

## HONORS 171: THE HUMAN EVENT

FALL 2008

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY - 8:35 AM, 9:40 AM

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Honors 171 is the first-semester portion of a two-semester interdisciplinary seminar entitled “The Human Event.” In this course we will explore the myriad of ways in which people have conceptualized the world around them from the period of earliest writing (2,200 BC) to the Renaissance (1,600 AD). True to the interdisciplinary nature of the course, texts have been selected from a variety of disciplines including: literature, history, religion, philosophy, and political theory. Although the readings in the course are organized in chronological order, there are certain thematic threads that will be consistent throughout the course. Some (but by no means all!) of the themes we will cover this semester include:

1. The role of faith and religion in shaping human action;
2. The ways in which societies conceptualize and categorize others;
3. The conception of “human nature” and the role of law and order in society;
4. The comparison of earthly concerns with visions of otherworldly delights;

### **COURSE GOALS:**

The goal of an interdisciplinary course such as this is to broaden your historical and cultural awareness. Many of these texts are alluded to in everything from popular culture to the modern texts of social and political thought. In addition, it is hoped that these readings will prompt you to think critically about the nature of human existence in relation to your own views and beliefs regarding politics, religion, history, and literature. While pursuing this goal, this course seeks to 1) engage you in a critical evaluation of primary texts; 2) to help you develop the skills to critically analyze others’ arguments and to develop your own arguments in response; and 3) to practice your own expression of clear and persuasive arguments in oral and written forms.

### **LIST OF TEXTS:**

The following texts **MUST** be **purchased**. They are all available at the university bookstore (Please buy the version indicated below):

*Tao Te Ching* (Trans. Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English) ISBN: 0679724346

*Greek Tragedies*, Volume 1, Second Edition (Editors Grene and Lattimore), ISBN: 026307905

*Plato’s Republic* (Trans. Grube) ISBN: 0872201368

*The Analects of Confucius* (Trans. Simon Leys), ISBN: 0393316998

*Dante’s Divine Comedy, Volume 1: Inferno* (Trans. Mark Musa), ISBN: 0142437220

*Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales*, Penguin Classics, (Trans. Neville Coghill), ISBN: 0140424385

You must also buy the **COURSE READER** (HON 171 POPOVA) at the Alternative Copy Shop at 715 South Forest Avenue just north of University, behind the Chuck Box.

## SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES:

1. Our class web page will be available on the Blackboard website at <https://my.asu.edu> under "my courses." This website features the links to the history/bio pages, the history/bio quizzes, digital drop box for memos, and safe assignment for turning in the digital copy of your papers. Use of this web page is mandatory.
2. The Barrett Writing Center will be available during the fall 2008 semester (starting Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>) to assist Barrett Honors College students with their papers for all their classes. Directed by BHC faculty and staffed by BHC writing tutors who themselves have completed both HON 171 and 272, the Barrett Writing Center offers individual tutoring on writing papers for the Human Event and your other courses. Its goal is to help you improve your lifelong writing and critical thinking skills, so please take advantage of its services. Go to the BWC web site at <http://honors.asu.edu/> and click on "Academic Services & Requirements" under the current student section. Under Barrett Writing Center, you then can access tutoring schedules, appointment information, and academic background on the staff.

## COURSE STRUCTURE:

This course has a seminar format that relies heavily on in-class discussion and your participation.

1. **Reading:** There is no way around it, reading requirements for this semester are heavy. Take care not to fall behind. When reading, you should evaluate the texts for their internal coherence and plausibility as well as for the way they speak to their historical contexts. You will find that this level of comprehension demands a *significant* investment of time.
2. **Participation** (20% of your grade): Participation includes three things: attendance, preparation, and discussion. Attendance is mandatory, meaning that your grade will suffer if you miss classes. Participation includes preparation. The seminar will only be as successful as you make it, and on that account, it is crucial that you come to class with a well-developed sense of the readings and prepared to contribute. Participation includes class discussion. Remember the purpose of this class is for us, as a group, to discuss the materials and to explore our ideas about them. For this reason, oral contributions count measurably toward your grade. It is just as bad to talk too much as it is to not talk at all. Our goal as a class should be to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable offering his/her ideas. Participation also includes listening to other students. No matter how much you talk, if you are rude to the other students you will receive a low grade in class participation.

**ALL CELL PHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF BEFORE CLASS BEGINS! Do not bring computers to class.** Experience has shown that people interact with the class differently when they have a screen to hide behind. Do not forget to bring your texts to class. We will consult them frequently. If you do not have your text, I will mark you as absent.

**FILMS:** You will also be expected to attend 1 of the 2 films being shown this semester and write a short memo about how the film relates to what we have read so far. If you go to both films you will receive extra credit.

3. **Short Memos and Quizzes** (20% of your grade): As a way to prepare for class, each student will be required to complete 11 out of 12 short (no more than half a page) memos. For more on the format see the attached page. I will use these memos to help shape that day's discussion, so

the comments and questions you raise are a valuable way for you to indicate difficulties or questions with the readings. These memos will help you to organize your thoughts about the author's argument, preparing you to participate more fully in class discussions. In addition, I will ask the student who wrote the most provocative memo to read his/her writing in class. After listening to the memo, I will call on one student to comment on the memo and pinpoint a theme for discussion. **Memos should be posted on Digital Dropbox (under tools) on Blackboard by 10pm the day before class – no exceptions!** They are each worth 10 points for a total of 110 points. Make sure your full name and class period are at the top of each memo. The subject line of your dropbox entry should be your last name and the memo #. If I can't tell who wrote the memo easily, it will not be counted. If your memo is late, it will not be counted. If you complete all 12 memos, your lowest score will be dropped.

Since our classes are only 50 minutes long, it is not possible for me to talk at length about the biography of the author or the history of the text in class (although it will definitely be discussed). In order to make sure that you still have this information I have created short documents about each week's authors and texts (found under course documents on blackboard). You should read these bios/histories on the weekend and then be prepared to take a short quiz (8 questions, multiple choice) **between 5pm on Sunday and 8am on Monday**. The quizzes can be found under the assignments tab on blackboard. It is possible 1 or 2 of the questions will relate to the reading for Monday as well. Each test is worth 4 points, or 40 points total.

4. **Papers** (60% of your grade): There will be three 5-7 page papers, each counting 20% toward your final grade. I will hand out questions approximately two weeks before the due date. Late papers will be penalized 5% (9 points) for each day past the deadline. I will give extensions only in emergencies; please try to let me know in advance.

**PLAGIARISM (ACADEMIC DISHONESTY):** Knowingly presenting another person's language or ideas as your own constitutes plagiarism. Don't do it. All Barrett Honors College faculty have access to a service that checks an extensive database of essays, spark notes, and websites to detect plagiarism. Plagiarism, the theft of intellectual property, is a serious crime that undermines everything we are trying to accomplish in this course. Repercussions will include failure of the paper AND failure of the course, and may include referral to the Student Conduct Committee of the University and expulsion from the University. If you have any questions, talk to me before you submit your paper. Students will be required to submit an electronic version of their papers through safe assignment along with their printed ones.

#### **STUDENT CONDUCT:**

Students must conduct themselves according to the ASU policies posted online at <http://www.asu.edu/studentlife/judicial>. These include the ASU [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#). For information on BHC policies for grievances and grade complaints, go the BHC web page at <http://honors.asu.edu> and follow the links for Prospective and Current Students, then Advising and Honors Curriculum, then Academic Advising Office, then Student Academic Grievance Procedures.

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus during the semester. The student agrees to this by registering and remaining in the course. Also, if you have any special needs or disabilities see me after the first class so that we can make arrangements.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

\*\*\* CR = Course Reader

### Unit 1: Unity and Discord

#### WEEK 1 (AUGUST 25-29) –

Monday – course introduction

Wednesday – close reading of a text (handout)

Friday – *Maxims of Ptahhotep* (2200 BC) – CR and online

#### WEEK 2 (SEPTEMBER 1-5)

Monday – No class!!! (Labor Day)

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 1 due by 10pm

Wednesday – *Katha Upanishads* (~ 700-400 BC) - CR

Thursday – Group B MEMO 1 due by 10pm

Friday – *Tao Te Ching* (~500-300 BC), pp. 3-33, use the notes!!!

#### WEEK 3 (SEPTEMBER 8-12)

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #1

Monday- *Tao Te Ching* (~500-300 BC), pp. 34-83, use the notes!!!

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 2 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Aeschylus (525-455 BC)

*Agamemnon* (Greek Tragedies), pp. 5-28

Thursday – Group B MEMO 2 due by 10pm

Friday – Aeschylus (525-455 BC)

*Agamemnon* (Greek Tragedies), pp. 29-60

#### WEEK 4 (SEPTEMBER 15-19)

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #2

Monday – Sophocles (496-406 BC) – FIRST PAPER TOPICS POSTED

*Antigone* (Greek Tragedies), 181-201

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 3 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Sophocles (496-406 BC)

*Antigone* (Greek Tragedies), PP. 202-232

Thursday – Group B MEMO 3 due by 10pm

Friday – Sappho (630-570 BC)

*If not, winter* - CR

**First Film: Electra – 1962** (Director: Mihalis Kakogiannis)

**Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 3pm**

**Discovery Hall 250**

#### WEEK 5 (SEPTEMBER 22-26)

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #3

Monday – Euripides (480-406 BC)

*Hippolytus* (Greek Tragedies), pp. 237-264

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 4 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Euripides (480-406 BC)

*Hippolytus* (Greek Tragedies), pp. 265-295; **DRAFT OF INTRO FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> PAPER**

Thursday – NO MEMOS  
Friday – **PEER REVIEW** of first paper (5 pages)

## **Unit 2: Ethics and the State**

### **WEEK 6 (SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 3)**

**FIRST PAPER DUE!!!** – Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup> by 2:00pm

Monday – Confucius (551-469 BC)

*The Analects of Confucius*, pp.3-48, use the notes!!!

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 5 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Confucius (551-469 BC)

*The Analects of Confucius*, pp. 55-101, use the notes!!!

Thursday – Group B MEMO 4 due by 10pm

Friday – Plato (428-328 BC)

*Republic*, Books 1 and 2, pp. 1-59

### **WEEK 7 (OCTOBER 6-10)**

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #4

Monday – Plato (428- 348 BC)

*Republic*, Books 3 and 4, pp. 60-121

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 6 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Plato (428- 348 BC)

*Republic*, Books 5 and 6, pp. 122-185

Thursday – Group B MEMO 5 due by 10pm

Friday – Plato (428- 348 BC)

*Republic*, Book 7, pp. 186-212

### **WEEK 8 (OCTOBER 13-17)**

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #5

Monday – Plato (428- 348 BC)

*Republic*, Books 8 and 9, pp. 213-263

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 7 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Aristotle (384-322 BC)

*Nicomachean Ethics*, pp. 369-389, 434-442; CR

Thursday – Group B MEMO 6 due by 10pm

Friday – Augustine (354-430 AD), *On the Trinity*; CR

## **Unit 3: Religion and Society**

### **WEEK 9 (OCTOBER 20-24)**

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #6

Monday – Augustine (354-430 AD), *Confessions*; CR

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 8 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Averroes or Ibn Rushd (1126-1198 AD)

*On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*; pp. 44-49; CR

Thursday – Group B MEMO 7 due by 10pm

Friday – Averroes or Ibn Rushd (1126-1198 AD)

*On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*; pp. 50-71; CR

**WEEK 10 (OCTOBER 27-31)**

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #7

Monday - Dante (1265-1321 AD) – SECOND PAPER TOPICS POSTED

*The Divine Comedy: Inferno, Cantos I-XI*

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 9 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Dante (1265-1321 AD)

*The Divine Comedy: Inferno, Cantos X-XV, XVIII*

Thursday – Group B MEMO 8 due by 10pm

Friday – Dante (1265-1321 AD)

*The Divine Comedy: Inferno, Cantos XXIII-XXV, XXVIII, XXXI-XXXIV*

**Second Film – The Seventh Seal – 1957 (Director: Ingmar Bergman)**

**Sunday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3pm**

**Discovery Hall 250**

**WEEK 11 (NOVEMBER 3-7)**

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #8

Monday – *Popol Vuh* (~1550 AD), CR

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 10 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 AD), *Muqaddimah*, CR

Thursday – Group B MEMO 9 due by 10pm

Friday - **PEER REVIEW** for second paper

**Unit 4: Self Discovery through Travel****WEEK 12 (NOVEMBER 10-14)**

**SECOND PAPER DUE!!!** Monday, November 10<sup>th</sup> by 2pm

Monday – Chaucer (1343-1400 AD)

*Canterbury Tales* (General Prologue)

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 11 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Chaucer (1343-1400 AD)

*Canterbury Tales* (The Knight's Tale)

Thursday – Group B MEMO 10 due by 10pm

Friday – Chaucer (1343-1400 AD)

*Canterbury Tales* (The Miller's Tale)

**WEEK 13 (NOVEMBER 17-21)**

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #9

Monday – Chaucer (1343-1400 AD)

*Canterbury Tales* (The Wife of Bath, prologue and story)

Tuesday – Group A MEMO 12 due by 10pm

Wednesday – Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566 AD)

*Devastation of the Indies*, CR

Thursday – Group B MEMO 11 due by 10pm

Friday – Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616 AD)

*Don Quixote*, BOOK 1: Prologue, Chapters I-III; CR

**WEEK 14 (NOVEMBER 24-28)**

Monday – Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616 AD)

*Don Quixote*, BOOK 1: Chapters XVI-VII, XXI, LII, CR

Wednesday – No class  
Friday – No class (Thanksgiving)

**WEEK 15 (DECEMBER 1-5)**

Sunday - History/Bio Quiz #10

Monday – Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616 AD) – THIRD PAPER TOPICS POSTED

*Don Quixote*, BOOK 2: Prologue, Chapters I-V, VIII- X; CR

Tuesday – NO MEMOS

Wednesday – Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616 AD)

*Don Quixote*, BOOK 2: Chapters XI, XXII-III; CR

Thursday – Group B MEMO 12 due by 10pm

Friday – Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616 AD)

*Don Quixote*, BOOK 2: Chapters XXXIV-V, XLIV-V, LIII; CR

**WEEK 16 (DECEMBER 8-12)**

Monday – Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616 AD)

*Don Quixote*, BOOK 2: Chapters LXIV-VI, LXXI-IV; CR

Wednesday – Reading Day

**FINAL PAPER DUE!!!** Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup> by 2pm.

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**GRADING FORMAT FOR THE COURSE**

**COURSE GRADING:**

I will be grading using the following scale for the course:

100-99% = A+, 98-93 = A, 92-90 = A-, 89-88 = B+, 87-83 = B, 82-80 = B- etc.

