

Villanova University  
Core Seminar in the Humanities II, 1650 to the Present  
Spring Semester, 2005  
Prof. Alexander Varias

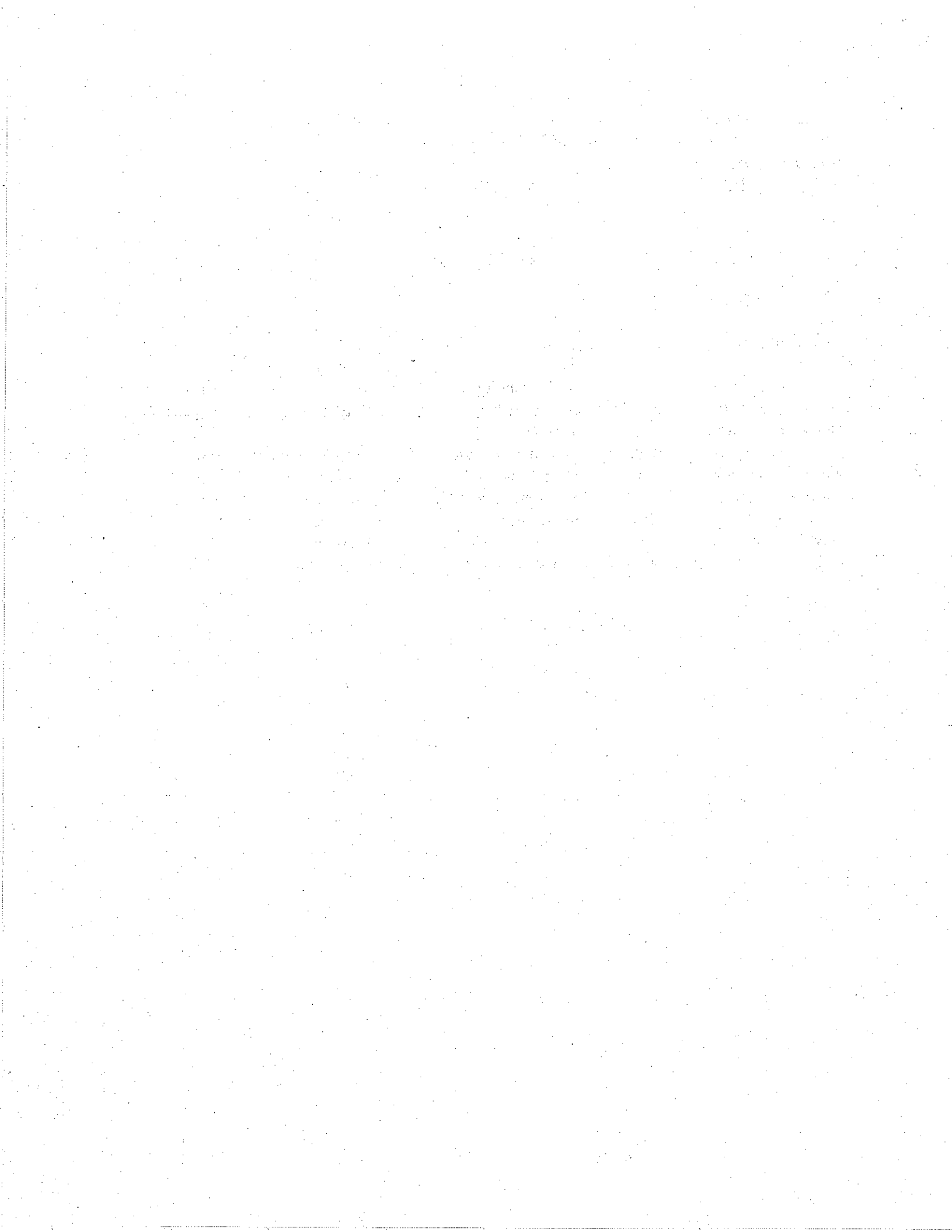
*Paper Topic #2*

Length: 5-7 pages.

Due: February 28

Most philosophes believed that technology was central to any vision of progress. Their views were contradicted by Rousseau and Burke who both seemed to believe in traditional forces and were at heart among the first romantics.

