

The College of the Humanities Humanities Program

HUMS4000: Politics, Modernity and the Common Good

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Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:35 - 12:55 (Paterson 303)

Tutorials: G-1. Wednesdays 13:05 - 14:55. G-2. Tuesdays 10:05 - 11:25 (Paterson 302)

Description

The Bachelor of Humanities program focuses on the human condition and the civic virtues. Year one approached humanity as *homo dei*, year two centered on human reason, and year three considered humanity in its aesthetic dimensions. The fourth year core seminar explores how, beginning with the French Revolution, the most radical forces of modernity set out to emancipate humanity from all forms of traditional authority. How did this project unfold and what efforts were made either to restrain or intensify it? Although new and radical, these ideas emerged from a debate stretching all the way back to ancient Greece. The fourth year core seminar, therefore, brings the whole adventure of the Bachelor of Humanities curriculum to a conclusion and returns the conversation to the world of the 21st century.

In the first term, we undertake a philosophical exploration of the problems of modernity and freedom by considering some major themes in 19th and early 20th century European philosophy and political thought. We will pay particular attention to the emergence and unfolding of the Philosophy of Freedom, also known as German Idealism. We attempt to return to a classical conception of human existence rooted in our communal connectedness with one another, a synthesis of the ancient Greek polis with the individual liberties of the modern age. This historicist philosophy tries to restore a full sense of cultural, aesthetic and civic satisfaction as against what was seen as the vulgarity, narrowness and philistinism of Enlightenment individualism and the concept of the state as nothing more than a heartless utilitarian contract among producers and consumers of commodities.

Thus, we will begin with Plato in order to consider the classical conception of the good life, which provided both a precedent and a foil for German Idealism, especially Hegel, whose *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a conscious re-enactment of the Platonic ascent to wisdom and happiness on historicist grounds. We will then examine Hobbes' *Leviathan* as the foundational text of modern liberal individualism at what the German thinkers considered its worst. We will then turn to Rousseau, severe critic of Hobbesian materialism and the first modern thinker to attempt to recover the classical vision of the polis on the basis of modern natural right, and whose struggle to reconcile freedom with

happiness provides German Idealism with its central enigma. After considering Burke's critique of the French Revolution and its Terror as the culmination of Rousseau's political theory, we will examine how Kant and Schiller each take up one of the two poles inherited from Rousseau's thought, setting the stage for Hegel's grand synthesis of freedom and community, the "absolute Science of Spirit," designed to promote freedom and community while avoiding revolutionary violence. The rest of the course examines a series of on-going assaults on Hegel's Absolute Idealism from the Left (Marx) and (in the European sense of the term) the Right (Nietzsche and Heidegger). Of special interest will be the internal debate among these thinkers as to whether history is rational and progressive (Hegel and Marx) or a cycle of existential experiences deeper than any rational account can penetrate, and with no teleological direction (Nietzsche and Heidegger). We will also re-encounter a number of themes that arose in previous B. Hum. courses in light of their connection to Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger: e.g., poetry versus philosophy, reason and revelation, the meaning of tragedy, the Apollonian and Dionysian. From Schiller down to Heidegger, German Idealism was deeply concerned with the relationship of music, art and liberal education to human wholeness and this theme will also be considered throughout the course. With Heidegger, we reach the fragmentation of German Idealism into the 20th century schools of existentialism, neo-Marxism and post-modernism, and a growing despair over the benevolent progress of history as the 20th century is faced with the juggernaut of world war and global technology

In the second term, we continue with the presupposition that underlined the first semester, namely that a gigantic paradigm shift happened in human consciences as well as its consciousness. However, while the first term took the conversation through a philosophical debate as to the nature of these new ideas, this part of the course will look at the unfolding of those ideas in the real world as the civilization of modernity. The "common good," however defined, requires a robust civilizational framework to help its materialization. The Athenian civilization proved the breeding ground for the ideas, notions, and concepts that form the foundation of the modern West. The new ideas, concepts and notions have led to the emergence of a civilization with autonomy, independent, and freedom as qualities for agency, the *modus operandi*, and the social structures, that not only have led to the emergence of the self as agent/actor, but also to the societal form of the sovereign state, and the anarchical society of states, and the global capitalist system. What are the nuances of this transformation? What did it entail? The First half of the term concentrates on the unfolding of modernity process into a civilization through the works of the giants of our time.

