

# POSTCLASSICAL CIVILIZATIONS

## SYLLABUS

### Course Description

This course covers ancient civilizations with a special emphasis on canonical texts from world literature. Students will analyze primary texts covering the different periods of western and non-western literature, and will discuss them from different critical stances. They will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the works by responding to questions focusing on the works, authors, themes, and motifs. Students will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the works by writing research paper focusing on the works, movements, authors, themes, and motifs. In addition, they will discuss the historical, social, cultural, or biographical contexts of the works' production. This course is intended for students who already possess a bachelor's and, ideally, a master's degree, and who would like to develop interdisciplinary perspectives that integrate with their prior knowledge and experience.

### About the Professors

#### *Blackburn, Stuart, Ph.D.*

Stuart Blackburn did his PhD at the University of California, Berkeley, in South Asian Studies and Folklore. He taught for many years at SOAS in London and later held visiting professorships at Heidelberg, Berkeley and Berlin (Humboldt University). He is the author of seven monographs (including the prize-winning *Inside the Drama House*, California, 1996) and the editor or co-editor of eight other books. He is currently a research associate at SOAS and writes historical fiction.

#### *McPherson, David, Ph.D.*

David McPherson is professor emeritus and former chair of the English Department at the University of New Mexico. His areas of expertise include the drama of Renaissance England and comparative literature.

#### *Nash, Susan Smith, Ph.D.*

Dr. Nash has developed numerous literature courses in the humanities, including world literature, American literature, and film. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma, and is widely published in the areas of literature, e-learning, and discourse. In addition, she has served as editor for journals focusing on literature and literary criticism.

#### *Will, Frederic, Ph.D.*

Frederic Will is a widely published professor of comparative literature who has been a Fulbright Scholar in Greece, Tunisia, and Ivory Coast. He is the founding editor of *Micromegas*, a journal of poetry in translation, and served as administrator and faculty member of Dartmouth, University of Massachusetts, and University of Iowa.

### Texts

Bedford Anthology, Vol 1. NY: St Martins, 2004

Jerry H Bentley, Traditions and Encounters, McGraw Hill, 2015.

Gloria Fiero. The Humanistic Tradition, Book 1. NY: McGraw-Hill, 2015.

Daniel Kolak. The Longman Standard History of Philosophy. NY: Pearson, 2006.

Peter N Stearns, World history in brief, Pearson, 2012.

Marilyn Stokstad. Art History: Vol 1. Ancient Art. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Prentice-Hall, 2014.

Further readings are assigned at the end of the articles.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the meanings and manifestations of civilization found in the subject of the course.
2. Identify unique theoretical underpinnings and influential thinkers in the course topic.
3. Analyze the relationship between the various aspects of history, ideas, and texts and the particular social, cultural, and biographical contexts of their production.
4. Research and critically evaluate cultural productions in light of civilization
5. Use secondary sources and close reading skills to produce a substantive critical essay relating one or more specific cultural productions to the economic, social, cultural, or biographical contexts of its production.
6. Demonstrate a balanced perspective and a deepened understanding of the cultures, times, people, and situations that produce these works.
7. Write coherent historical arguments that explore the relationships of various concepts and texts, and which provide a clear synthesis.

### **Course Goals:**

1. To provide students with a broad perspective of approaches to world culture and an understanding of the various ways in which they manifest themselves and to assess students' ability to express their perspectives through exams and essays.
2. To provide students with a deeper understanding of diverse cultural and interdisciplinary traditions the course focus and to express this deepened understanding in written tests and a critical essay.
3. To provide an overview of cultural analysis and interpretation methods and help students apply these skills in writing essay examinations and a critical essay.
4. To read widely and critically in a variety of cultural texts in order to explore potential meanings and to demonstrate the depth and breadth of this reading in essay examinations and a critical essay.
5. To do library research on a particular trend, event, concept, an individual theorist, or an issue in the area of comparative culture and to write a critical essay which incorporates this research.

### **Course Content:**

1. Cultural developments and texts that have been designated as being produced within the category of the course topic.
2. Discussion of the theoretical, social, philosophical and biographical contexts in which those works were produced.
3. Historical movements in various periods.
4. Discussion of the cultural issues and questions related to theoretical, social, philosophical, and biographical approaches to the study of the course topic.
5. Key ideas about how to evaluate and interpret cultural events, texts, and approaches.
6. Criticism and reflection upon political and economic systems as reflected in culture.
7. Discussion of the relevance of course readings to the understanding of contemporary cultural issues.
8. Critical analysis and interpretation of culture.
9. Conducting scholarly research on and off-line.

### **Course Readings:**

The course readings will be available through the Online Library, which will provide students access to selected journal articles, book chapters, and reference materials. Please visit the following web site to see **LECTURES / READINGS / DISCUSSION / PROJECTS**  
<http://www.humanitiesinstitute.org/postclassical.html>

### **Course Preparedness:**

This course requires analysis, research, and writing. It assumes the mastery of prerequisite college-level skills in

spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, and essay writing. It also assumes the ability to read and analyze literary texts. This course provides instruction in history and does not address remedial writing issues at the sentence, paragraph, or essay level. The California Department of Education "English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools" offers context for understanding the standard for writing at the college level. Students who do not meet the standards outlined in the "English-Language Arts Content Standards" will not pass this course.

In short, this course assumes that students already "write with a command of standard English conventions, write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument, and use clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies" (California Standards, Grades Nine and Ten). This course focuses on texts and analysis and requires college-level writing skills that exceed those required at the secondary level.

**Course Workload:**

In accordance with accreditation standards, requires approximately two hours of outside work for every contact hour. For a 9-hour course, there are 144 contact hours, plus a minimum of 288 hours outside work. For a sixteen-week course, students can expect to devote a minimum of 18 hours of independent study per week in order to complete the coursework.

**Grading Factors:**

**Short Essays (50%)**

You will write ten short (1,000 – 1500 words) on the topics provided to you by your instructor in which you apply a critical paradigm from theorists or issues raised by the Study Guide questions. You should start your paper with a succinct thesis statement, describe the critical paradigm and the text(s) being analyzed. Be sure to cite critical passages to demonstrate support for your argument.

**Final Essay (50%)**

10,000 word essay on one of the topics discussed.

**Definition of Grades:**

**Graduate Courses**

- A** Outstanding Achievement
- B** Commendable Achievement
- C** Marginal Achievement
- D** Unsatisfactory \*
- F** Failing \*

\* Students receiving this grade in a course that is required for his/her degree program must repeat the course.

- I Incomplete** A grade given at the discretion of the instructor when a student who has completed **at least two-thirds of the course class sessions** and is unable to complete the requirements of the course because of uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances. The student must convey these circumstances (preferably in writing) to the instructor prior to the final day of the course. If an instructor decides that an "Incomplete" is warranted, the instructor must convey the conditions for removal of the "Incomplete"

to the student in writing. A copy must also be placed on file with the Office of the Registrar until the "Incomplete" is removed or the time limit for removal has passed. An "Incomplete" is not assigned when the only way the student could make up the work would be to attend a major portion of the class when next offered.

An "I" that is not removed within the stipulated time becomes an "F." No grade points are assigned. The "F" is calculated in the grade point average.

**W Withdrawal** Signifies that a student has withdrawn from a course after beginning the third class session. Students who wish to withdraw must notify their admissions advisor before the beginning of the sixth class session in the case of graduate courses, or before the seventh class session in the case of undergraduate courses. Instructors are not authorized to issue a "W" grade.

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or work as one's own. Students must give credit for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge. If a student borrows ideas or information from another author, he/she must acknowledge the author in the body of the text and on the reference page. Students found plagiarizing are subject to the penalties outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of the Catalog, which may include a failing grade for the work in question or for the entire course. The following is one of many websites that provide helpful information concerning plagiarism for both students and faculty:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

### **Ethics:**

Ethical behavior in the classroom is required of every student. The course will identify ethical policies and practices relevant to course topics.

### **Technology:**

Students are expected to be competent in using current technology appropriate for this discipline. Such technology may include word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Use of the internet and e-mail may also be required.

### **Diversity:**

Learning to work with and value diversity is essential in every class. Students are expected to exhibit an appreciation for multinational and gender diversity in the classroom.

### **Civility:**

As a diverse community of learners, students must strive to work together in a setting of civility, tolerance, and respect for each other and for the instructor. Rules of classroom behavior (which apply to online as well as onsite courses) include but are not limited to the following:

- Conflicting opinions among members of a class are to be respected and responded to in a professional manner.
- Side conversations or other distracting behaviors are not to be engaged in during lectures, class discussions or presentations
- There are to be no offensive comments, language, or gestures

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students seeking special accommodations due to a disability must submit an application with supporting documentation, as explained under this subject heading in the General Catalog. Instructors are required to provide such accommodations if they receive written notification from the University.

**Writing Across the Curriculum:**

Students are expected to demonstrate writing skills in describing, analyzing and evaluating ideas and experiences. Written reports and research papers must follow specific standards regarding citations of an author's work within the text and references at the end of the paper. Students are encouraged to use the services of the University's Writing Center when preparing materials.

The following website provides information on APA, MLA, and other writing and citation styles that may be required for term papers.

**Online Library:**

Our Online Library supports academic rigor and student academic success by providing access to scholarly books and journals electronically.