

The College of the Humanities Humanities Program

HUMS4000: Politics, Modernity and the Common Good

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Lectures: Monday 1:05-2:25 and Wednesday 1:05-2:25 (Paterson 303)

Tutorials: G-1 Monday 2:35-3:55 and G-2 Monday 4:05-5:25 (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 seminar, therefore, brings the whole adventure of the Bachelor of Humanities curriculum to a conclusion and returns us to the world of the 21st century.

In the first term, we undertake a philosophical exploration of the problems of modernity and freedom. We will pay particular attention to the emergence and unfolding of the philosophy of modernity from Kant, and through the pillar figures such as Hegel, Mill, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Max Weber. This philosophical movement seeks to redeem the emancipatory potential of the present against what it describes as the culture of alienation, the assertion of rigid and narrow private interests associated with Enlightenment materialism and individualism. Beginning at the height of the enlightenment, we explore enlightenment notions of the self and freedom and then examine how these conceptions shift over the next century. A shift that increasingly understands the self as a product of its time and place and which complicates the political ideals of freedom and autonomy. We begin with some of the classical 'liberal' political thinkers of the late 18th century enlightenment: Smith, Bentham, Kant, and, as the course continues, we explore how these seminal enlightenment notions of the self and autonomy are altered by new understandings of the self as situated in a time and context. Hegel in many respects is the culmination of the enlightenment's notion of the self as autonomous individual now synthesized with this new historical sense. For Hegel, freedom is now to be achieved in and through the institutions and practices of modern ethical life. Radicalised and applied to the problems of economic, political, and religious life, this programme continues to dominate in the works of the Hegelian School up to the Revolutions of 1848, and forms the backdrop to the thought of Karl Marx. Deriving from many of the same sources, but with markedly different inflections, Romanticism and Nietzsche call into question the connection of spontaneous action with rational autonomy, and the idea of history as a progressive task of emancipation and the realisation of reason. We finish with Freud and Weber, thinkers who deeply recognize the challenges to freedom not only from the modern world, but from the very nature of the self.

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. But 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. 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 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 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. They argue that in practice power and politics and not freedom and autonomy dominate the fate of 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 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 is based on the followings:

Attendance and participation* (30%)

A paper** (40%, due date decided in class)

Take-home exam*** (30%, due date is the final day of university exam period)

* Attendance of lectures and discussion groups is obligatory, not optional. Grade is based on regular class and discussion attendance, participation (asking

questions and offering comments) and discussion presentation(s). Students will be asked to make presentations in the discussion groups, on an equally rotating basis, on the readings for that week. The mechanics of this will take some time to work out. On average, we will aim to have two presentations at each discussion group. Occasionally, more may have to be scheduled to give everyone an opportunity to present. Every effort will be made to enable students to present on the readings of their choice, but some flexibility will be necessary to fit everyone in. Students are encouraged to review the readings and volunteer sooner rather than later if there is a particular text you would like to present on.

** 15 pages double-spaced typed. To be submitted **Monday December 4** in the Fall and **April 11** in the winter term Topics will be provided. E-submissions are not acceptable.

Late papers will be fined by a fraction of a grade (i.e., A to A-) for each day.

***In accordance with University regulations, the take-home exam will be handed out at the last lecture class. It will be due on the last day of the exam period, 12 noon at the respective Professor's office (Loeb D691 and Paterson 300). The questions will cover the entire semester of readings and themes, with some degree of choice. E-submissions are not acceptable.

Fall Term Texts:

- Kant: *Political Writings* (2nd Edition), Edited by H. S. Reiss. Cambridge University Press.
- Marx: *Selected Writings*, Edited by Lawrence H. Simon. Hackett Publishing.
- John Stuart Mill: *On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays* (2nd Edition) Edited by Mark Philp and Frederick Rosen. Oxford University Press.
- Friedrich Nietzsche: *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*. Translated by Peter Preuss
- Friedrich Nietzsche: *On The Genealogy Of Morals*, Translated by Michael A. Scarpitti, Penguin Classics.
- Sigmund Freud: *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Translated by James Strachey, W.W. Norton & Company.
- *Course Reader*, available from Ryttec Printing.

Approximate Schedule of Themes and Readings for the Fall Semester:

Week One: The Enlightenment I: individuality, freedom and optimism. Adam Smith.

Week Two: The Enlightenment II: utilitarianism: Jeremy Bentham.
German Enlightenment I. Kant: autonomy.

Week Three: German Enlightenment II. Kant: reason, state, and international politics.

Weeks Four: Democracy and Freedom: the Critics: Edmund Burke, De Tocqueville.

Week Five: Utilitarianism and Freedom. J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*.

Week Six: J.S. Mill and the Critiques of Utilitarianism.

Week Seven: Hegel: Freedom and society; *The Philosophy of Right*.

Week Eight: Fall Break

Week Nine: Karl Marx: Alienation, Materialism.

Week Ten: Karl Marx: Capital, Communism.

Week Eleven: Friedrich Nietzsche: history, morality, and agency.

Week Twelve: Sigmund Freud: individuality and rationality.

Week Thirteen: Max Weber: rationality in the modern world.

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*

Themes and Readings for the Winter Semester: Approximate Schedule of Themes and Readings (Detailed outline will be handed out separately);

I. Civilization

1st Class: Introductory Remarks. Civilization and the Philosophy of Freedom

II. The Civilization of Modernity

Weeks 1-3 Proactive Human

Arendt. *The Human Condition*

Weeks 4-5 Modern Modus Operandi

Taylor. *Modern Social Imaginaries*

Weeks 6-7 Structure of the Modern Civilization

Bull. *The Anarchical Society*

Week 8 Winter Break

III. The Critics of the Civilization of Modernity

Week 9 Literally Portrait of the Human Condition

Rushdie. *Midnight's Children*

Weeks 10 Reconstructed Human

Gandhi. *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*

Week 11 Distorted Modus Operandi

Said. *Orientalism*

Week 12 Panopticon World

Foucault. *Discipline & Punish*



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 on <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/#AIatCU>.

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 Chart](#)

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 Exams

Students who do not write/attend a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply to write a deferred examination.

1. be made in writing 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](#).

The granting of a deferral also requires that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course according to the evaluation scheme established in the Course Outline, excluding the final examination for which deferral privileges are requested. Reasons for denial of a deferral may include, among other conditions, a failure to (i) achieve a minimum score in the course before the final examination; (ii) attend a minimum number of classes; (iii) successfully complete a specific task (e.g. term paper, critical report, group project, computer or other assignment); (iv) complete laboratory work; (v) successfully complete one or more midterms; or (vi) meet other reasonable conditions of successful performance.

More information can be found [in the calendar](#).

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

Withdrawal From Courses

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA.

NEW FALL 2017: WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term. Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Dates can be found here: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

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 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](#)