Keeping such thoughts in mind, write an essay with your views of the new technological innovations that have been available to you as a student. Do you think they further your educational progress? Do you feel liberated or confined by the new technology of the computer age? Does the computer free our time for good ends or does it only serve to waste time in other ways? How do you think Condorcet or Voltaire would have felt about the promise of technology in 2001? Would Rousseau or Burke or the romantic poets have been more critical?



## Assignment #3 – A Day in the Life

One of the most important elements in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is its sense of place. Stephen is not simply any young man growing up, he is a young man growing up in Ireland at the turn of the century. He is a product of his environment, which means family, religion, language, culture, but also very specifically place. The physical movement of Stephen's life from school to home, from home to home, from Dublin to the Continent, drives the pattern of his growth and maturity.

In Joyce's most influential work, *Ulysses*, published in 1922, he follows Stephen (and an additional protagonist, Leopold Bloom) over the course of one day as they move about Dublin, and Joyce's writing is adamant in its geographical accuracy. It is almost impossible to read Joyce without a map in hand.

Your assignment: Describe a day in your life, moving from concrete place to place, showing<sup>1</sup> the importance of location in your life; how where you are makes you who you are. You may choose to focus on your life at Villanova, or you may prefer to elect a day of another time and place.

Points to consider:

- Will you select a day of great importance, or a day of everyday occurrence, and why?
- What will be the time frame; distant past, recent past, present?
- As you move from place to place during the day, how does this physical displacement affect your emotions, thoughts, reactions?
- Is your overall reaction to each place one of tolerance, acceptance, affection? Why?

This assignment has 2 parts – one part is text, the other is a map. If you wish to write about a day at Villanova, you can use the attached map to plot your movements. If your chosen day is spent elsewhere, you can either use a purchased map, or draw your own.

4-5 pages.

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<sup>1</sup> Show, do not tell, how these places are important. In other words, "this is the school where I went to kindergarten and learned to read" is telling, "I walked by Elton Road School and remembered taking the bus there for the first time to Mrs. Oliver's class" is showing.

## Museum Project

The Museum Project is due in my office (076 Saint Augustine Center) by 5:30 p.m. on Monday, September 22nd.

Your first assignment is to visit the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, which is located at 3260 South Street in West Philadelphia between 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> street. You are free to tour the museum alone at any time you choose. You are also welcome to join me on Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup> to tour the museum. We will meet at the entrance at 2 p.m.

Then, using between three and four pages, please answer one of the following questions:

1. Imagine that one of your everyday possessions will be included in a museum display one day in the very distant future. Write an extensive description of the object using the museum's written descriptions as models. Describe your possession and its historical relevance in detail.
2. Look at the main gift shop on the second floor and its extensive collection including its postcard rack. Is the gift shop selling the museum or is the museum selling the gift shop? Perhaps neither is true, or perhaps both are true – what do you think? What is the difference, in your mind, between a gift shop reproduction and an authentic artifact? On that note, why do we value authenticity? Consider comparing a gift store item with an item in the museum proper.
3. Do museums exhibitions favor the lives and objects of the wealthy? Pick several examples from the museum to back up your argument.
4. Imagine that the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology is a book about ancient civilizations. What story would the book be telling? How would it tell it? What would the book's main thesis be?
5. What do the items in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology tell us about the relationship between people, god(s) and technology? Choose a few specific examples in the museum to explore this theme.
6. How does the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology teach us about history? What pedagogical methods does it use? How do museums present information differently from books or lectures? Are there any limitations to these methods? Please concentrate on specific examples.

**Franklin and the Enlightenment Assignment – 2 pages**

The objective of this assignment is to analyze the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* in terms of our discussions on the Enlightenment. Select one of the major themes of the Enlightenment and analyze how the early life of Benjamin Franklin reflects this concept. Were Franklin's actions always consistent with this theme? Were there any inconsistencies in his thoughts and actions?

See attached guidelines for expectations...

