


Undergraduate Council
 New Course Course Change
 Core Category: WI-ID Effective Fall 2010

81

or

Graduate/Professional Studies Council
 New Course Course Change
 Effective Fall RECEIVED SEP 29 2009

- Department: History College: CLASS
- Faculty Contact Person: Thomas Behr Telephone: 713-743-3083 Email: tbehr@uh.edu
- Course Information on New/Revised course:
 - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:
HIST / ~~4329~~ / Greek and Roman Historians
4335
 - Instructional Area / Course Number / Short Course Title (30 characters max.):
HIST / ~~4329~~ / GREEK AND ROMAN HISTORIANS
4335
 - SCH: 3.0 Level: SR CIP Code: 54.0103.0001 Lect Hrs: 3 Lab Hrs: 0
- Justification for adding/changing course: Successfully taught as a selected topics course
- Was the proposed/revised course previously offered as a special topics course? Yes No
 If Yes, please complete:
 - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:
HIST / 4395 / Greek and Roman Historians
 - Course ID: 26112 Effective Date (currently active row): 20093
- Authorized Degree Program(s): B.A. History
 - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in the College/Department? Yes No
 - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in other Colleges/Departments? Yes No
 - Can the course be repeated for credit? Yes No (if yes, include in course description)
- Grade Option: Letter (A, B, C ...) Instruction Type: seminar (Note: Lect/Lab info. must match item 3, above.)
- If this form involves a change to an existing course, please obtain the following information from the course inventory: Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title
 ____ / ____ / ____
 Course ID: ____ Effective Date (currently active row): ____
ENGL 1304 and junior standing, or consent of instructor.
- Proposed Catalog Description: (If there are no prerequisites, type in "none".)
 Cr: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: ~~none~~ Description (30 words max.): Reading the works of the Greek and Roman founders of the historical discipline to explore the writing of history as a philosophical and literary enterprise.
- Dean's Signature:  Date: 9/28/09
 Print/Type Name: Dr. Sarah Fishman

U N I V E R S I T Y of H O U S T O N
CORE CURRICULUM COURSE REQUEST

Originating Department/College: History / CLASS

Person making request: Thomas C. Behr Telephone: 713-743-3083

E-mail: tbehr@uh.edu

Dean's signature:  Date: 9/28/09

I. General Information:

Course number and title: HIST 4329: Greek and Roman Historians

Catalog description must be included on completed CBM 003 form and attached to this document.

Category of Core for which course is being proposed (mark only one):

- Communication
- Mathematics
- Mathematics/Reasoning (IDO)
- American History
- Government
- Humanities
- Visual/Performing Arts Critical
- Visual/Performing Arts Experiential
- Natural Sciences
- Social/Behavioral Sciences
- Writing in the Disciplines (IDO)

II. Objectives and Evaluation (respond on one or more separate sheets):

Call ext. 3-0919 for a copy of "Guidelines for Requesting and Evaluating Core Courses" or visit the website at www.uh.edu/academics/corecurriculum

- A. How does the proposed course meet the appropriate Exemplary Educational Objectives (see **Guidelines**). Attach a syllabus and supporting materials for the objectives the syllabus does not make clear. (SEE ATACHED)
- B. Specify the processes and procedures for evaluating course effectiveness in regard to its goals.
- C. Delineate how these evaluation results will be used to improve the course.

SVP. Effective 5/2/08. Replaces all previous forms, which may no longer be used.

Thomas Behr –
Greek and Roman Historians, Core Curriculum Course Request, Section II

- A) The “Greek and Roman Historians” course is essentially an historiographical course, that is aimed at understanding the nature of the historical enterprise from its origins and, by extension, to consider in depth the historical discipline in general. The nature of historical inquiry, scientific premises, research, and writing are the constant context within which a series of major ancient historians will be closely read. Students will be required to write analytical papers weekly to present their “findings” in regard to those constant contextual concerns, with feedback in seminar discussion.
- B) Use of evidence (the text under consideration), logic, experience, critical reason and coherent argumentation will be the standards upon which all of the written work will be graded, and will be modeled and encouraged within the seminar format itself, conducted on a quasi-Socratic method.
- C) Evaluation, of papers and of final essays, will serve to refine the selection of readings, and of the selections within readings, that serve most to engage the students in basic intellectual and practical concerns within the historical discipline.
- D) The writing assignments in this course will prepare students to understand philosophical premises and methodological assumptions in the writing of history, to assess and employ evidence and arguments in their own research and writing, to read and assess work of professional colleagues as part of the scholarly enterprise.

Greek and Roman Historians
Dr. Thomas Behr

Fall 2009

Syllabus

Office Hours: MW 3-4 and by appointment, AH 541

Email: thomasbehr@earthlink.net (spam filter, put HIST 4395 in Subject Line)

Description: This class is “historiographical” in that we will be reading our selected historians from classical Greece and Rome mainly as practitioners of the historian’s craft, considered historically (as reflecting the ideas of their times) and philosophically. Aristotle held a pretty low opinion of historians—what’s up with that?!

Learning Outcomes: We have a double objective here: One, we will be looking to understand how various founders of the historical discipline considered the nature of their work: in the material, efficient, formal, and final senses. Students will learn what the writing of history meant at its origin, and in relation to current historiographical methods. Two, we will be looking to see if those writings still have anything to tell us about the nature of the world and ourselves.

Required Texts:

Herodotus, *The History*. Robert Strassler, ed. Pantheon

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War: Landmark Edition*. Free Press

Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire*. Penguin

Livy, *Early History of Rome* 2nd ed. Penguin Classics

Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives*, Vol. 1&2 Modern Library (Dryden trans.)

Tacitus, *Annals and Histories*. Everyman’s Library (due out in 9/09)

Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*. Modern Library

Useful:

R. Morkot, *Penguin Historical Atlas of Greece* Penguin / 0140513353

C. Scarre, *Penguin Historical Atlas of Rome* Penguin / 0140513299

C. Richard, *Twelve Greeks and Romans Who Changed the World* R&L / 0-74252791-3

Assessment:

Pre-views (10 out of 11) 70%

Discussion (prep & part) 10%

Final 20%

Pre-views: Writings on each of the assigned selections of readings, due in class on the day we are scheduled to discuss those selections. 3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, 750 to 1250 words. Points to explicitly cover in each essay:

- 1) What is the author's point? (i.e. why has he undertaken to write the thing? why has he chosen the subject he has? what does he want people to learn?) and
- 2) What are the author's philosophical-religious assumptions (huh!?), and how are those manifested in the author's methodology (in research *and* in presentation)? (i.e. what are his metaphysical, anthropological, and ethical/political assumptions, and how does his selection of events, explanation of causality, and narrative strategy connect with those?)

Miscellany...

Late papers will be penalized one full grade, or more if later than one day.

Students with disabilities need to present formal documentation from the Center for Students with Disabilities before the first assignments, further information available here -- <http://www.uh.edu/csd/documentation.htm>

Plagiarism or other cheating on the essays will be reported and penalized. For further information about Academic Honesty, the Academic Calendar, Religious Holy Days, and Disabilities, refer to -- http://www.uh.edu/provost/stu/stu_syllabsuppl.html

Book Preview Guidelines

These comments must taken with a grain of salt. They will need to be interpreted and applied differently according to the genre and character of the work in question. There are some important general considerations, however, and some requirements that ought to be kept in mind. You should have a few standard references within reach if possible: Mortimer Adler, *How to Read a Book*; Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*; an excellent unabridged dictionary (e.g. Webster's), and a one-volume encyclopedia (e.g. Columbia, pre-1970 edition).

You should plan on reading your assignments a number of times, probably three times. The first time you can read straight through the work in order to get the general ideas and line of argument. The second time through you will need to be at a table and will want to take notes. You will be looking for three major things: the thesis (or theses), the "evidence" (using the term very loosely, i.e. including a narrative of fictional events), and the reasoning (steps in logic) and, finally, the conclusion(s) that the author wants you to make from that evidence and argument. You may also want to think about the work's significance on different levels, but this is a completely secondary objective to exercise at issue. What does the text say? How does it say it? And, the part we will discuss in class: what difference does it make?

A good place to start reading the **first** time through is to check if there is an "Author's Introduction," "Conclusion" or "Epilogue," etc. In such places the author may well identify (claim) why he is writing the book and what point he has set out to prove (his thesis)--although the author may be sneakier about it: be sensitive to rhetorical strategies, and to claims that the evidence speaks for itself, logically the case for a work of fiction, but not necessarily--or the author may want to try to correct "mis-readings" of the work, or to respond to criticisms of

earlier editions. Is the author being ironic? Then, as you are reading your book through the **second** time, consider the structure of the work: is each chapter part of one long thesis? is the organization chronological or thematic, and why? are there various theses or how do they fit together into some comprehensive claim that the author is making?

In order to do this, you need to read each chapter carefully and find out what is going on at each level of the narrative, taking notes on the points and the arguments being made. Finally, you may want to read your book a **third** time to make sure you have understood the thing and that your evaluation is on track, catching points or proofs that you may not have understood the first times through. Confirm (or revise) your earlier impression about the author's ultimate purpose.

Now you have to take your notes and write your review. For our purposes, each pre-view must be between 500 and 800 words. No more (ideally), no less. To accomplish this feat, make time for careful organization and multiple re-writes. Identify the thesis. Do not be stingy. Make sure your explanation of the thesis is clear. What does the thesis tell us about the author's interests? (Do not feel compelled to label the author's ideology, but bracket your intuitions, for now, as an hypothesis, above all, don't be concerned about being wrong.) Carefully avoid ALL anthropological, sociological or historical claims, generalizations, and conclusory claims from other texts not under consideration: e.g., "Human beings are violent by nature...", or "People have always...", or "Everyone knows that...", "The Bible says...", etc.

Ideology, or intellectual and spiritual commitment, is probably among the most important points we'll want to evaluate eventually, but this is best done in our class discussion. Why does *this* author want to prove *this* particular point? *Cui bono*? What are the debates behind it, around it? What is not being said? Who benefits? What philosophical assumptions, premises, and vision of the cosmos are implicit? What's their view of the meaning of life? What do we care today about such things?

But, for now, bracket all that in your own mind. We will take them up in class.

In your writing now, analyze the argument, shun summary, get to the point(s). Your first sentence should be something like: "Plato's point in the *Meno* is...." If the points are not black-and-white, don't shy away from *shades of gray*. If there are ambiguities, maybe it is intentional, maybe there is some deeper connection? Bring together your notes from your reading. What kind of evidence does the author use? Does the evidence prove what the author wants it to prove? What are other ways of interpreting the same evidence? Are there other things that the author ignores, accidentally or deliberately? Is some agenda apparent? Has the author assumed "facts" without proving them? What questions would you want to put to the author? Is the author serious and to be taken literally?

The "great books" are a glimpse into ourselves, into our institutions and values, into our conflicts, despairs and hopes. The experience of reading a great book may be difficult because they present complexities, not usually simple lessons. Such an encounter is like meeting a new person: a bundle of unknown complexities. It takes patience, authentic dialogue, effort, and even love, to get to that person's understanding of the truth, and to our understanding of what we have in common.

Have fun!