

Wabash College

Department of Physics

CT-202(I) Cultures and Traditions

Instructor: Dr. Martin John Madsen

Semester: Spring 2007

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Office Hours:

TTh 9:45 am – 11:00 am

Discussion Times: MWF 9:00 am – 10:00 am

Room: Goodrich 006

Introduction

This course continues a broad survey of texts and readings from a selected group of cultures and traditions. This semester we will be reading *Frankenstein*, learning about the cultures of science, the ancient Hebrews, African-Americans, and we will be reading *Hamlet*.

Course Format and Procedure

The course consists of three discussion periods per week. There will periodically be general lectures delivered to the entire class. These will be held in Salter Hall.

Textbook and Reading

Various Texts, (various editions), by various authors

All the required texts are available at the bookstore. You are responsible for purchasing the same edition as the one the bookstore carries. This way, all page references will be uniform across the class.

C&T Readings Book, (Spring 2007 edition), by various authors

The C& T Readings Book will soon be available at the bookstore. Until the entire binder is available for purchase, each period's readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Discussions

Your final grade will consist of three parts. The first of these is your participation in class discussion, worth 37.5% of your final grade. This will be further broken down into three parts.

1. Preparation

- (a) Read the text. It is extremely helpful if you take notes on a separate sheet of paper (or computer) as you are reading. Mark passages that you feel are interesting and important. Think about your reading and question the author's motives, methods, and conclusions.
- (b) Prepare questions and comments. One of these must be posted to the appropriate discussion thread on the Blackboard site for each discussion period. The posting of questions to the group will constitute 12.5% of your final grade (if you post an acceptable question, you get credit). Note that copying a previously posted student's question is not acceptable.
 - i. Acceptable questions are, for example, "Why did Frankenstein initially agree to make a mate for the monster, but then change his mind and break his promise?"
 - ii. Unacceptable questions are, "Where did the monster go after Frankenstein created him?"
- (c) Comments must be posted prior to 8 am on the day of every discussion. Comments posted after this time, or in response to other student's questions will not count toward your discussion grade.
- (d) Once a week (on an unspecified random day) the discussion questions will be recorded and graded.

2. Participation

- (a) Participation is vital for a good discussion. Participation will also count for 12.5% of the final grade. As participation is a very subjective concept, your participation will be graded based on group feedback. At the end of each week you will be asked to fill out a survey, grading the participation of your fellow classmates. Participation will be ranked on the following scale:
 - 0- no participation or key comments
 - 1- a reasonable or average level of participation
 - 2- excellent participation and vital comments.

The average score for each week will be weighted with the instructor's observations and the participation score will be posted on Blackboard for the week.

- (b) Failure to grade your fellow students by not taking the survey prior to the next class period (on Monday) will make that week's participation grade an automatic zero.

3. Presence

- (a) Actually showing up to discussions and lectures is a third key part of participating in the discussion. Showing up alone is not enough, though: you must be awake and actively thinking. It is also important that you take notes. This aspect will also count for 12.5% of your final grade and will be measured as follows.
- (b) After each discussion or lecture, a discussion thread will be posted on Blackboard. You are to respond to this thread by repeating something that someone in the class (or the lecturer) said and comment on it: "[Student's name] said..."
- (c) Acceptable comments, showing thought and insight in the discussion, as well as showing a grasp of the key discussion points, will receive credit. Note that copying a previously posted student's comment is not acceptable.
 - i. Acceptable comment: "John said that he thought David was wrong in sending Bathsheba's husband to the front to be killed. I believe that David was justified in that he did not actually commit a crime and, as king, he had the power and authority to carry out such military orders..."
 - ii. Unacceptable comment: "John said that he believed in UFOs and I think he is an idiot."
- (d) Comments must be posted prior to the start of the next class period. Any comments posted after this time or posted in response to other student's comments will not be counted toward your discussion grade.

- (e) Once a week (on an unspecified random day) the discussion comments will be recorded and graded.
- 4. Although no formal attendance will be taken, attending class is essential! If you need to miss class, please let me know in advance; if you inadvertently miss because of oversleeping, sudden illness, please send me an email or voice mail of what happened. You are responsible for all material and announcements covered in class even if you failed to attend.

Writing Assignments

The second part of your grade will be composed of four writing assignments and, together, they will make up 37.5% of your final grade. The writing assignments will be broken up in the following way.

Papers - Critical Writing

You will write two papers of 4-5 pages (1200-1500 words) this semester on assigned or arranged topics. These papers will be organized, analytical essays in which you set forward a thesis and then demonstrate the validity of your ideas by means of examples, analysis and logical argument referring to specific pages and passages in the text. A range of topics will be presented in a timely manner. The papers will be due according to the following timetable:

Paper 1: Monday, January 29th, at 9:00 am

Paper 2: Friday, April 6th, at 9:00 am

The paper must be turned in via the digital dropbox on Blackboard. Make sure you include your name in the text of the file. You are expected to hand your paper in on time. A late paper will be marked down one point for each hour it is late.