TOM MOGAN

## Sample Writing Assignments

1. *Genesis*: We have considered the text from the point of view of individual growth and development. Either: Explain why Joseph is a more mature person than Adam. Or: Explain how the story of Jacob wrestling with the mysterious man at Peniel is an archetypal metaphor for some of the struggles which adolescents are challenged by.
2. Here is one that the students have found interesting in the modern course. *Silas Marner*: Imagine that you are a citizen of Raveloe. You are a parent whose children have reached adulthood and are happy, productive members of the community. Marner writes to you asking advice about how to rear Eppie. You respond to him by letter. What would you tell him?

### Some Representative Core Humanities Writing Assignments (Dr. Paul Wright, 9/03)

N.B.: These assignments, drawn from both the "Ancient" and "Modern" sections of my Core seminars, range from essay assignments to potential final exam questions.

#### Essay Assignments for the Ancient, Medieval, & Renaissance Thought Seminar

1) In chapter 15 of *The Prince*, Machiavelli writes, "Many writers have imagined republics and principalities which have never been seen or known to exist in the real world." Although he never names a specific writer, it is generally assumed that he is referring to authors such as Plato and his *Republic*; this seems especially likely when Machiavelli makes a distinction between "the way people live and the way they ought to live." Drawing on Machiavelli's writings and Plato's *Republic*, evaluate both authors' claims to realism. Are there any utopian elements in Machiavelli's thought? Are there practical elements in Plato? Does Machiavelli ever make use of Platonic principles in his writings? Does Plato allow any room for Machiavellian politics?

2) It is an all-too common and perhaps all-too convenient criticism of Augustine to say that he is misogynist. While it seems obviously inappropriate to call him a feminist, particularly in the terms of modernity, book one of *The City of God* exposes and gives voice to the sexual brutalization of women in both war and peace. What is Augustine's understanding here of sexuality, violation, and integrity (both bodily and spiritual)? Why does he connect his discourse on rape to his critique of Roman virtues? Does this connection force us to re-evaluate our own assumptions about honor, chastity, and politics (sexual and otherwise)?

3) One might consider Venice itself to be a character in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. What exactly do we learn about Venice the city in Shakespeare's play? What is the cultural, political, and economic structure of the city within the world of the play? How does Shakespeare's Venice differ from the real Venice of the 16<sup>th</sup> century? Is Shakespeare's Venice accurate? Does it need to be? Why or why not?

4) In the fourteenth century, the Italian Giovanni Boccaccio wrote a treatise *On Famous Women*. In it he suggests:

"The ladies of sacred history, following the way and the directions of their holy Teacher [Jesus], often discipline themselves to tolerate adversity almost beyond human consideration. Pagan women, by contrast, attain [glory]—and with what a strength of spirit—either by a certain gift or instinct of nature; or better, because they are spurred on by a desire for the fleeting splendor of the world; and sometimes, battered by fortune, they confront the heaviest of trials. The first kind of women ... is described ... in the works of pious men ... The merits of the second kind ... I have undertaken to describe, as if to give them a just reward." [cited and translated by Catherine Jordan in *Renaissance Feminism* (Cornell UP, 1990)]

In addressing *The Book of Margery Kempe*, how would you characterize Margery's pursuit of attention and recognition? Does she deserve "a just reward" as a figure of Christian piety? Which of Boccaccio's two types of women does Margery best exemplify? Is she motivated more by spirituality or by glory, or does she somehow manage to bridge Boccaccio's two models of femininity?

### Essay Assignments for the Modern Thought Seminar

- 1) You are a Freudian psychoanalyst so steeped in Freud's concepts that you could have ghost-written *Civilization and Its Discontents*. One day, Kurtz steps out of the pages of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and into your office, having somehow cheated death in Africa. He wants to return to his fiancée and the normalcy of "civilization." Can you help him and how?
  
