

UC 10342 09F

CBM003 ADD/CHANGE FORM

APPROVED DEC 09 2009

Undergraduate Council  
 New Course  Course Change  
 Core Category: WI-ID Effective Fall 2010

81

or

Graduate/Professional Studies Council  
 New Course  Course Change  
 Effective Fall ~~RECEIVED~~ SEP 29 2009

1. Department: History College: CLASS  
 2. Faculty Contact Person: Thomas Behr Telephone: 713-743-3083 Email: tbehr@uh.edu

3. Course Information on New/Revised course:  
 • Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:  
HIST / 4339 / Modern European Intellectual History  
 • Instructional Area / Course Number / Short Course Title (30 characters max.)  
HIST / 4339 / MOD EURO INTELLECTUAL HIST  
 • SCH: 3.00 Level: SR CIP Code: 54.0103.0001 Lect Hrs: 3 Lab Hrs: 0

4. Justification for adding/changing course: Successfully taught as a selected topics course  
 5. Was the proposed/revised course previously offered as a special topics course?  Yes  No  
 If Yes, please complete:

• Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:  
HIST / 4395 / Modern European Intellectual History  
 • Course ID: 26112 Effective Date (currently active row): 20081

6. Authorized Degree Program(s): B.A. History  
 • Does this course affect major/minor requirements in the College/Department?  Yes  No  
 • Does this course affect major/minor requirements in other Colleges/Departments?  Yes  No  
 • Can the course be repeated for credit?  Yes  No (if yes, include in course description)

7. Grade Option: Letter (A, B, C ...) Instruction Type: seminar (Note: Lect/Lab info. must match item 3, above.)

8. If this form involves a change to an existing course, please obtain the following information from the course inventory: Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title  
 \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_  
 • Course ID: \_\_\_ Effective Date (currently active row): \_\_\_  
*ENGL 1304 and HIST 2353 or 3380, or consent of instructor.*

9. Proposed Catalog Description: (If there are no prerequisites, type in "none".)  
 Cr: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: ~~none~~ Description (30 words max.): Fundamental texts in the history of European ideas, from the Enlightenment into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Explores major currents of modern thought in their historical contexts.

10. Dean's Signature: [Signature] Date: 9/28/09

Print/Type Name: Dr. Sarah Fishman

U N I V E R S I T Y   o f   H O U S T O N

CORE CURRICULUM COURSE REQUEST

Originating Department/College: History / CLASS

Person making request: Thomas C. Behr Telephone: 713-743-3083

E-mail: tbehr@uh.edu

Dean's signature:  Date: 9/28/09

**I. General Information:**

**Course number and title:** HIST 4339: Modern European Intellectual History

**Catalog description** must be included on completed CBM 003 form and attached to this document.

**Category of Core** for which course is being proposed (mark only one):

- Communication
- Mathematics
- Mathematics/Reasoning (IDO)
- American History
- Government
- Humanities
- Visual/Performing Arts Critical
- Visual/Performing Arts Experiential
- Natural Sciences
- Social/Behavioral Sciences
- Writing in the Disciplines (IDO)

**II. Objectives and Evaluation (respond on one or more separate sheets):**

**Call ext. 3-0919 for a copy of "Guidelines for Requesting and Evaluating Core Courses" or visit the website at [www.uh.edu/academics/corecurriculum](http://www.uh.edu/academics/corecurriculum)**

- A. How does the proposed course meet the appropriate Exemplary Educational Objectives (see **Guidelines**). Attach a syllabus and supporting materials for the objectives the syllabus does not make clear. (SEE ATTACHED)
- B. Specify the processes and procedures for evaluating course effectiveness in regard to its goals.
- C. Delineate how these evaluation results will be used to improve the course.