We begin the term with the classic work of the American/German philosopher, Hannah Arendt, on the human condition. Even though she has been described as one of "Heidegger's children," she has gone beyond the German tradition and provides a giant revival of the Aristotelian question of what does it mean to be human but within the context of the modern condition. Then through examining the works of our own Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, we explore the *modus operandi* of the modern civilization. For Taylor the modern condition of secularity means a great dis-embedding from the brink of tradition, where the self is left on his/her own reason and how this idea

has led to the emergence of an all-pervasive order. We shall continue with the works of the International Relation Theorist, Hedley Bull, who provides an insightful portrait of the spatial structures and organizations (or the international system) that shapes the public square in the modern civilization. In the second part of the course, we turn to thinkers who are harsher about the modern civilization than the aforementioned thinkers are. They argue that in practice, power politics and money, not freedom, and autonomy dominate the public domain in the unfolding of the industrial European and American worlds and more so, it extended to the non-Western world as well. We deal with the literary, philosophical, religious, and post-modern treatments of the modernity-based civilization. Here, we begin with Salman Rushdie and continue with Edward Said and Gandhi, ending with Michael Foucault. These thinkers invite us to a radical reconsideration of the present condition of globalized and yet fragmented world. They provide insightful meditation on our present epistemology, the nature of our relation with the world and the divine and may help us comprehend the prevalence of the various forms of extremism, politics of identity, terrorism and 21st century tribalism.

Course Requirements: The final grade of this course will be calculated as follows:

Attendance and participation* (35%)

A term paper** (40%)

An in-class review exam of the reading materials (25%) held late in the terms (**November 21 and March 20**).

* Attendance of lectures and discussion groups is obligatory, not optional. The grade is based on regular attendance of lectures and discussion groups and participation during the discussion groups asking questions and offering comments. Students will be expected to contribute to the discussion groups on an equally rotating basis, coming prepared to raise questions or themes concerning the readings for that week. **NB:** Please do not switch out of your assigned discussion group. Only if the groups are (to the degree possible) of equal size can the responsibility of students to generate the discussion be shared equally. The only valid reason for switching into the other group is a conflict with a regularly scheduled Carleton University course (i.e., not a directed readings course or any kind of extra-curricular activity). If you think you have such a conflict, please speak to Prof. Newell for the Fall and Prof. Rajae for the Winter.

** 10-12 pages double-spaced typed paper. The fall term version is a textual exegesis to be submitted on Friday December 7 (Topics will be provided). The winter term version is a fourth year paper, with a topic of your choice in consultation with the instructor and submission is on Monday April 8. E-submissions are not acceptable. Late papers suffers fine by a fraction of a grade (i.e., A to A-) for each day.

Fall Term Texts:

Plato. *The Symposium*. Hackett
Thomas Hobbes. *The Leviathan*. Hackett.
Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Basic Political Writings* Hackett.
Edmund Burke. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Oxford.
Immanuel Kant. *Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Hackett.
Friedrich Schiller. *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*.
Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*.
Hackett.
----- *Phenomenology of Spirit*.
Friedrich Nietzsche. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Vintage
----- *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life*.
Hackett.
Karl Marx. *Selected Writings*. Hackett.
Martin Heidegger. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Yale.
----- *Basic Writings*. Harper.

Approximate Schedule of Themes and Readings for the Fall Semester:

Introductory Remarks.

Lecture 1: Classical holism. Modernity's break with classical holism. The Philosophy of Freedom/German Idealism as an attempt to restore classical holism on the basis of modern autonomy and liberty.

Nature versus Freedom: The Origins of German Idealism

Lecture 2: Plato, Symposium, first half (to speech of Socrates).
Lecture 3: Plato, Symposium, second half (from speech of Socrates to end).
Lecture 4: Hobbes, Epistle Dedicatory, chapters 1 – 14.
Lecture 5: Hobbes, chapters 15 to 24.
Lecture 6: Rousseau, First and Second Discourses.
Lecture 7: Rousseau, Social Contract Books 1 and 2.
Lecture 8: Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France.
Lecture 9: Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, parts 1-2. Schiller, Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man, letters 1,2,13,20,21,22.

Oct. 22-26, Fall Break

The Hegelian Absolute and the Science of Spirit

Lecture 10: Hegel, On Love; Introduction to the Philosophy of History;

Lecture 11: Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Miller translation (Oxford).

Readings are by section number, not page number. Preface, 1-41; Introduction (entire); The Truth of Self-Certainty, 166-167; Lordship and Bondage, 178-196.

Lecture 12: *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Stoicism, 197-201; Skepticism, 202-205; Unhappy Consciousness, 206-230; Spirit, 438-443; Ethical World, 446-463; Ethical Action, 464-476; Right, 477-483; Self-estrangement, 484-486. Absolute Freedom and Terror, 582-596; Forgiveness, 670-671; Religion, 672-683.

The First Assault on Hegelian Idealism: Marx and Marxism

Lecture 13: Marx, *On the Jewish Question*.

Lecture 14: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*.

The Second Assault on Hegelian Idealism: Nietzsche and the World as Will to Power

Lecture 15: Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (hand-out); The Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life; The Three Metamorphoses (hand-out); *Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface, Parts 1-3.

Lecture 16: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, parts 5-9.

