TC 357 – LAH 350 ● Self and Society in Renaissance Culture

Professor: Professor Wayne Rebhorn
Unique #: 42070 - 29450
Semester: Fall, 2015
Cross-lists: N/A

Areas: N/A
Flags: Writing, Global Cultures
Restrictions: None
Computer Instruction: N/A

Professor Information: Office location: Parlin Hall 328; Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and by appointment; email address: warebhorn@austin.utexas.edu

Prerequisites: upper division standing and a grade-point average of 3.50.

Course Description: This course aims to introduce students to the civilization of the Renaissance in Europe from Petrarch and Boccaccio in mid-fourteenth century Italy to Molière in mid-seventeenth century France. Although our primary focus will be on the literature of the period, we will also consider politics, philosophy, and art, as well as social and intellectual history. Since we cannot hope to do justice to all these subjects or to a period as immense as the Renaissance, we shall focus on two of its central preoccupations, both of which are harbingers of the modern: first, its notion of a flexible or protean self and of identity as something shaped and manipulated by the individual; and second, its sense of the historical contingency of the social order, of society as something man-made and hence transformable. Proceeding more or less in chronological order, we will follow the first of these notions in autobiographical writings and in books which aimed to prescribe just how the self should be fashioned. At the same time, we will also examine the preoccupation of the Renaissance with society in the utopian literature of the period and in a variety of works concerned with the alienation of marginal groups and with social change. Actually, these two concerns were never really distinct from one another in the minds of Renaissance people, nor were they kept apart in the works we shall read. Finally, we shall consider the growth of rationalism and absolutism in the course of the period which ultimately led away from the Renaissance and into the Enlightenment.

This course also aims to help students improve their writing by having them write and re-write their essays, with abundant feedback from the professor at each stage.

Texts: Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (Norton); More, *Utopia* (Barnes & Noble); Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly* (Penguin); Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (Norton); Machiavelli, *The Prince and Other Writings* (Barnes & Noble); *Lazarillo de Tormes and The Swindler* (Penguin); Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (Signet); Jonson, *Plays and Masques* (Norton); Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Signet); Molière, *Tartuffe* (Harvest); and a packet at the Co-op, containing Petrarch’s "Ascent" and the Montaigne’s “Of Cannibals.” (Note: I have ordered new, not used, copies of the books by Boccaccio, More, and Machiavelli, and as their translator or editor, I will happily inscribe your copies for you.)

Requirements and Grading:

1. Attendance. Students are expected to attend class. If you miss more than four classes, your grade average for the semester will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade for each additional class you miss (e.g., a B+ will become a B, a B- will become a C+). There are no excused absences. Attendance also means attending the entire meeting of the class; if you leave early without getting permission, you will be marked absent for the class. Every two latenesses will equal an absence.

2. Quizzes. There will be brief, unannounced quizzes given at the start of class throughout the semester. Each quiz will be short answer in format and will cover the reading assigned for that day. One quiz grade may be dropped without penalty. If you are absent on a quiz day or miss a quiz because of lateness, your grade for that quiz will be a zero. There will be no make-up quizzes.

3. Essays. Students will write two essays during the course of the semester, determining the topics for those essays on their own. They may derive their topics, however, from the set of study questions provided by the professor, who will also distribute general guidelines for writing essays. One essay will be shorter (at least 6 pages) and the longer one will include references to at least two or three secondary articles or book chapters. There will be opportunities for consultation with the professor about the essays at various stages of their composition as well as an opportunity to re-write each essay. However, all re-writes will be due within a short period, usually no more than about five days after the original essay is turned in (the specific deadlines will be arranged with the professor).

All essays must be written in 12-point Times or Times Roman, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides; pages must be numbered. Footnotes must be numbered with Arabic numerals and placed at the bottom of the page. Put page references to texts (after the first reference) in a parenthesis within the body of the essay itself.
All students will be asked to compose a list of at least 5 or 6 texts (ranked in order) they wish to write on, and the professor will attempt to assign them two texts from among their top choices. They may decide to make their first essay the longer one of the two, either by composing it as such from the start, or by expanding a shorter version of that essay initially. Alternatively, students may chose to make their second essay their longer essay. In the first case, students will have approximately three weeks to turn that first essay into their longer essay by adding secondary materials into it, expanding it, and refining it stylistically, as need be (the specific due date will be worked out with the professor). In the second case, students should read the text for their longer essay by no later than two weeks before their essay is due so that they may consult with the professor about their thesis and possible secondary materials they might read. The first draft of that longer essay will be due on the date when the class reads the text involved, and students will have five days after the essay is returned to them to complete any necessary revisions.

4. Oral reports. Students will present oral reports (about 5 minutes long) on both of their papers to the class, presentations that should ideally help to initiate class discussion.

4. Grading: The final grade will be determined by the short essay (25%), the longer essay (50%), the quizzes (15%), and class participation, which will include the students’ oral presentation of their essays (10%).

5. Exams. There will be no exams.

6. Final grades. Final grades will use the plus/minus system.

Course Schedule

(If a text is assigned for a given day, the entire text must be read for that day, unless otherwise noted.)

Aug.
27. Introduction. Machiavelli’s letter to Francesco Vettori.

Sept.
8. The Decameron, Day 2: Stories 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, Conclusion.
10. The Decameron, Day 3: Introduction, Stories 1, 2, 10; Day 4: Introduction, Stories 1, 2, 5, 9.
15. The Decameron, Day 5: Stories 4, 8, 9; Day 6: Introduction, Stories 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, Conclusion.
17. The Decameron, Day 7: Stories 1, 2, 4, 9; Day 8: Stories 3, 5, 6, 7, 9.
22. The Decameron, Day 9: Introduction, Stories 2, 3, 5, 10, Conclusion; Day 10: Stories 4, 6, 10, Conclusion; The Author’s Conclusion.
29. Utopia, Book 2.

Oct.
1. Erasmus, The Praise of Folly.
6. The Praise of Folly.
22. The Prince
27. Lazarillo de Tormes.
29. Marlowe, Doctor Faustus.

Nov.
3. Doctor Faustus.
12. The Tempest.
17. No class.
26. No class (Thanksgiving).

Dec.
1. Moliere, Tartuffe.
3. Tartuffe and Teaching Evaluations.
Other Policies:

**Honor Code:** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

**Academic Integrity:** Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. For additional information on Academic Integrity, see [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint.php)

**Documented Disability Statement:** The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or [http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd)

**Religious Holy Days:** By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.