

CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION

Fall 2016

Instructor: Zachary Herz

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Time and Place: Hamilton 707, TTh 6:10 to 8:00 P.M.

Office Hours: TBA, but assume Brownies Café, TTh 2:30-4:00 P.M.

Welcome to Contemporary Civilization! This course will teach you how to engage with key texts in Western political thought, while practicing both normative and analytic argument. In order to achieve these goals, you will be expected to read closely—and analyze thoroughly—the texts that make up the Contemporary Civilization syllabus, as well as the contributions of your classmates. Students will be evaluated on their participation in class and on exams, as well as on three short papers.

- 1) Course Participation and Discussion Questions.** You are expected to complete the assigned reading for each class, and to be prepared to discuss that reading in class. In addition, starting on the week of September 12, each student will be required to send me (via Courseworks) a short response essay (more than a paragraph, but less than a page) once per week. That response should be sent by 4:00 P.M. on the day of class, and should reflect engagement with the reading for that class. Responses will be graded. You will receive a tentative participation grade halfway through the semester, and I am happy to discuss your participation with you if you have any concerns. Class attendance is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be reflected in your participation grade. If you absolutely must miss class, please e-mail me no later than 12 hours prior to class to let me know.

- 2) Essays.** You will write three papers of 5-7 pages each over the course of the semester. You will receive each essay prompt two weeks before the essay is due, and will receive the essay back one week after handing it in. Essays that are handed in late will receive a penalty of one-third of a letter grade for each day past the deadline (for example, a B+ paper handed in one day late will receive a grade of B). Students who wish for an extension should contact me as soon as possible, and should bring documentation of whatever circumstance necessitates the extension. Be warned: I'm stingy.

- 3) Exams.** There will be a midterm exam in class on November 10, and a cumulative final exam on Friday, December 16 (12.30-3.30). I will discuss those exams in greater detail closer to their dates.

- 4) Content Warnings, Participation Norms, and Mutual Respect.** Over the course of the semester, you will almost certainly read arguments that strike you as offensive. This is a necessary part of the Contemporary Civilization

curriculum; the history of Western political thought contains some disturbing ideas, and one of my goals for the class is to train students in how to confront that legacy. Students will react differently to different texts depending on their own background and views; for that reason, I do not provide global content warnings. Students with specific needs in this regard should speak to me privately or to the Office of Disability Services (ODS, discussed below); I will gladly provide any necessary accommodation.

More broadly, this course will require discussing some fraught and sensitive topics. Towards that end, it is vital that the classroom maintain an attitude of respect, in which students feel as free as possible to share their reactions without fear of ridicule or censure. I encourage you to disagree quite strongly with each other and to express that disagreement, but we are part of a community, and statements that disrupt the class, or that make other students feel unwelcome, will not be tolerated.

I do not permit personal computers or any other sort of devices in class; students with Kindle editions of the texts may bring an e-reader to class if necessary, and students who require laptops as a matter of disability accommodation should speak with ODS. One student each class will be in charge of taking detailed notes on that day's discussion to share with the class, and she may bring a laptop if she chooses.

- 5) Academic Honesty.** *Plagiarism is unacceptable.* Columbia College is dedicated to the highest ideals of integrity in academia. Therefore, any instance of academic dishonesty, attempted or actual, will be reported to the faculty chair of the course and to the dean of the Core Curriculum, who will review the case with the expectation that that a student guilty of academic dishonesty will receive a grade of "F" in the course and be referred to dean's discipline for further institutional action. If you are unsure how plagiarism is defined at Columbia, let me know immediately and I will be happy to explain further. All students are expected to abide by the Columbia College Honor Code, which states:

"I affirm that I will not plagiarize, use unauthorized materials, or give or receive illegitimate help on assignments, papers, and examinations. I will also uphold equity and honesty in the evaluation of my work and the work of others. I do so to sustain a community built around this Code of Honor."

- 6) Disability Services and Accommodation.** In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, you must first be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Please refer to <http://health.columbia.edu/disability-services> for further information on this process. You must present an accommodation letter and any other necessary documentation to the instructor before exams are administered or other accommodations can be provided. Please do not come to me directly with accommodation requests—I will gladly honor

accommodation requests from ODS, but cannot evaluate and accommodate students myself.

- 7) **Confidentiality.** I am happy to discuss with you any problems that you might be having at Columbia or that might be affecting your engagement with my class, but **I am a mandatory reporter.** That means that I cannot keep confidences, and under some circumstances I may be legally compelled to share information with the University. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, *I strongly recommend contacting Counseling and Psychological Services* (below).
- 8) **Resources.** Columbia University provides a variety of different services and resources to students, all of which you should feel free to use.

