 3/8	DuBois	<i>SBF</i> , Chapter 5
R 3/10	DuBois	<i>SBF</i> , Chapter 14
T 3/15	Friedrich Nietzsche	<i>Human, All-too-human</i> , Part 1 (skip the Preface)
R 3/17	Nietzsche	<i>HAH</i> , Part II
T 3/22	Nietzsche	<i>HAH</i> , Part III
R 3/24	Nietzsche	<i>HAH</i> , Part VI
T 3/29	Nietzsche	<i>HAH</i> , Part VII
R 3/31	Virginia Woolf	"Professions for Women" (WebCT)
T 4/5	Woolf	"Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" (WebCT)
R 4/7	Swift	<i>GT</i> , Part I
Sun. 4/10	<i>Essay 3 due on WebCT</i>	
T 4/12	Swift	<i>GT</i> , Part II
R 4/14	Swift	<i>GT</i> , Part III
T 4/19	Swift	<i>GT</i> , Part IV
R 4/21	<i>No class: Easter</i>	
T 4/26	<i>No class: deemed a Friday class</i>	
R 4/28	Finish Swift; wrap up course	

Final speech: On Monday, May 2, at 10:45 we will meet in our usual classroom and then march on the Oreo.