- 2) In reading *Candide* together, we saw the ways in which Voltaire made European society and its relationship to human suffering an object of the most withering critique. Based on what you gathered from your reading about Voltaire's views on politics, social order, and civility, what do you think he would target if he were a satirist living today? What institutions, practices, or people would Voltaire set his sights on and why? Try to focus on a select few examples. Some examples might include, but are not limited to: consumerism, advertising, Starbucks, New Age religions, smart weapons & stealth bombers, elections, scandal-mongering, Third World poverty, Jerry Springer, infotainment, sports, racism, elitism, higher education, political correctness, etc. Put differently, what are the hypocrisies and self-delusions of our own era? Or do we now truly live in the "best of all possible worlds," given that our standard of living is claimed to be unsurpassed in human history? Do you find yourself responding to it all like Candide, Pangloss, Martin, the old woman, or Paquette (to name but a few)? Would Voltaire be right in satirizing our era? Or is his critique ultimately more destructive than productive? Is the answer simply to work and tend our own gardens, as Candide would have it? Is that an abdication or an acceptance of responsibility? Is Voltaire just a bitter crackpot when all is said and done? To make the paper work, it will ultimately need a *thesis* that advances a reading of Voltaire as social satirist. Try putting *Candide* into a conversation with the present and see what shakes out.
  
- 3) Your *Crimes of War* guide makes mention throughout of *IHL* (International Humanitarian Law); see esp. pp. 386-88. This historic body of legislation includes treaties, accords, protocols, and conventions from the last 150 years or so. It is a collection of standards and legal devices that are not always consistent with one another; moreover, while these laws build on pre-modern sources, they for the most part assume rather than make explicit that earlier tradition. In other words, we are still at the point of having multiple reference points as opposed to having one binding international law. What would *IHL* look like if it were one document written by a committee consisting of Voltaire, Hobbes, Augustine, and Plato? What would be in bounds and out of bounds in terms of *jus ad bello* and *jus in bello*? What bone(s) of contention would remain as the committee drafted the document? On what could they all agree? What compromises would have to be made to generate the document? This essay will be something in the vein of informed speculation; you are encouraged to approach the task creatively. You might write the fictional document produced by the committee; perhaps you could write a dialogue that serves as a transcript of the deliberations; you might even write a journalistic account of why the committee failed to draft anything at all. There are countless approaches to the assignment; be inventive.
  
- 4) Examine one or more of the articles I've provided as supplemental reading [Engels's piece on the family, Elias's article about the state monopoly on violence in the Weimar Republic, Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, etc.]. Using these resources and Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* as inspirations, characterize the moral universe of Eichmann's Third



Reich. How is violence administered, conducted, and evaluated in Eichmann's bureaucratic world? Is violence individual, cultural, political, or something else entirely? Is Eichmann's evil truly "banal" as Arendt suggests? What distinguishes Eichmann from any other bureaucrat? What are the strengths and limitations of Arendt's argument and of the secondary materials? Although you'll be looking at some secondary sources this time around, remember that your primary task is to develop an original thesis of your own and argue it critically.

### Final Exam Questions

1) Looking at the more obviously literary texts in our course (*Candide*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Maus*, & *Wind-up Bird Chronicle*), what makes literature distinctive or unique in comparison with other sorts of disciplines we've dabbled in this semester? Does literature tell a kind of truth and does it tell that truth in the same way? How do the other disciplines "speak" truth? Which discipline strikes you as most compelling or useful?

2) Painful history is the common thread of all our texts this term, whether or not they were fictional *per se*. The original, root meaning of "fiction" and "poetry" had little to do with factuality and more to do with the concept of "invention" and "making" (hence the Latin "fictio" and the Greek "poesis"). Is understanding and telling the past a way of mitigating it? Are facts and data the only way to be truthful? From which text did you learn the most about the past this term? Which did you feel was a dead-end to your understanding?

**Essay 2: The Medea**

**Due Date: Thurs., Sept. 25th**

**Length: 5 pp.**

Please choose ONE of the following topics:

1. **Comparison:** Using Medea and Ruth as examples, consider the portrayal of women and the concept of faithfulness. In what ways are both Medea and Ruth faithful to another? How is their reward for that faithfulness different? How does this difference affect their actions? Examine differences of character and presentation.
2. **Analysis:** Given the context of the drama contests in Dionysian festivals, and the significance of following Dionysius as a mystery religion, analyze the motif of regenerative forces versus destructive forces within the Medea. Think about her own past use of regeneration, her procreative gift within motherhood, and how and why she turns to destruction.
3. **Cause and Effect:** In Joseph, Ruth, and Medea, we have watched the interaction of outsiders with a tight-knit community. What influence does the role of the Corinthian community have on Medea's actions? How is the community a part of the larger Hellenic community and thus in opposition to Medea's own background? Why doesn't Medea fit into the Hellenic mold, and what impact does this have on her circumstances and actions?

This paper should be written using the Writing Lab for the drafting process. I will be collecting the final draft on the due date. Remember to use parenthetical citation when using quotations or when otherwise necessary.

Reminder: Complete the **Academic Integrity Tutorial** on the class webpage by the end of next week so that we may further discuss cheating and plagiarism.

**Subject: Re: October 3rd Workshop Request**

**Date:** Wed, 24 Sep 2003 08:51:11 -0400

**From:** "Timothy Horner" <timothy.horner@villanova.edu>

**To:** Mary Beth Simmons <marybeth.simmons@villanova.edu>

Okay...

What is the nature of the relationship between God and Humans in Genesis 1-38?  
This comes right away and it hits them like a rock, because they are all been indoctrinated into thinking that God is an all knowing, long suffering, forgiving, unconditional loving, softy. IN this part of Genesis they come face to face with a text that simply will not allow them to down that path. (I help). It is an excersize that forces them to confront the TEXT and make decisions about which is more important, what you hear or what you read. It also allows them to ask questions and not fear doubt and ambiguity. It seems simple, but it is not!

Next: Compare and Contrast Paul's ideas in Galatians and Romans.

This is a comparative paper that pushes to them to look for change and development in a single writer that they have been told does not change. Again, this is about getting very close to the text (a big thing with me) and trying to bring some kind of form out of chaos without dismissing the chaos inherent in all good writing. It forces them to get down to the essentials of Paul's argument. I am trying to teach them to be sceptical without being cynical. Big Plan for the Clever Dan.

Here is the final essay: Finding God, Seeing Truth. (5-7 pages) This is a more general essay and should be a cumulative work on the readings you have done thus far. You should begin by looking at your first assignment about Truth and God and then discuss what has changed because of the readings. What from this course stands out as particularly helpful, threatening, comforting, disturbing. You can focus on one text or one aspect that is reflected in several texts. This should be your best work.

In the modern class, when we did the Am Rev. I first asked them individually who they were sympathetic to, the Loyalists or the Rebels. The I assigned them the task for writing a persuasive paper from the side they disagreed with. This is to get them to look at things differently and to look at life from both sides now. Moderate to poor outcome on this one. Too much for many of them.

I also give them a choice in the modern section of writing on a poem (Hughes), or analyse a piece of music (Jazz), or DuBois. Straightforward stuff but pretty interesting and varied (wow is that important for me when I am reading 45 of them!).

That is about it except for e-journals which are weekly e-mail that they send to me on their thoughts in the readings. These are in the style of an email (totally relaxed and ungraded) but sometimes you get some really interesting things coming through. Email is a reality and I want to tap into that culture and interface intellectual thinking with email. Gee, maybe they will email their friends about something they read in class!?

That is about all,

Core Humanities: Modern Thought, Enlightenment to the Present  
CHS 1001 (Sections 004 and 007)  
Dr. Lutes  
Fall 2003

**Paper #1**

Three typed pages, due at the beginning of class **Monday, Sept. 8**

Write a three-page essay on ONE of the topics below. Refer to specific evidence from the novel. If you quote directly from the text, be sure to follow the MLA format guidelines in Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*. Good essays take interpretive risks; strive to go beyond the obvious in your assertions. Do not summarize the plot of the novel, and do not rehash class discussion.