Papers that are handed in on time may be rewritten; rewrites are due one week after the papers are returned to you. If you choose to rewrite a paper, the final grade will be the average of the original grade and the grade on the rewrite. A rewrite that simply corrects grammatical errors will not receive a higher grade. Pay attention to the “General Comments” on your comments sheet. Rewriting means re-thinking. You must discuss your plan to rewrite with the instructor PRIOR to beginning the rewriting process.

Each paper will be worth 12% of the final grade. Papers will be graded out of 100 points and will be evaluated with the following guidelines.

1. Organization and development of the argument (30 points)
 - (a) a clear central thesis
 - (b) logical organization
 - (c) evidence supporting your ideas; use of concrete examples that demonstrate understanding of the assigned texts (including page references)
2. Diction and syntax, using appropriate language (20 points)
3. Correctness in grammar and punctuation (10 points)
4. Depth and richness of thought, insightful analysis of the questions, attention to counter-arguments and to the complexity of the issue (40 points)

Hints for writing for papers:

- Have an idea or argument that you want to convey. Think about the issues raised in lectures and discussions. Have your own interpretation of the text. The purpose of the paper is to convey that idea to the reader convince the reader that your idea is correct.
- The opening paragraph should state the purpose of your paper and your own particular thesis. A description of the topic is not a thesis statement. Neither is a description of what you will do in the paper. The thesis contains the argument of the paper, i.e., what you are going to argue. The thesis is your proposition; the rest of the paper is the evidence supporting it. Example of a thesis: The recent tax cut was a bad idea. (Or: The recent tax cut was a good idea.) Not a thesis: This paper will explore the wisdom of the recent tax cut.
- Each paragraph should develop one basic idea. The paper should show overall logical development of its thesis. Material that does not relate to your thesis does not belong in the paper.
- Use evidence from the text to support your thesis. Your evidence may include short quotations or references to specific events for which you cite a page number but do not give a direct quotation. Give the page number for every direction quotation, as well as other important facts about the text. You do not need to use footnotes; just use the (author, page#) style of references.
- Revise. Do not turn in your first draft. The rough draft is a way for you to figure out what you want to say. Good writing requires the courage to change what you have written, even when it sounds good, in order to build a coherent and clear essay.
- As college sophomores, you are expected to use correct spelling and grammar at all times.
- Use the Writing Center. It's located in the armory, room 101B. Julia Rosenberg and her student workers are there to help you with your writing skills. Appointments are recommended; call 6024.

Journals - Reflective Writing

In addition to the two critical papers, you will be required to write journal responses to other texts you read this semester. A reading journal complements and completes the act of reading by allowing you to record impressions, pose questions, and explore issues raised by the text. A journal is reflective writing rather than writing to present a thesis and convince the reader. Do not summarize the text. Rather, pose a question, tease out an issue, respond to the author-be creative in your response. The journal papers will be due:

Journal 1 (2-3 pages): Monday, February 26th at 9:00 am.

Journal 2 (2-3 pages): Tuesday, April 24th at 11:59 pm.

The journal papers must also be turned in via the digital dropbox on Blackboard. Late papers will be penalized one point per hour. Each journal paper will be worth 6.75% of the final grade. Journal papers will be graded using the following guidelines.

1. Diction and syntax, using appropriate language (20 points)
2. Correctness in grammar and punctuation (20 points)
3. Depth and richness of thought, insightful analysis of the text, appropriate consideration of the implications of the text, or other meaningful thoughts (60 points) (**Do NOT simply summarize the text!**)

Final Exam

All sections will take the same final. Finals will be graded by two professors, myself and Prof. Timmerman. Your grade will be the average of the grades given by each grader.

To do well on the final exam, you need to remember the main character, events, and ideas from each of the readings. The easiest way to study for the final is to review the notes you took on the readings. If you don't have any notes, but will be difficult to study for the final.

In order to provide you with exposure to a different style, and to familiarize you with another C&T instructor, Prof. Timmerman and I will be trading sections several times during the semester.

Grading

Course grades will be determined by your total point score as follows:

Discussion	37.5%
Writing Assignments	37.5%
Final Exam	25%

Academic Support Services:

Students with disabilities, whether physical, learning, or psychological, who believe they may need accommodations in this class, are encouraged to contact Academic Support Services as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Please meet with Julia Rosenberg (ext. 6024) to verify your eligibility for any classroom accommodations and for academic assistance related to your disability. You may also discuss your disability with the professor if you wish. All discussions will remain confidential. If you have a hidden or visible disability which may require classroom or test accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during a scheduled office hour. If you have not already done so, please visit Academic Support Services (Armory 101) which is responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities.