

**The Human Situation  
Team Alpha  
Spring 2010**

**Profs. Cremins, DiMattei, Ferguson, Meyer, Morrisson and Valier**

**Introduction to the course:**

This is not a course designed for those seeking a relaxed atmosphere. Reading great books about the human condition is only our point of departure. Along the way we will insist on teaching you to become better readers, writers and thinkers. Our preference is for important questions partially answered over unimportant questions fully answered. We believe that it is in the context of these important questions that the most worthwhile reading, writing and thinking takes place.

**Objectives for the Course:**

- Students will develop their critical reasoning in reading, discussing and writing on a variety of classic texts.
- Students will become familiar with some of the central philosophical, political, historical and scientific issues that have dominated the history of Western thinking.
- Students will enhance their communication skills through intensive small-group discussions and oral examination finals.

**Requirements for the course:**

There are four requirements for this course: (1) regular class attendance; (2) no membership in the SMB; (3) readings as assigned in the syllabus and throughout the semester; (4) Assignments.

(1) Class Attendance

Class attendance is required and will be monitored throughout the semester. Contact your professor about any absences. Ideally, you should be so motivated by the intensity of the readings and the perspicuous and insightful lectures of the instructors that additional security should, in fact, have to be called for crowd control. Unfortunately, for whatever reasons, these are not ideal times. Some students have come to believe that there is no causal relationship between regular class attendance and their success in the course. There is! **Finally, please plan to stay for the entire lecture out of respect for the other students.**

(2) Attila at the Gates—the SMB

In recent years there has been a noted increase in the membership of the SMB (Society of Modern Barbarians)—a loosely knit guerilla organization whose bubble-gum-chewing, tobacco-spitting, baseball-cap-wearing, beeper-blaring, telephone-ringing distractions make concentration on the part of the lecturer and other students impossible. Do NOT come to

class bearing hats, cell phones, or other distractions. Included in this category are laptops. **Use of laptops is not allowed during lecture.** Notes can be taken with a pencil or pen and paper. Do NOT pack up your bags before the lecturer is done with class.

(3) Reading for the Course

Luther, "On Trade and Usury" and "On Trade". (Handouts).  
Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Pelican Shakespeare, 0140714626.  
Behn, *Oroonoko*, Norton Critical Edition, 0393970140.  
Smith, *Selections from The Wealth of Nations*, Harlan Davidson, 0882950932.  
Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, Steegmuller Vinatage Press, 0679736360.  
Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, Signet Classic, 0451527100.  
Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Dodo Press, 1409950255.  
Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Scribner, 0743273567.  
Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics, 0141180978.

(4) Assignments for Lecture Portion of the Class

Lecture Paper:	50%
Final Exam:	50%

Paper: There will be one essay due in the course of the semester. This essay will be a short (no more than four double-spaced 12-font TYPEWRITTEN pages) analytic essay. The essay will be assessed by an instructor other than your discussion leader, with the final decision of your grade to be determined by your discussion leader. **THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DAY INDICATED BELOW.** You must also submit your paper to Turnitin.com before the deadline. Your professor will provide you with 1) a Turnitin class identification number and 2) a password in order to register with your discussion class on the web site. *Please set this up immediately, using only one email address for the whole semester.*

Final Examination: The final examination in this course is an oral examination. Each student will be examined for up to twenty minutes by one of the faculty members of this team. Your discussion leader will NOT be your examiner

The paper and final exam will constitute your lecture grade, which is one of the four hours of credit you receive for The Human Situation course in the Fall. Your discussion grade makes up the other three hours, and the papers and assignments that constitute that grade will be determined by your discussion leader.

**Schedule:**

- 1/20 Introduction (IM)
- 1/25 Luther: *On Trade and Usury* (SDM)
- 1/27 Luther: *On Trade and Usury* (JF)
- 2/1 Luther: *On Usury* (SDM)
- 2/3 Shakespeare: *Merchant of Venice* (JF)
- 2/8 Shakespeare: *Merchant of Venice* (SDM)

2/10 Shakespeare: *Merchant of Venice* (JF)  
2/15 Behn: *Oronooko* (HV)  
2/17 Behn: *Oronooko* (KM)  
2/22 Behn: *Oronooko* (KM)  
2/24 Smith: *Wealth of Nations* (IM)  
3/1 Smith: *Wealth of Nations* (SDM)  
3/3 Smith: *Wealth of Nations* (HV)  
3/8 Smith: *Wealth of Nations* (IM)  
3/10 Flaubert: *Madame Bovary* (RC)  
3/15 SPRING BREAK  
3/17 SPRING BREAK  
3/22 Flaubert: *Madame Bovary* (JF) (Paper Due)\*  
3/24 Flaubert: *Madame Bovary* (RC)  
3/29 Marx: *Communist Manifesto* (IM)  
3/31 Marx: *Communist Manifesto* (IM)  
4/5 Engels: *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (HV)  
4/7 Engels: *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (HV)  
4/12 Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby* (RC)  
4/14 Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby* (KM)  
4/19 Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby* (KM)  
4/21 Miller: *Death of a Salesman* (KM)  
4/26 Miller: *Death of a Salesman* (JF)  
4/28 Miller: *Death of a Salesman* (RC)  
5/1 Conclusion