**OPTION ONE.** On the cover of our edition of *Kindred*, successful mystery novelist Walter Mosley is quoted as saying, "In *Kindred* Octavia Butler creates a road for the impossible, and a balm for the unbearable." In one sense, it is easy to see how Butler creates a road for the impossible through time travel. But Walter Mosley is suggesting something more complex about the novel's achievement. What do you think Mosley means by this statement? What is the novel's "impossible" destination (other than simply visiting the past), and what is its "balm for the unbearable"? Do you think Butler's message can apply to impossible and unbearable aspects of our own lives in the United States of 2003? Why or why not? Be as specific as you can.

**OPTION TWO.** We make assumptions all the time. Often we do not even *know* we are making assumptions until we run into situations that challenge our ideas, forcing us to see that what we assumed to be true is not true at all. Through the fantastic device of time travel, the characters in *Kindred* are constantly thrown into situations that challenge their assumptions. Choose one character and trace the path of his or her assumptions in the novel. What do you think Butler is trying to tell us about how specific assumptions work and what effects they have? Can you identify any roughly parallel situation in your world today, in which your own assumptions, or those of someone you know, have been exposed and called into question? Why or why not? To respond to this topic successfully, you should narrow your scope carefully and identify specific assumptions. Do not try to generalize too broadly.

**FORMAT.** All papers must be typed and double-spaced in 10- or 12-point font, with page numbers in the upper right-hand corner and one-inch margins. Staple the pages together. Do not use a title page; instead, simply type your name, the name of the class, my name, and the date in the upper left-hand corner of your first page. Don't forget to title your essays.

**WRITING CENTER REQUIREMENT.** You are required to consult the Writing Center for *at least one* of your four graded papers, which are labeled in capital letters and boldface type on your syllabus as Paper #1, Paper #2, and so on. To fulfill this requirement, you must plan ahead and call the Writing Center, usually two weeks in advance, to get an appointment. When you go for your appointment, bring a copy of

this assignment and a draft of your paper. I encourage all students – from the most enthusiastic writers to the most reluctant ones – to take advantage of the individual writing consultations with specially trained peer tutors in the Writing Center, located in Dalton Room, Old Falvey 202. To make an appointment, call 519-4604 or just walk in. Do not wait until the last minute; the center gets very busy!

**PORTFOLIO REMINDER.** Please remember to keep all of the writing you do for this course in a single folder. Date all assignments. When I return your papers with comments and/or grades, put them in your portfolio. You will have to submit your portfolio, along with a final reflection paper, at the end of the semester.

**Reaction Paper 4**

CHS 1001

Dr. Busch

Spring 2003

Please choose one of the following topics:

1. Hi. You're probably wondering how the computer disappeared from your desk, only to be replaced by this note. Don't you remember how Hobbes says you should lock your doors? Anyway, I'm taking the moderns in Core this semester, just like you. I was very interested to read in Hobbes and Locke that no one naturally has any more right to anything than anybody else does. That got me to thinking: if my rights are naturally equal, why can't I just go around taking whatever I want? Your computer, for example!

I'm a good sport, though. If you think you can prove to me that I made a mistake somewhere, go for it. Use Locke – or Hobbes, if you want – to explain why you deserve to get the computer back. Tape your response to the Oreo. It better be good, though, or you can kiss that laptop goodbye.

2. You wouldn't believe it, but I've just received a phone call from the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs! It seems they're in quite a bind. Yesterday all the tribes in the country submitted a petition with just one little request: please hand over to the native Americans all the land on which their ancestors once lived. In a panic, the SCIA surfed the web to see who might help them make their decision, and seeing our website they gave me a call. I said sure, I've got some students who are studying John Locke right now, and they'd love to come to Washington and set you straight. What will you say?

Your Name:

Please answer ONE of the following two essay questions:

1. Two of the most important episodes in Abraham's life are the dialogue with God over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:17-33) and the binding of Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19). What does each one teach about justice? How might the two lessons seem to conflict? Can they be reconciled? ← note: This RP topic works better after 5-10 minutes of discussion that highlights the remarkable dialogue in the former case and silent obedience in the latter
2. Many of you have highlighted passages and themes in Deuteronomy that are surprising or even shocking to modern readers. Suppose Moses agreed to come to our class and answer our questions. How might the conversation go?

