

SYLLABUS

I. Course Description:

The Great Conversation – Culture is an interdisciplinary course intended to introduce students to a selection of great works in the fields of literature, art, music, philosophy, theology, politics, and history from ancient Greek and Roman times to the present. The focus will be on Western culture and civilization.

The works will be studied in roughly chronological order so that we might see how various thoughts and ideas have been expressed throughout time and how certain concepts have developed. The purpose of the course, as is reflected in its title, is to promote our participation in the great conversation about our world, our society, and our humanity that has been going on for three thousand years and more. We will read the words (and view and hear the works) of those who have preceded us and then add our own thoughts and ideas to the conversation. The classes will be discussion-based, with all of us taking turns in facilitating discussion from day to day. Guest facilitators (faculty members from the Oxford campus, the Emory campus, and other institutions in the area) will join us upon many occasions, both during the regular class sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. and during the supplemental sessions on Wednesday afternoons from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**II. Chief Facilitators: Dr. Gretchen Schulz (Office: 103 Humanities, 4-8372;
Home: 770-784-8269)**

**Dr. Jim Kiersky (Office: 205-A Language Hall, 4-8361;
Home: 770-939-3308)**

**III. Times/Places: Tues/Thurs, 10:00 – 11:15 a.m., Humanities Conference Room
Wed., 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., Humanities Conference Room (and
otherwise as designated.)**

IV. Course Requirements:

Students are expected to read the assigned text (or, in the case of art or music or other non-literary work, study the assigned work) prior to class and to come to class well prepared to make frequent intelligent contributions to the discussion of the thoughts and ideas raised by the text (or work). At regular intervals each of us will serve as facilitator-du-jour (one of two or three), initiating class discussion with an opening question and moderating discussion as it proceeds.

All who are participating in the ongoing great conversation of the course will keep journals of comments and questions stimulated by the texts read (or works studied) and by the class discussions of the texts (or works). At a minimum, each of us should prepare a journal entry prior to and/or following each class meeting, dealing somehow with issues relevant to the text (or work) assigned for that meeting. These journal entries should be brought to class each session for we may make use of them to promote discussion at any time. These journals will be collected at intervals by the chief facilitators (Dr. Schulz and Dr. Kiersky). They will not be graded in the usual fashion, but their content will serve as an indication of the degree and quality of student engagement with the course material, and information will factor into the overall grade assigned at the end of the term for the degree and quality of class participation. (See the statement on Grading below in section V.)

Students will write four papers (of at least 1,000 words) due throughout the semester. The format and content of these papers will be discussed in class. Students will be encouraged to bring a draft of each paper to a conference with the chief facilitators for the course, Dr. Schulz and/or Dr. Kiersky, so discussion may yield suggestions for revision which will strengthen the work.

V. Grading: Class participation (including regular participation for 60 points and facilitation for 40 points)	100 points
4 papers (for 40 points each)	160 points
Journal entries	<u>40 points</u>
Total for the course	300 points

Please note that Dr. Schulz and Dr. Kiersky will be grading your work using the plus/minus grading system.

Policy on absences: Since class participation is such an important component of this course, attendance is important, too, and excessive absence will result in points deducted from your final grade. Only true emergency, significant illness, and required religious observance can excuse an absence. Please inform Dr. Schulz and Dr. Kiersky of the latter ahead of time.

Policy on late or missing work: A paper submitted late without an adequate excuse (true emergency or significant illness) will lose a letter grade for each calendar day it is late. A paper that is more than four calendar days late (without an adequate excuse) will not be accepted at all and will be given a zero. Missing journal submissions will affect the final grade. Failure to take an assigned turn as a facilitator-for-the-day (without an adequate excuse) will also affect the final grade.

VI. Class Schedule:

January 14: Old Testament, *Genesis*, chh. 1-22.

January 15: Old Testament, *Exodus*, chh. 1-20.

January 20: Homer, *The Odyssey*

January 21: Greek art and architecture

January 22: Homer, *The Odyssey*

January 27: Thucydides

January 28: Plato, *Republic*, Books VI, VII, and X.

January 29: Plato, *Republic*, Books VI, VII, and X; Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*

February 3: Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*

February 4: New Testament, *Matthew*

February 5: Epictetus, *Encheiridion*

February 10: Plutarch

February 11: Roman art and architecture

February 12: Augustine, *Confessions*

February 17: Dante, *Inferno*

February 18: Medieval and Renaissance art

February 19: Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*

February 24: Machiavelli, *The Prince*

February 25: Medieval and Renaissance music

February 26: Shakespeare, *King Lear*

March 2: Hobbes, *Leviathan*

March 3: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*

March 4: Rousseau, *The Discourses*

March 16: Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

March 17: Mozart

March 18: Defoe, *Moll Flanders*

March 23: Romantic poetry

March 24: Beethoven

March 25: C. Bronte, *Jane Eyre*

March 30: Nietzsche

March 31: Marx

April 1: Freud

April 6: de Tocqueville

April 7: Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*

April 8: Harlem Renaissance, poetry

April 13: Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

April 14: Twentieth Century art and architecture

April 15: Harlem Renaissance, jazz

April 20: Kerouac, *On The Road*

April 21: Sartre

April 22: feminist poetry (Rich, Plath, et.al.)

April 27: *Thelma and Louise*