

Course Proposal: English 3100G/Philosophy 3100G: Cultural Foundations I

1. Catalog Description

- a) English 3100G /Philosophy **3100G**
- b) Cultural Foundations I
- c) (3-0-3)
- d) F, S
- e) Cultural Foun I
- f) An in-depth look at three cultural foundations, two Western and one African. The course examines societies and values by exploring primary texts in literature, philosophy, and religion.
- g) Prerequisite: English 1001G, English 1002G
- h) English 3100G/Philosophy **3100G** is a **writing intensive** course.

2. Student Learning Objectives

- a) In successfully completing English **3100G/Philosophy 3100G**, students will:
 - 1) Read, discuss, and write about primary texts, so as to encourage traits connected with logical, critical, independent thinking and with the evaluation and processing of oral, written, and visual information. Students will develop their skills in listening and reading with comprehension and writing and speaking in standard English. The examination of texts from a variety of cultures will encourage the recognition of relationships, of similarities and differences (literacy, critical thinking).
 - 2) Read primary texts from radically different cultures as a means to exploring the impact of racial and ethnic prejudices on attitudes and behaviors. Developing an understanding of the foundations underlying cultural values will aid students in "developing the capacity to make informed, responsible individual and social judgments." Observing the different (though sometimes parallel) ethical and behavioral schemas proposed by great minds in a variety of cultural contexts will enable students to better understand "the contributions of physical, social, intellectual, and emotional well-being and sense of self to the quality of community life " (literacy, critical thinking, citizenship).
 - 3) Write papers and essay exams throughout the semester (3000-4000 words) on the texts in the course (literacy, critical thinking).
- b) Additional student learning objectives. Students will
 - 1) Develop an awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the contributions

of the arts to past and present cultures.

2) Come to an appreciation of knowledge for its own sake sufficient to motivate continuing self-directed learning.

3. Course Outline

English 3100G/Philosophy 3100G is divided into 15 units, to be distributed evenly during a 15-week/50-minute course (45 classes) or a 15-week/75-minute course (30 classes)

Unit 1/Week 1: Introduction to the Course and Classical Civilization

Selections from Homer's *Odyssey* and Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*
Selections from E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*

Units 2-3/Weeks 2-3: The Social, Political, and Psychological Thought of Antiquity

Selections from Plato, *Republic* and *Phaedo*
Selections from Aristotle's *Ethics*
Sappho, lyrics
Sophocles, *Antigone*
Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*
Selections from Ovid, *Art of Love*

Unit 4/Week 4: The Classical View of Art and Metaphysics

Selections from Plato, *Republic*
Selections from Aristotle, *Poetics*
Sophocles, *Oedipus*
A Survey of Greek and Roman Art and Architecture

Unit 5/Week 5: The Roman and Hellenistic Inheritance

Selections from Plotinus, *The Enneads*
Selections from Cicero and Caesar
Virgil, *Aeneid*

Unit 6/Week 6: Introduction to Jewish and Christian Cultural Foundations. Judaism: The Civilization of Torah

The Hebrew Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Job, Psalms, 1 Maccabees
Goldin, *The Living Talmud: The Wisdom of the Fathers*
Holtz, *Back to the Sources* (chapters on *Bible*, *Talmud* and *Midrash*).

Unit 7/Week 7: Judaism through the Ages

Holtz, *Back to the Sources* (chapters on Medieval Philosophy, Kabbala, Hassidism).
 Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim*
 On Reserve: *The Zohar*

Unit 8/Week 8: Early Christianity

The New Testament: Matthew, First Corinthians, Revelation, Romans
 On Reserve: Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity*
 Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*
The Ante-Nicene Fathers

Unit 9/Week 9: The Medieval Church

August, *The Confessions*
 Dante, *The Inferno*
 On Reserve: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*
 Joinville, *Chronicles of the Crusades*

Unit 10/Week 10: Humanism and Reformation

Dillenberger, *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*
 Dolan, *The Essential Erasmus (In Praise of Folly, An Inquiry Concerning Faith)*
 On Reserve: Cassirer, *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man (Petrarch, "Ascent of Mt. Ventoux," etc.)*

Unit 11/Week 11: The African Cultural Context: Origins

D. T. Naine, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*
 Ulli Beier, ed., *The Origin of Life and Death: African Creation Myths*

Units 12-13/Weeks 12-13: The African Cultural Context: Oral Culture and Traditional Belief

Selections from Peter Seitel, ed., *See So That We May See. Performance and Interpretation of Traditional Tales From Tanzania*
 Selections from Victor Turner, *Revelation and Divination in Ndembu Ritual*

Units 14-15/Weeks 14-15: The Traditional Context for Contemporary African Literature

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
 Ngugi wa Thiong'O, *Weep Not, Child*
 Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino, Song of Ocol*

4. Evaluation of student learning

- a) Achievement of student learning will be evaluated based on the following:
- 1) two to three essays , at least one with revision 50%
 - 2) midterm and comprehensive final examinations 40%
 - 3) class discussion and oral presentations 10%
- b) English 3100G/ Philosophy 3100G satisfies the criteria for a **writing intensive** course.