The Writing Center, in 310 Philosophy Hall, provides writing support to students at all stages of the paper-writing process. They can be reached at (212) 854-3886, or at <https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center>.

Academic Success Programs provides a network of comprehensive programs and services that assist students in enhancing and maximizing their academic potential through academic advising, academic skill-building, career seminars, personal counseling, and mentoring opportunities. ASP also provides individual and group tutorials and skills-based workshops to students who desire additional academic support services. They can be reached at (212) 854-3514, or at <https://www.cc-seas.columbia.edu/asp>.

Counseling and Psychological Services supports the psychological and emotional well-being of the campus community by providing counseling, consultation and crisis intervention—all of which adhere to strict standards of confidentiality. CPS offers free psychological counseling (short-term individual counseling, couples counseling for students and their partners, student life support groups, medication consultation, training, and emergency consultation) to all undergraduates who have paid the Health Service Fee. CPS can be reached at (212) 854-2284, or in an emergency at (212) 854-2878; its website is <https://health.columbia.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services>.

Columbia's *Office of Disability Services* empowers students with disabilities to realize their academic and personal potential by facilitating equal access and coordinating reasonable accommodations and support services for eligible students. Students seeking accommodations or support services from ODS are required to register with the office. ODS can be reached at (212) 854-2388, or at <https://health.columbia.edu/disability-services>.

Student Services for Gender-Based and Sexual Misconduct manages the disciplinary procedure for reports of gender-based and sexual misconduct where students are alleged to have engaged in such behavior. This office can be reached at (212) 854-1717, or at sexualrespect.columbia.edu.

Rape Crisis/Anti-Violence Support Center Hotline: (212) 854-HELP (4357)

9) Grading. Your grade will be calculated roughly as follows:

Participation: 20%

Midterm Exam: 15%

Final Exam: 20%

3 Essays: 15% each

I reserve the right to depart from this rubric in extraordinary circumstances.

10) Required Texts.

The following texts are available at BookCulture, at 536 West 112th Street. If you prefer to contribute to the death of independent booksellers, these texts are of course available at amazon.com and a variety of other online retailers, however *please make sure you have purchased the correct edition.*

Plato, Republic (Hackett)

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics (Oxford, trns. Ross/Brown)

Aristotle, Politics (Hackett)

New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha (Oxford)

Augustine, City of God (Penguin)

The Qur'an, Abdel Haleem ed. (Oxford)

Machiavelli, The Prince (Hackett)

The Protestant Reformation (Harper & Row)

Hobbes, Leviathan (Oxford)

Locke, Political Writings, Wootton, ed. (Hackett)

--COURSE SCHEDULE ON FOLLOWING PAGE--

11) Schedule of Classes.

Sept 6	Introduction/Plato, <i>Republic</i>
Sept 8	Plato, <i>Republic</i>
Sept 13	Plato, <i>Republic</i>
Sept 15	Plato, <i>Republic</i>
Sept 20	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
Sept 22	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics/Politics</i>
Sept 27	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> (FIRST ESSAY ASSIGNED)
Sept 29	Old Testament
Oct 4	New Testament
Oct 6	Augustine, <i>City of God</i>
Oct 11	Augustine, <i>City of God</i> (FIRST ESSAY DUE)
Oct 13	Qur'an
Oct 18	Qur'an
Oct 20	Medieval Islamic Philosophy
Oct 25	Medieval Christian Philosophy
Oct 27	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> (SECOND ESSAY ASSIGNED)
Nov 1	Machiavelli, <i>The Discourses</i>
Nov 3	Federalist Papers/Midterm Review
Nov 8	<i>No Class – Election Day</i>
Nov 10	<i>Midterm!</i> (SECOND ESSAY DUE)
Nov 15	Sepulveda & Vitoria
Nov 17	Selections from Hillerbrand (THIRD ESSAY ASSIGNED)
Nov 20	Descartes (NOTE: This is a Sunday, to accommodate students who will be travelling on the 22. We will determine the time for this class closer to its date)
Nov 24	<i>No Class - Thanksgiving</i>
Nov 29	Hobbes
Dec 1	Hobbes (THIRD ESSAY DUE)
Dec 6	Locke
Dec 8	Last Day/Final Review
Dec 16	<i>Final Exam (12:30-3:30, location TBA)</i>