

**The Human Situation  
Team Alpha  
Fall 2009**

**Profs. Charara, Collins, DiMattei, Little, Maya, Meyer, Mikics, Morrisson**

**Introduction to the course:**

This is not a course designed for those seeking a relaxed atmosphere. Reading great books about the human condition is only our point of departure. Along the way we will insist on teaching you to become better readers, writers and thinkers. Our preference is for important questions partially answered over unimportant questions fully answered. We believe that it is in the context of these important questions that the most worthwhile reading, writing and thinking takes place.

**Objectives for the Course:**

- Students will develop their critical reasoning in reading, discussing and writing on a variety of classic texts.
- Students will become familiar with some of the central philosophical, political, historical and scientific issues that have dominated the history of Western thinking.
- Students will enhance their communication skills through intensive small-group discussions and oral examination finals.

**Requirements for the course:**

There are four requirements for this course: (1) regular class attendance; (2) no membership in the SMB; (3) readings as assigned in the syllabus and throughout the semester; (4) Assignments.

**(1) Class Attendance**

Class attendance is required and will be monitored throughout the semester. Contact your professor about any absences. Ideally, the students should be so motivated by the intensity of the readings and the perspicuous and insightful lectures of the instructors that additional security should, in fact, have to be called for crowd control. Unfortunately, for whatever reasons, these are not ideal times. Some students have come to believe that there is no causal relationship between regular class attendance and their success in the course. It is presumed that students will make a concerted effort to attend the lectures, in that they will form part of the basis of the discussions in our smaller group meetings. It should also be noted that individual instructors might have particular attendance and participatory requirements in their discussion sections. **Finally, please plan to stay for the entire lecture out of respect for the other students.**

**(2) Attila at the Gates—the SMB**

In recent years there has been a noted increase in the membership of the SMB (Society of Modern Barbarians)—a loosely knit guerilla organization whose bubble-gum-chewing, tobacco-spitting, baseball-cap-wearing, beeper-blaring, telephone-ringing distractions make concentration on the part of the lecturer and other students impossible. Do NOT come to class bearing hats, cell phones, or other distractions. Included in this category are laptops. **Use of laptops is not allowed during lecture.** Notes can be taken with a pencil or pen and paper. Do NOT pack up your bags before the lecturer is done with class.

### (3) Reading for the Course

Genesis. Translated by Alter for Norton.

*Odyssey*, Homer. Translated by Lombardo for Hackett.

*The Homeric Hymns*. Translated by Shelmerdine for Focus.

*Electra*, Sophocles. Translated by Rudell for Ivan Dee House.

*On Justice, Power and Human Nature*, Thucydides. Translated by Woodruff for Hackett..

*The Birds*, Aristophanes. Translated by Henderson for Focus.

*Protagoras*, Plato. Translated by Bartlett for Cornell University Press.

*The Golden Ass*, Apuleius. Translated by Lindsay for Indiana University Press.

Gospel of Matthew. Translated by Reid for Liturgical Press.

*The Qur'an*. Translated by Khalidi for Penguin.

### (4) Assignments for Lecture Portion of the Class

Midterm Exam: 30%

Lecture Paper: 35%

Final Exam: 35%

Midterm: This will take place on October 5th and will be comprised of a combination of short answers and longer answers.

Paper: There will be one essay due in the course of the semester. This essay will be a short (no more than four double-spaced 12-font TYPEWRITTEN pages) analytic essay. The essay will be assessed by an instructor other than your discussion leader, with the final decision of your grade to be determined by your discussion leader. THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DAY INDICATED BELOW. You must also submit your paper to Turnitin.com before the deadline. Your professor will provide you with 1) a Turnitin class identification number and 2) a password in order to register with your discussion class on the web site. *Please set this up immediately, using only one email address for the whole semester.*

Final Examination: The final examination in this course is an oral examination. Each student will be examined for up to twenty minutes by one of the faculty members of this team. Your discussion leader will NOT be your examiner

The midterm, paper and final exam will constitute your lecture grade, which is three of the six hours of credit you receive for The Human Situation course in the Fall. Your discussion grade makes up the other three hours, and the papers and assignments that constitute that grade will be determined by your discussion leader.

### **Schedule:**

Week	Date	Text	Lecturer
1	24-Aug	INTRODUCTION	Morrisson
	26-Aug	Genesis	Morrisson
	28-Aug	Genesis	Mikics
2	31-Aug	Genesis	Mikics
	2-Sep	Genesis	Mikics
	4-Sep	Genesis	Mikics
3	7-Sep	<b>LABOR DAY</b>	
	9-Sep	<i>Odyssey</i>	Collins

	11-Sep	<i>Odyssey</i>	Maya
4	14-Sep	<i>Odyssey</i>	Maya
	16-Sep	<i>Odyssey</i>	Meyer
	18-Sep	<i>Odyssey</i>	Mikics
5	21-Sep	<i>Odyssey</i>	Mikics
	23-Sep	<i>Hymn to Demeter</i>	Meyer
	25-Sep	<i>Hymn to Demeter</i>	Meyer
6	28-Sep	<i>Electra</i>	Maya
	30-Sep	<i>Electra</i>	Maya
	02-Oct	<i>Electra</i>	Mikics
7	5-Oct	MIDTERM	
	7-Oct	<i>On Justice</i>	Little
	9-Oct	<i>On Justice</i>	Morrisson
8	12-Oct	<i>On Justice</i>	Little
	14-Oct	<i>On Justice</i>	Collins
	16-Oct	<i>On Justice</i>	Collins
9	19-Oct	<i>Birds</i>	Collins
	21-Oct	<i>Birds</i>	Little
	23-Oct	<i>Birds</i>	Little
10	26-Oct	<i>Protagoras</i>	Bartlett
	28-Oct	<i>Protagoras</i>	Collins
	30-Oct	<i>Protagoras</i>	Little
11	2-Nov	<i>Protagoras</i>	Morrisson
	4-Nov	<i>Protagoras</i>	Morrisson
	6-Nov	<i>The Golden Ass</i>	DiMattei
12	9-Nov*	<i>The Golden Ass (Lecture paper due)</i>	Maya
	11-Nov	<i>The Golden Ass</i>	Morrisson
	13-Nov	Gospel of Matthew	DiMattei
13	16-Nov	Gospel of Matthew	DiMattei
	18-Nov	Gospel of Matthew	DiMattei
	20-Nov	Qur'an	Charara
14	23-Nov	Qur'an	Charara
	25-Nov	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>	
	27-Nov		
15	30-Nov	Qur'an	Charara
	2-Dec	Qur'an	Charara
	4-Dec	CONCLUSION	