5. Rationale

a) English **3100G**/Philosophy **3100G** will be in the Humanities segment of the general education program. The course will be structured around three five-unit segments, each introducing a distinctive set of cultural foundations by means of the study of significant primary texts. The ideas treated in each segment will be considered primarily in their own terms, but also, the context having been established, in relation to each other and to parallel western models.

The first segment explores the Greek and Roman foundations for Western social, ethical, and artistic thought. The segment begins with a one-unit introduction first to the course generally and then more particularly to the origins of Western civilization at the turning point from *mythos* to *logos*, as evidenced in Homer and Hesiod. It then turns to the psychological and social dimensions of antiquity, exploring such themes as gender and the role of the individual in society and the "mind/body" problem. The classical view of art and its relation to reality is treated next, and the segment closes by examining Roman and Hellenistic thought. The writers whose seminal texts will be read and discussed are the Greeks: Plato, Aristotle, Sappho, Sophocles, Plotinus, and Aristophanes; and the Romans: Cicero, Caesar, Ovid, and Virgil.

The second segment (units 6-10) examines Jewish and Christian foundations of Western thought. Unit six explores the Hebrew nation, with readings assigned from the Hebrew *Bible* and contemporary discussions of the Torah. Unit seven examines medieval and later Jewish commentarial traditions, including the Kabbala, as well as Haskala and the Hassidic movement. Unit eight examines the foundations of Christian faith, focussing on selected texts from the Christian Bible and contemporary commentary. Units nine and ten treat the development of a more modern Christian tradition in the Early and Medieval Churches, examining substantial selections from the two most significant philosophical and literary works of the middle ages, Augustine's *Confessions* and Dante's *Inferno*, and broaches the question of Protestant reform, with reading assigned from Martin Luther's work.

The third five-unit segment of English **3100-G** /Philosophy **3100-G** introduces Sub-Saharan African cultural foundations, providing students with a comparative perspective on the development of culture as empire and the transformation of cultures subject to colonization. By juxtaposing the development of Western culture with that of a non-Western culture, American students can examine the foundations wherein national, cultural identity provides the paradox of being a people both colonizing and colonized; hence, students can examine contemporary American values in light of both Eurocentric and Afrocentric cultural traditions. In units 12-13, students are introduced to traditional African concepts of origin, creation and death from a variety of African cultures by examining myths and an epic specific to tradition in present Mali. By using Tanzanian performance texts from ethnographer Peter Seitel and studies of Ndembu ritual by anthropologist Victor Turner, which include primary texts, students can examine further the oral tradition as a basis for culture and belief. In units 14-15, students will read two short novels by Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o and a long poem by Okot p'Bitek as a means of examining the relationships between colonizing and colonized culture and the impact of Western culture upon non-Western, African cultures.

b) The prerequisites for English **3100G**/Philosophy **3100G** are English 1001G and English 1002G.

6. Implementation

a) The course will be team-taught by members of the English and Philosophy Departments.

b) The texts for English **3100G**/Philosophy **3100G**: Cultural Foundations I, are:

Units 1-5

Plato, *Republic and Phaedo*, (Oxford University Press, 1993)
 Aristotle, *Poetics, Ethics* (Hackett, 1987)
 Sophocles, *Antigone and Oedipus* (Harp College, 1990)
 Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (Players Press, 1992)
 Ovid, *Art of Love* (Indiana University Press, 1957)
 Dodd, E.R., *The Greeks and the Irrational* (U of California Press, 1951)
 Hesiod, *Works and Days, Theogony* (Hackett, 1993)
 Homer, *The Odyssey* (Random House, 1990)
 Plotinus, *Enneads* (Viking Penguin, 1991)
 Virgil, *Aeneid* (Random House, 1990)

Units 6-10

Judah Goldin, *The Living Talmud: The Wisdom of the Fathers* (NAL-Dutton, 1954)
 Barry Holtz, *Back to the Sources* (S&S Trade, 1986)
 Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* (Pantheon, 1991)
 Augustine, *The Confessions* (Hackett, 1993)
 Dante, *The Inferno* (NAL-Dutton, 1954)

Dillenberger, *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings* (Doubleday 1958)
 (Dolan, *The Essential Erasmus* (NAL-Dutton, 1989)
The New Testament, The Hebrew Bible

Units 11-15

D. T. Naine, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* (Longman Group, 1979)
 Ulli Beier, Ed., *The Origin of Life and Death: African Creation Myths*
 (Heinemann, 1966)
 Selections from Peter Seitel, ed., *See So That We May See. Performance and
 Interpretation of Traditional Tales From Tanzania*
 Selections from Victor Turner, *Revelation and Divination in Ndembu Ritual*
 Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Astor-Honor, 1985)
 Ngugi wa Thiong'O, *Weep Not, Child* (Heinemann, 1988)
 Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino, Song of Ocol* (Heinemann 1984)

c) No supplementary materials or laboratory experience will be required.

d) The course will be first offered in Fall 2000.

7. Community College Transfer

There will be no community college transfer credit for this course.

8. Date approved by the department 3-27-00

9. Date approved by CAHCC 4-5-00

10. Date approved by CAA _____

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