**GRADING FOR CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION:**

Every day at the end of class, I will give you a grade for participation using the following scale:

- 3) The student arrives on time, prepared with comments and/or questions about the readings, often initiates discussion, but does not try to dominate the class, listens carefully to what other students say and responds to their comments, and does not carry on a conversation with people around him other than participating in the general discussion.
- 2) The student participates in some of the discussion, giving evidence of having read some of the assignment, does not disrupt the class, and pays close attention to what others are saying during the discussion.
- 1) The student is overly quiet, rarely participating, and, if called upon, seems unprepared. He/she may seem disinterested in the class or in the ideas of other class members.
- 0) The student is either absent or as good as absent. He/She never participates, sleeps during class, or disrupts other class members by talking to others around him/her rather than participating in the general discussion.

You will receive two grades in the course for your participation that will add up attendance (worth 60% of your participation grade) and class participation (worth 40% of your class participation grade): one for the first half of the course and one of the second half. The purpose of the midterm grade is to let you know if you need to improve your participation before the course is over.

**MEMO GRADING:**

You are graded on quality, not quantity.

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 10      | The thesis is clear and compelling, original. The student supports their argument with at least 4 pieces of evidence, dissecting direct quotes masterfully to prove their point. There are strong links between each section of the paragraph. There are no grammatical or spelling errors. There are no citations missing. |
| 9 – 9.5 | The thesis is clear (though perhaps not original). There are good links from one idea to the next, but the student does not bring in all of the evidence from the text that he/she could. Practically no grammar or spelling errors   |
| 8 – 9   | The thesis is obvious and/or the evidence is insufficient or not compelling, but the structure of the paragraph is otherwise good. There are more grammatical and spelling errors, but not enough to make the writing incomprehensible. The memo may be missing citations.  |
| 7 – 8   | There is a topic sentence rather than a thesis and as a result the memo is largely descriptive. The argumentation is weak and the structure of the paragraph is confusing. There may be many grammatical and spelling errors.   |
| 6 – 7   | There is a topic sentence rather than a thesis and as a result the memo is largely descriptive. There are almost no direct quotes from the text or they are added in a haphazard manner. There may be many grammatical and spelling errors that make the memo difficult to read.  |
| 5 – 6   | Very unclear writing with no topic or thesis. It seems unclear whether or not the student read the text. There are major structural and grammatical errors.   |



**PAPER GRADING FORMAT**

<p><b>THESIS (30 points)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offers a logical argument based on a close and critical reading of the text.</li> <li>- Includes a “road map” that is a summary of the specific evidence that will appear in the paper (in the order in which it will appear).</li> </ul>
<p><b>CONTENT (45 points)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides substantive and relevant development of ideas</li> <li>- Uses the text effectively to support claims</li> <li>- Uses paraphrase and quotes skillfully</li> <li>- Demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical and persuasive manner.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ORGANIZATION (22 points)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creates a clearly identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion</li> <li>- States a clear thesis and provides identifiable, focused topic sentences</li> <li>- Provides unified paragraph structure (each paragraph develops only one central idea).</li> <li>- Provides coherent paragraph structure – writer employs cohesive devices such as transitional phrases within and between paragraphs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>LANGUAGE USE (38 points)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Avoids errors in sentence boundaries such as run-on/fused sentences and sentence fragments</li> <li>- Uses passive constructions sparingly</li> <li>- Demonstrates mastery of coordination and subordination of English clauses</li> <li>- Demonstrates mature sentence style by employing sentence variety and sentence combining</li> <li>- Avoids word usage errors in verb tenses and word forms</li> <li>- Avoids word usage errors in subject-verb agreement, number, word order, word choice</li> <li>- Avoids word usage errors in articles, pronoun usage, and prepositions</li> <li>- Employs a mature, college-level vocabulary (varied and sophisticated word choice fairly free of passive verb constructions)</li> </ul>
<p><b>MECHANICS (15 points)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follows formatting/length instructions for the assignment</li> <li>- Turns the paper in following the instructions for the assignment</li> <li>- Proofreads the essay for correctness: avoids errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.</li> </ul>