

# HISTORY OF WESTERN THOUGHT I

## IDS 320

### Fall Semester 2003

**Prof:** Alex Stotts

**Email:** [stotts@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:stotts@oregon.uoregon.edu)

**Monday:** 6:00-9:30 p.m.

Bldg. 11 Rm. 256

**COURSE DESCRIPTION** - This course will acquaint students with a number of important texts, ideas, figures and events that have shaped the evolution of Western Thought. Although not exhaustive in scope, the course allows students to explore and critically interrogate some of the cornerstones of prototypical Western approaches to justice, society, the soul, and our role in the universe. While assigned reading is primarily philosophical in nature, a multi-disciplinary approach is taken to better understand how our most fundamental ideas are imprinted upon a diverse range of cultural expressions.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS** - For each class meeting, it is necessary to be thoroughly prepared and ready to ask questions, identify problems, and engage in class activities. Readings are to be completed on a weekly basis as indicated on the syllabus. Be sure to give yourself enough time to read and digest the material - anticipate re-reading some of the text selections to gain full understanding.

#### **Required Readings:**

- The following books have been ordered for you to purchase:
  - 1) Plato. *The Republic*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Translated by Allan Bloom. BasicBooks/Perseus Press, 1991. ISBN 0465069347
  - 2) Ren Descartes. *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Translated by Donald Cress. Hackett Publishing Co., 1999. ISBN 0872204200
  - 3) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Translated by Donald Cress, Hackett Publishing Co., 1992. ISBN 0872201503
- To keep down the cost of course texts, we will utilize an academic website where one of the readings may be found free of charge. Students should download and print out appropriate selections of the text as indicated in the Readings and Topics Schedule. (If you are not sure how to do this or have computer anxieties, please talk to me asap.)
- In-class materials (e.g., review sheets, hand-outs.)

#### **COURSE GRADES**

**Graded Assignments:**

Response Essays (2 x 15%).....	30%
Mid-term Exam.....	30%
Participation/Attendance .....	10%
Comprehensive Final Exam.....	30%

**Scale Used to Compute Final Grades**

A	94-100	C	73-75
A-	90-93	C-	70-72
B+	86-89	D+	66-69
B	83-85	D	63-65
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	76-79	F	59 <

**Please Note:** Late assignments are subject to grade penalties. You must complete all assignments in order to pass this class.

**Response Essays:** Each student is responsible for writing two short essays (3-4 pp. typed) in response to a question given out in class. The essays must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Due dates are posted on the Reading and Topics Schedule. Essays cannot be turned in late in the event of an *unexcused* absence.

*Purpose:* Lectures, class discussions, and readings are designed to stimulate your thinking, to reveal patterns and complexities, not to provide you with “the answers.” Hence, the response essay component of this class is included to provide a place for you to make connections and think through some of the ideas explored. These essays are an opportunity to work on developing and clearly explicating ideas covered in the course. Thoughtfully doing this work will aid you tremendously in preparing for the final exam.

**Do not** simply summarize the readings and lectures. You are expected to make *clear connections between the ideas presented in readings and lectures*. Thus, a substantial portion of the essay must involve an accurate discussion of those aspects of the readings and lectures most relevant to the topic at hand.

Grades will be based on how accurately you answer the question and explain your reasoning and this includes substantive use of readings and lectures as well as the degree to which you've elaborated upon and supported your theses. In developing your essay, remember to explain *why* you think what you do --- don't just say that you agree with an idea or that you think an idea is wrong without providing well-considered support/evidence. Your grade is based on how well you've developed your reasons for your answer.

**Midterm and Final:**

The *midterm* will be a take-home essay exam over material covered in the first part of the semester. Students must complete essays that respond to two or three questions given out in class one week in advance. Essays should be approximately 4-5 typed pages total.

The *final exam* will be take-home essay exam due at the start of the last course meeting (12/15). One week prior to the due date, students will be given a list of questions and will be asked to write on two of them. Essays should be 7-8 typed pages total.

**Participation/Attendance:** *Participation* is to be courteous and constructive. Respectful disagreement is encouraged but contentious or bellicose behavior has no place in the classroom. Give each of your classmates the benefit of the doubt and assume that they, like you, are persons of intelligence and good will. Participation also includes the completion of in-class assignments and group work.

*Attendance* to class is expected and roll will be taken. Class meetings will provide information not presented in the readings and, periodically, additional handouts/guidelines will be given.

**NOTE:** More than 1 unexcused absence will negatively impact your course grade.

- If you must miss a class because of an illness, please let me know (in advance) so that you receive an **excused** absence. Students are expected to promptly make up any work missed due to an excused absence.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Academic Integrity:** All work for this course must be your own and must be produced exclusively for this class. Academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating, plagiarism) is strictly prohibited and will result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or entire course. All appropriate Linfield College guidelines on cheating, dishonesty, and plagiarism are in effect for this course.

**ADA & Special Needs:** If you have special needs or are differently abled, please let me soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

### Topics and Reading Schedule

(Note: any syllabus modifications will be announced in class)

<b>Week 1</b> 9/15	<b>What is ‘Western Thought’?</b> Introduction to course	
<b>Week 2</b> 9/22	<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> Books I - II, pp. 3-61	
<b>Week 3</b> 9/29	<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> Books III- IV, pp 63-125	
<b>Week 4</b> 10/6	<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> Book V-VI, pp.127-192	Response Essay #1 Due 10/6
<b>Week 5</b> 10/13	<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> Books VII –VIII, pp.193-248	
<b>Week 6</b> 10/20	<u>Read:</u> Aristotle, <i>De Caelo (On the Heavens)</i> Book II (hand-outs)	Mid-term questions distributed 10/20
<b>Week 7</b> 10/27	<u>Read:</u> The Enlightenment (hand-outs)	Mid-Term Due 10/27

**Week 8**

11/3

Read: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (pp. tba) (on-line)  
<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-contents.html>

**Week 9**

11/10

Read: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (pp. tba) (on-line)  
<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-contents.html>

**Week 10**

11/17

Read: Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Parts One-Six, pp. 1-42

Response Essay  
#2 Due 11/17

**Week 11**

11/24

Read: Descartes, *Meditations I – VI*, pp. 57-100

**Week 12**

12/1

Read: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pp. tba

**Week 13**

12/8

Read: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pp.tba

Final Exam  
Questions  
Distributed 12/8

**Week 14**

12/15

**Review; Closing Remarks; Evaluations**  
(no reading)

FINAL EXAM  
DUE 12/15