

Georgetown University

BLHS-111
The New Millennium

Fall, 2009
W 6:15 - 9:35 PM
TBD

SYLLABUS

Don Ross, Instructor

Course Description: This course will be divided into two parts. In keeping with the goal of drawing on all the Core Courses, the first part will be an overview of the intellectual history of the previous four millennia. Thus we will be exploring some of the main ideas stemming from the Ancient Near East (2nd millennium BCE); the Classical Period in China, India, and Greece (1st millennium BCE); the Age of World Religions (1st millennium CE); and the Age of the Science in the West (2nd millennium CE). The second part of the course will consist of student presentations applying the ideas studied in the first half to the present and the future. Regarding the present, students will explore the effects of these ideas on the politics (e.g. human rights, feminism, "animal rights," environmentalism), religion, economics, and technology (e.g. genetics, computers) of contemporary America. Regarding the future, students will debate whether human intellectual history suggests the domination of one culture or a synthesis of major cultures, and whether that future will exhibit a cyclical or linear pattern. In all cases, students will be asked to present their ideas as to what such a world would look like.

CONTACT INFORMATION

	<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Cell/GU	301-412-3081	dlr33@georgetown.edu
Home	301-530-6249	donandpatty1@verizon.net
Work	703-272-5670	don.ross@ngc.com

POLICIES

The instructor will be available by telephone or e-mail any time, day or night.

Papers must include appropriate and specific citations. Papers exhibiting plagiarism will receive a grade of F for the first offense, failure of the course for the second.

Papers with more than three spelling/grammatical errors per page will be lowered one grade.

Late papers will be lowered one grade.

There will be an initial test on the materials on grammar and plagiarism listed at the end of this syllabus. Students will have to retake the test until it is error-free.

Grades will not be recorded for short papers until they are free of grammatical/spelling errors.

Make-up exams will be arranged only for emergencies.

Regular class attendance is insisted on. Students who do not attend class regularly will not receive the benefit of a doubt in their final grade.

Students will be held responsible for all material covered in class; absence from class does not absolve a student from this responsibility. Students will also be held responsible for all material in the required readings, whether explicitly covered in class or not.

Students who do not complete all the requirements or who are convicted of academic dishonesty will receive a grade of F.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Epic of Gilgamesh. Trans. N. K. Sandars. Penguin. 014044100X.
Confucius. *The Analects of Confucius*. Trans. A. Waley. Vintage. 0679722963.
Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*. Trans. G. Feng and J. English. Vintage. 0679724346.
The Bhagavad Gita. Trans. J. Mascaro. Penguin. 0140449183.
Plato. *Phaedo*. Trans. G. M. A. Grube. Hackett. 0915144182.
Augustine. *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*. Trans. T. S. Hibbs. Gateway. 0895267039.
Newton. *Principia*. Trans. A. Motte. Running. 0762420227.
Darwin. *Darwin: The Indelible Stamp*. Running. 0762430516.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Sacred Books of the East: Volume 35. The Questions of King Milinda. Trans. T. W. Rhys Davids. Adamant Media. 1402185928.
Aristotle. *Introduction to Aristotle*. Ed. R. McKeon. McGraw Hill. 039430973.
al-Ghazali. *The Alchemy of Happiness*. Dodo. 1406565180.

ON-LINE MATERIALS

The Great Hymn to the Aten. <http://katherinestange.com/egypt/hymn2.htm>
The Questions of King Milinda. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/sbe35/index.htm>
Aristotle. *Physics* II. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/physics.2.ii.html>
Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* I. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.1.i.html>
al-Ghazali. *Alchemy of Happiness*. <http://majalla.org/books/2005/The-Alchemy-of-Happiness.pdf>

CLASS SCHEDULE

Lectures and Discussions

Sep. 9

Introduction
Grammar/Plagiarism Test

The Past

Ancient Near East (2nd Millennium BCE)

Sep. 16	[unknown] Akhenaten	<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> <i>Hymn to the Aten</i>	Mesopotamia Egypt	61 - 117 On-Line
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Classical Period (1st Millennium BCE)

Sep. 23	Confucius Lao Tzu	<i>Analects</i> <i>Tao Te Ching</i>	Confucianism Taoism	83 - 233 3 - 83
Sep. 30	[unknown] [unknown]	<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> <i>Questions of King Milinda I - III</i>	Vedanta Buddhism *	3 - 86 1 - 136 or On-Line
Oct. 7	Plato	<i>Phaedo</i>	Platonism	5 - 67
Oct. 14	Aristotle	<i>Physics II</i> <i>Nicomachean Ethics I</i>	Aristotelianism	116 - 138 or On-Line 308 - 331 or On-Line

Age of World Religions (1st Millennium CE)

Oct. 21	Augustine al-Ghazali	<i>Enchiridion</i> <i>Alchemy of Happiness I - IV</i>	Christianity Islam *	1 - 141 19 - 48 or On-Line
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Emergence of the West (2nd Millennium CE)

Oct. 28	Newton	<i>Principia</i> Definitions <i>Principia</i> Laws I - III <i>Principia</i> III Rules <i>Principia</i> III Phenomena <i>Principia</i> III Propositions I - XIII <i>Principia</i> III General Scholium	Nature	1 - 11 11 - 12 307 - 309 309 - 314 314 - 324 426 - 430
Nov. 4	Darwin	<i>Origin of Species</i> III - IV <i>Origin of Species</i> XIII <i>Descent of Man</i> I <i>Descent of Man</i> III - IV	Humanity	378 - 415 560 - 584 615 - 629 657 - 702
Nov. 11			Review	
Nov. 18			Mid-Term	

* Outside the millennium chronologically, but inside it in spirit.

Term Papers and Presentations

The New Millennium (3rd Millennium CE)

Nov. 25

Consultations

The Present

- Dec. 2 How has the thought of the past affected politics in contemporary America
How has the thought of the past affected religion in contemporary America?
How has the thought of the past affected economics in contemporary America?
How has the thought of the past affected technology in contemporary America?

The Future

- Dec. 9 Does the history of human thought suggest that we are heading toward the domination of one culture over all others? If so, what will it be like?
Does the history of human thought suggest that we are heading toward a synthesis of cultures? If so, what will it be like?
Does the history of human thought suggest a cyclical view of history (i.e. that history swings between extremes like a pendulum)? If so, what will the next millennium be like?
Does the history of human thought suggest a linear view of history (i.e. that history is progressive, such that one can extrapolate from current trends)? If so, what will the next millennium be like?

GRADING

Mini-Papers/Presentations	(30% of grade)	1 - 2 pages on a question assigned weekly due weekly
Term Papers/Presentations	(30% of grade)	5 - 10 pages on a topic about the present or the future due the day of the presentation
Mid-Term	(40% of grade)	short answer

PLEDGE

As signatories to the Georgetown University Honor Pledge, and indeed simply as good scholars and citizens, you are required to uphold academic honesty in all aspects of this course. You are expected to be familiar with the letter and spirit of the Standards of Conduct outlined in the Georgetown Honor System and on the Honor Council website. As faculty, I too am obligated to uphold the Honor System, and will report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty.

REFERENCES

Common Grammatical Errors Handout
What is Plagiarism? <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html>