

**The Human Situation
Team Alpha
Fall 2011**

Profs. Brenner, Estess, Ferguson, Maya, Meyer, Morrisson, Zaretsky

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, 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, internet-surfing, ipod-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

Homer, *Odyssey*. Tr. Lombardo, Hackett Publishing Co. ISBN 978 0872204847

The Bible (King James version). David Norton, Penguin. ISBN 978 0141441511

Aeschylus, *The Oresteia: Eumenides*. Tr. Fagles, Penguin Classics. ISBN 978 0140443332

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Tr. Warner, Penguin Classics. ISBN978 0140440393

Aristophanes, *Frogs*. Tr. Barrett, Penguin Classics. ISBN 978 0140441529

Plato, Apology and Crito from *4 Texts on Socrates*. Tr. West and West, Cornell University Press
ISBN 978 0801485749

Virgil, *The Aeneid*. Tr. Ruden, Yale University Press. ISBN 978 0300151411

Epictetus, *A Manual for Living*. Tr. Lebell, HarperOne. ISBN 978 0062511119

(4) Assignments for Lecture Portion of the Class

a) Midterm Exam:	30%
b) Lecture Paper:	35%
c) Final Exam:	35%

a) Midterm: This will take place on October 14th and will be comprised of a combination of short answers and longer answers.

b) 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.*

c) 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

(N.B. The midterm, paper and final exam will constitute your lecture grade, which makes up 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 your discussion leader will determine the papers and assignments that constitute that grade.)

Schedule:

1	22-Aug	INTRO (IM)
1	24-Aug	<i>Odyssey</i> (TE)
1	26-Aug	<i>Odyssey</i> (TE)
2	29-Aug	<i>Odyssey</i> (KM)
2	31-Aug	<i>Odyssey</i> (KM)
2	2-Sep	<i>Odyssey</i> (GM)
3	5-Sep	LABOR DAY
3	7-Sep	<i>Odyssey</i> (GM)
3	9-Sep	Job (JF)
4	12-Sep	Job (IM)
4	14-Sep	Job (JF)
4	16-Sep	Job (JF)
5	19-Sep	<i>Eumenides</i> (GM)
5	21-Sep	<i>Eumenides</i> (KM)
5	23-Sep	<i>Eumenides</i> (GM)
6	26-Sep	<i>History</i> Thucydides (RZ)
6	28-Sep	<i>History</i> Thucydides (RZ)
6	30-Sep	<i>History</i> Thucydides (IM)
7	3-Oct	<i>History</i> Thucydides (RZ)
7	5-Oct	<i>History</i> Thucydides (RZ)
7	7-Oct	<i>Frogs</i> (TE)
8	10-Oct	<i>Frogs</i> (TE)
8	12-Oct	<i>Frogs</i> (GM)
8	14-Oct	Midterm Exam
9	17-Oct	<i>Apology</i> (IM)
9	19-Oct	<i>Apology</i> (RZ)
9	21-Oct	<i>Apology</i> (IM)
10	24-Oct	<i>Crito</i> (IM)
10	26-Oct	<i>Crito</i> (IM)
10	28-Oct	Roman History (RZ)
11	31-Oct	<i>Aeneid</i> (KM)
11	2-Nov	<i>Aeneid</i> (KM)
11	4-Nov	<i>Aeneid</i> (RZ)
12	7-Nov	<i>Aeneid</i> (RZ)
12	9-Nov	<i>Aeneid</i> (JF)
12	11-Nov	Gospel of Mark (JF)
13	14-Nov	Gospel of Mark (JF)* (Paper)
13	16-Nov	Gospel of Luke (JF)
13	18-Nov	Gospel of Luke (TE)
14	21-Nov	<i>Manual for Living</i> (TE)
14	23-Nov	THANKSGIVING
14	25-Nov	BREAK
15	28-Nov	<i>Manual for Living</i> (IM)
15	30-Nov	<i>Manual for Living</i> (TE)
15	2-Dec	Summation Lecture