## Details on Essay 2

Dr. Peter Busch

CHS 1000

April 12, 2002

### Essay Topic:

About 200 years have passed since the death of the prophet Mohammed; the Christians would say that it is 850 A.D. You are a well-educated Muslim living near Baghdad. While digging in your garden last spring, you happened to find a box containing several very old scrolls written in ancient Greek. You had some difficulty locating someone to help translate them into Arabic, but when you did, you were amazed to learn what you had discovered: a lost manuscript of *The Laws*, written by the philosopher Plato more than 1200 years ago!

You began to study the book very carefully and found yourself asking these questions. A) How does the Athenian Stranger try to understand the laws that are believed to have come from a god, and what conclusions does he reach? B) If you were to accept his approach, how would you understand the laws contained in the Koran, and what would this mean for your way of life as a Muslim?

### The Assignment:

Write a 5-page paper that addresses these questions. You are free to write the paper in any form you choose (standard essay, journal entry, letters, etc.) provided you make careful reference to the *Laws* and to Surah I-II of the Koran.

- a. Preliminary paper: Work on answering A). Focus on *Laws* 630c-631b.
- b. Rough draft: 5 pages, due 4/22/02
- c. Final draft: 5 pages, due 5/1/02 (last day of class)

Grading: As was the case with Essay 1, the preliminary paper is ungraded; the rough draft, worth 1/3 of your total grade; the final draft, 2/3.

### Further notes:

As you write this paper, you may of course find yourself thinking about Avicenna and Al Ghazali. Note, however, that when the box appears in your garden, neither one of these thinkers has yet been born.



## War in the Old and New Testament

Assigned readings: Genesis 1-11; Joshua 1-10; Isaiah 2:1-15; Isaiah 13; Matthew 5; and Luke 6: 20-36.

Additional readings: Genesis 14; Leviticus 26; Numbers 21, 21; Deuteronomy 2, 7, and 20; 1 Samuel 14-15; 2 Samuel 22; Job 39; Psalms 35, 44, 45, 46; Ecclesiastes 3; Isaiah 9, 10, 40, 42; Nahum 3, Matthew 24, 26, 39; Luke 22; Romans 8, 13; 2 Corinthians 10; James 4; Hebrews 11; and Revelations 12, 13, 19, 20.

1. How many wars are there in Genesis? Why? Critically examine the differences.
2. Be one of the players in one of the Genesis wars and write about your experiences.
3. The story of Adam and Eve as well as that of Cain and Abel are the material of legend and myth. Critically react to this statement. Or retell the story in your letters.
4. Why do the walls of Jericho fall? What part does God play in the battle?
5. Critically examine God's covenants and God's warfare.
6. Be one of Joshua's new warriors. (Remember those who disobeyed God had perished in the forty years desert exile.)
7. Whose side is God on in the Old Testament wars? For example, why can God deliver the king of Ai into Joshua's power?
8. Joshua conquered the entire country and left no survivors just as God had commanded him? Why?

Scotfield CCJ

9. (Isaiah 13) Who are the warriors of the Lord? Write letters as if you belong to that group.

10. Be a citizen of Babylon and describe the destruction and war.

11. Describe the new kind of warfare outlined in the New Testament? (e.g. Matthew 5).

12. Discuss the passive resistance described in Mathew 5: 38-42.

13. How is love related to war?

14. Discuss the directive: "Love your enemies." (Luke 6: 27).

## First Major Paper for Core Humanities CHC 1000

Dr. Nancy Kelley

You are at Agathon's banquet. It is your turn to speak on the meaning of love. Knowing that Socrates is actively listening to what you say, write a four to five page paper defining your idea of this human state.

You can be as creative as you like. For example:

- Who are you? Are you an invited or uninvited guest?
- Who has spoken before you, and who is left to speak?
- What literary device might you use to lighten the atmosphere at this banquet (think about Aristophanes' hiccups)?

You must be as specific as possible. For example:

- Make at least two detailed references to what other speakers have said in *The Symposium*. If you have posited that you are speaking first or second, you can make reference to what you have heard these other guests say about love in a previous discussion.
- Make references to some of the specific ideas discussed in our class as if they were comments you had heard previously either in the agora or at another banquet.