Thomas Behr –

Modern European Intellectual History, Core Curriculum Course Request, Section II

- A) The “Modern European Intellectual History” course is a “history of ideas in context” course that is aimed at understanding the double understanding of the trajectory of modern ideas in the Western world and how those ideas have reflected back upon the study of man and society with the various social scientific disciplines. A wide range of the greatest “philosophes” of the European Enlightenment, with an emphasis on social and political thought, will form the backbone of the class, and selected 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century heirs or critics of Enlightenment paradigms will serve to help students round out an understanding of the major poles, and multiple intermediary positions, across the spectrum of modern thought. A constant contextual concern will be how the ideas under study can be considered as products of their time, but also as products of particular persons, considering also the impact of those ideas on their times and their relevance to our own approach to historical, social and political scientific research. Students will be required to write analytical papers weekly to present their “findings” in regard to those constant contextual concerns, with feedback in seminar discussion.
- B) Use of evidence (the text under consideration), logic, experience, critical reason and coherent argumentation will be the standards upon which all of the written work will be graded, and will be modeled and encouraged within the seminar format itself, conducted on a quasi-Socratic method.
- C) Evaluation, of papers and of final essays, will serve to refine the selection of readings, and of the selections within readings, that serve most to engage the students in basic intellectual and practical concerns within the history of ideas sub-discipline.
- D) The writing assignments in this course will prepare students to understand philosophical premises and methodological assumptions in the writing of history, to assess and employ evidence and arguments in their own research and writing, to read and assess work of professional colleagues as part of the scholarly enterprise.

**SYLLABUS**

**Hist 4395 Selected Topics  
"Modern European Intellectual History:  
The Enlightenment and Its Critics"**

Professor: Dr. Thomas Behr  
Email: [thomasbehr@earthlink.net](mailto:thomasbehr@earthlink.net) (reply to spam filter)  
Office: Dept. of History, 541 Agnes Arnold Hall  
Hours: M, W 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. and by appointment

**Course Description and Conceptualization:**

After reviewing some of the main thinkers of the Enlightenment, the founders of intellectual currents that lead through modernism to post-modernism, we will focus on some important thinkers who have gone against the current, so to speak, on the great issues confronting modernity. Our focus is on the metaphysical, anthropological, social and political ideas that we associate as the mainstream of modern thought in part one of the class, about one-third of the semester, and then on some of the leading contrarian thinkers on those same topics from the 1790's to the 1970's. It should be a fun ride. We will be breaking new ground together.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will have an understanding of the philosophical premises that go into the doing of social scientific, and specifically historical, research and writing, and have an appreciation of the spectrum of philosophical and ideological perspectives that have exercised an influence over the various schools of historical and social scientific thought.

**Required Texts:**

- I. Kramnick, *Portable Enlightenment Reader*. (ER) Penguin. ISBN 0-14-024566-9
- C. Blum, *Critics of the Enlightenment*. (CE) ISI Books, 2003. ISBN 1-932236-25-2
- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Harvey Mansfield, trans. (DA) Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000. ISBN 0-226-80536-0
- Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism*. (EX) Meridian.
- C.S. Lewis, *Abolition of Man*. Harper.
- F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom. The Definitive Edition*. Chicago, 2007.
- A. Solzhenitsyn, *The Solzhenitsyn Reader*. ISI Books, 2009.

**Optional Extra Credit:**

- A. Besançon, *A Century of Horrors*. ISI Books.

**Assignments and Grading:**

Reading "Previews," due weekly	8/10 x 10%
Final (in class, closed book)	20%
Preparation & Participation	x%
Optional essay	up to 5% on top

**Pre-View Papers** are to be turned in before the class in which they are scheduled to be discussed on **Turn It In .Com (turnitin.com)** with **course ID 2581495** and password "**Aristotle.**" **Late papers** will be penalized one full grade for each day late.

**Plagiarism or other cheating on the essays or exam will be reported and penalized. For further information about Academic Honesty, the Academic Calendar, Religious Holy Days, and Disabilities, refer to:**  
[http://www.uh.edu/provost/stu/stu\\_syllabsuppl.html](http://www.uh.edu/provost/stu/stu_syllabsuppl.html)

**Book Preview Recommendations**

These comments must taken with a grain of salt. They will need to be interpreted and applied differently according to the genre and character of the work in question. There are some important general considerations, however, and some requirements that ought to be kept in mind. You should have a few standard references within reach if possible: Mortimer Adler, *How to Read a Book*; Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*; an excellent unabridged dictionary (e.g. Webster's), and a one-volume encyclopedia (e.g. Columbia). You should plan on reading your assignments a number of times, probably three times. The first time you can read straight through the work in order to get the general ideas and line of argument. The second time through you will need to be at a table and will want to take notes. You will be looking for three major things: the thesis (or theses), the "evidence" (using the term very loosely, i.e. including a narrative of fictional events), and the reasoning (steps in logic) and, finally, the conclusion(s) that the author wants you to make from that evidence and argument. You may also want to think about the work's significance on different levels, but this is a completely secondary objective to exercise at issue. What does the text say? How does it say it? (And, the part we will discuss in class: what difference does it make?)