The Third Assault on Hegelian Idealism: Heidegger, Existentialism and Post-modernism

Lecture 17: Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, parts 1-3

Lecture 18: Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, part 4.

Lecture 19: Heidegger, *The Origin of the Artwork*; *Letter on Humanism*.

Lecture 20: Heidegger, *An Essay Concerning Technology*.

Lecture Class 21: In class Review Exam (November 21, 2018)

Lecture 22: *The Aestheticization of Revolutionary Violence: a screening of Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will*.

Lecture 23: *The Fragmentation of German Idealism into Critical Theory, neo-Marxism and Post-modernism*.

Lecture 24. *Concluding Remarks*.

Winter Term Texts:

Hannah Arendt. *The Human Condition*

Hedley Bull. *The Anarchical Society*

Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*

M.K. Gandhi. *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*

Salman Rushdie. *Midnight's Children: a Novel*

Edward Said. *Orientalism*

Charles Taylor. *Modern Social Imaginaries*

Approximate Schedule of Themes and Readings for the Winter Semester:

Civilization

Lecture 1 (Jan. 7): Introductory Remarks; Civilization and Modernity

The Civilization of Modernity

Lecture 2 (Jan. 9): Being Human (Arendt, 1-78)

Lecture 3 (Jan. 14): Labour and Work (Arendt, 79-174)

Lecture 4 (Jan. 16): Action (Arendt, 175-247)

Lecture 5 (Jan. 21): Modern Age, and the Good (Arendt, pp. 248-325)

Lecture 6 (Jan. 23): Modern order and “Self-Understanding” (Taylor, 1-67)

Lecture 7 (Jan. 28): “Social Self-Understanding” I (Taylor, 69-107)

Lecture 8 (Jan. 30): “Social Self-Understanding” II (Taylor, 109-161)

Lecture 9 (Feb. 4): Consequence; Secularity (Taylor, 163-196)

Lecture 10 (Feb. 6): Anarchical Society (Bull, 3-50)

Lecture 11 (Feb. 11): Ends of AS: Order and Justice (Bull, 51-94)

Lecture 12 (Feb. 13): Means in AS-I (Bull, 97-155)

February 18th –22nd Winter Break

Lecture 13 (Feb. 25): Means of AS-II (Bull, 159-222)

II: Critics of the Civilization of Modernity

Lecture 14 (Feb. 27): The World of Optimism Disease (Rushdie, 1-288)

Lecture 15 (Mar. 4): The Fractured Modern Soul (Rushdie, 289-533)

Lecture 16 (Mar. 6): Swaraj as the Human Condition (Gandhi, 5-41)

Lecture 17 (Mar. 11): The Reality of India (Gandhi, 42-65)

Lecture 18 (Mar. 13): True Civilisation (Gandhi, 66-119)

Lecture 19 (Mar. 18): Said and Orientalism (Film)

Review Exam (Mar. 20): In class

Lecture 20 (Mar. 25): Anatomy of “Orientalism” (Said, 1-28, 31-110, and 284-328)

Lecture 21 (Mar. 27): The New Phase of Orientalism (Said, 329-352)

Lecture 22 (Apr. 1): Constructed Worlds (Foucault, 3-31)

Lecture 23 (Apr. 3): The Working of the System (Foucault, 135-169)

Lecture 24 (Apr. 8): Maintaining the System, Surveillance (Foucault, 195-228)



University Regulations for All Humanities Courses

Copies of Written Work Submitted

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the internet. More information can be found [here](#).

Academic Accommodation Policy

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Religious obligation: write to the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at

613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion is below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

[Grading System](#)

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

Statement on Class Conduct

The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and **in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due.**

The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. More information is available [in the calendar](#).

Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of a serious illness/emergency or other circumstances beyond their control may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made. [More information](#).

The application for a [deferral](#) must:

1. be made in writing or online to the Registrar's Office no later than **three working days** after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and, in cases of illness, by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination, or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [forms and fees page](#).

Any questions related to deferring a Final Exam or Final Assignment/Take Home Examination should be directed to the [Registrar's Office](#).

Withdrawal From Courses

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [here](#):

Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

Make sure that you are aware of the separate deadlines for Financial and Academic withdrawal!

Making registration decisions in Carleton Central involves making a financial and academic commitment for the courses you choose, regardless of attendance. If you do not attend – you must withdraw in Carleton Central within the published deadlines to cancel your registration. [More information](#)

Department Contact Information

College of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for CLCV, HUMS LATN GREK Term Papers and assignments is outside 300 P.A.

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for RELI and SAST Term Papers and assignments is outside of 2A39 P.A.

Registrar's Office 300 Tory (613)520-3500

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/>

Student Resources on Campus

[CUKnowHow Website](#)

[Academics: From registration to graduation, the tools for your success.](#)