A good place to start reading the **first** time through is to check if there is an "Author's Introduction," "Conclusion" or "Epilogue," etc. In such places the author may well identify (claim) why he is writing the book and what point he has set out to prove (his thesis)--although the author may be sneakier about it: be sensitive to rhetorical strategies, and to claims that the evidence speaks for itself, logically the case for a work of fiction, but not necessarily—or the author may want to try to correct "mis-readings" of the work, or to respond to criticisms of earlier editions. Is the author being ironic? Then, as you are reading your book through the **second** time, consider the structure of the work: is each chapter part of one long thesis? is the organization chronological or thematic, and why? are there various theses or how do they fit together into some comprehensive claim that the author is making?

In order to do this, you need to read each chapter carefully and find out what is going on at each level of the narrative, taking notes on the points and the arguments being made. Finally, you may want to read your book a **third** time to make sure you have understood the thing and that your evaluation is on track, catching points or proofs that you may not have understood the first times through. Confirm (or revise) your earlier impression about the author's ultimate purpose.

Now you have to take your notes and write your review. For our purposes, each pre-view must be between 500 and 800 words. No more (ideally), no less. To accomplish this feat, make time for careful organization and multiple re-writes. Identify the thesis. Do not be stingy. Make sure your explanation of the thesis is clear. What does the thesis tell us about the author's interests? (Do not feel compelled to label the author's ideology, but bracket your intuitions, for now, as an hypothesis, above all, don't be concerned about being wrong.) Carefully avoid ALL anthropological, sociological or historical claims, generalizations, and conclusory claims from other texts not under consideration: e.g., "Human beings are violent by nature...", or "People have always...", or "Everyone knows that...", etc.

Ideology, or intellectual and spiritual commitment, are probably among the most important points we'll want to evaluate eventually, but this is best done in our lecture and discussion. Why does *this* person want to prove *this* point? What are the debates behind it, around it? What is not being said? Who benefits? What philosophical assumptions, premises, and vision of the cosmos is implicit? What's their view of the meaning of life? What do we care today about such things? But, for now, bracket all that in your own mind. We will take them up in class.

In your writing now, analyze the argument, shun summary, get to the points. Your first sentence should be something like: "Plato's point in the *Meno* is...." If the points are not black-and-white, don't shy away from *shades of gray*. If there are ambiguities, maybe it is intentional, maybe there is some deeper connection? Bring together your notes from your reading. What kind of evidence does the author use? Does the evidence prove what the author wants it to prove? What are other ways of interpreting the same evidence? Are there other things that the author ignores, accidentally or deliberately?

Is some agenda apparent? Has the author assumed "facts" without proving them? What questions would you want to put to the author? Is the author serious and to be taken literally?

The "great books" are a glimpse into ourselves, into our institutions and values, into our conflicts, despairs and hopes. The experience of reading a great book may be difficult because they present complexities, not usually simple lessons. Such an encounter is like meeting a new person: a bundle of unknown complexities. It takes patience, authentic dialogue, effort, and even love, to get to that person's understanding of the truth, and to our understanding of what we have in common and where we differ, and what difference it makes.

Have fun!

### **Reading Schedule:**

1/28 - What is Enlightenment?

(ER Readings: Selections beginning on pp. 1, 26, 39, 60, 64, 75, 81, 96, 109, 115, 134, 168)

2/4 - A New Theory of Human Nature

(ER Readings: Selections beginning on pp. 181, 185, 195, 202, 222, 229, 242, 255, 280, 297, 306, 329, 333, 339)

2/11 - Consequences for Social, Economic and Political Thought

(ER Readings: Selections beginning on pp. 363, 387, 395, 405, 424, 430, 452, 502, 505, 552)

TBA