### Expectations

- Specific references to the text must be cited according to *A Writer's Reference*
- Write at least two pages on your definition of love and no more than two pages on the scenario and references in your paper.

## First Major Paper for Core Humanities CHC 1000

Dr. Nancy Kelley

You are Socrates addressing his jury of 500 Athenian citizens in defense of the charges of impiety brought against you. Write a four to five page paper making your best attempt to have yourself acquitted. Remember that the actual vote was very, very close (280 to 220) and so you have a reasonable chance to be exonerated, or at least not condemned to death.

You can also choose to be Socrates' prosecutor and write the prosecution's case against him.

You must be as specific as possible. For example:

- Make at least two detailed references to what has been said against you in *The Apology*. If you are the prosecutor, you must make specific references to what Socrates has previously said.
- Make references to some of the specific ideas discussed in our class.

### Expectations

- Specific references to the text must be cited according to *A Writer's Reference*
- Write at least two pages on your defense or prosecution and no more than two pages on your scenario (If you are Socrates this would be the dialogue involving with Meletus. If you are the prosecutor, this would be Socrates' questions to you.) and any other references in your paper.

Pick something from contemporary society ( a current event, a sport, a TV show, a movie, etc.) and explain how Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau would view it. Who do you think would have the most accurate assessment of the event you chose? Who do you think would be right? With whom would you agree?

Bob Legnini

**CORE HUMANITIES PROGRAM  
ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL, AND RENAISSANCE THOUGHT**

Dr. Marylu Hill

Fall, 2003

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***WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1***

Choose one seemingly “unreasonable” – that is, extraordinary, non-rational, outside the bounds of normalcy – event or occurrence in the *Book of Genesis* and explore its function within the Genesis story. How is it treated within the text (i.e., do the participants regard it as normal or abnormal), and what impact does that treatment have on the story? How important is it to the story and to the greater themes of Genesis?

More importantly, what should we conclude about this event? For example, 1) can a deeper explanation, a rational explanation, be found after all despite the initial surprise and bafflement; or 2) is the event or lesson fundamentally mysterious, defying our understanding; or 3) is it some combination of a and b??

For this assignment, you must visit the Writing Center (Old Falvey) with a preliminary draft, then revise it according to what you discuss with the writing center tutor. You will then hand in both the preliminary draft and the rewritten version.

Length: 3-4 pages

Due Date: Friday, September 19 by 4:30 p.m. in my mailbox (Rm. 104, SAC)

**CORE HUMANITIES PROGRAM  
ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL, AND RENAISSANCE THOUGHT**

Dr. Marylu Hill

Fall 2001

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*Writing Assignment #2*

It is the year 34 C.E., and you are a follower of the man named Jesus who was recently executed as a threat to the Roman empire. Write a letter to a friend or relative who has been suspicious of your choice to follow Jesus, and convince him/her why s/he should listen to the good news of Jesus' message and become a disciple like yourself. Be sure to offer concrete reasons and proofs of Jesus' greatness. A central part of your argument should be reasons why anyone would choose to follow Jesus, particularly given the difficult nature of his message. But also consider the many miraculous signs that accompanied Jesus' public life, particularly the last final sign of his death and supposed resurrection.

Your portrait of Jesus must be based on ***either Mark or John's gospel*** — ***not a mix of both***. Keep in mind the differences between these two gospels, and make certain your argument conforms to the basic tone of the gospel you have chosen. And ***do not call yourself a Christian*** — the term Christian is not used until later in the century.

At the end of your letter, please append a postscript that identifies the gospel you chose to use, and offers a short rationale for your choice of that gospel.

Length: 2-3 pages

Due Date: ***Wednesday, Sept. 26***, by 4:45 p.m., in my mailbox, Rm. 104, SAC

**CORE HUMANITIES SEMINAR  
ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL, AND RENAISSANCE THOUGHT**

Dr. Marylu Hill

Fall, 2002

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***FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT***

For your final writing assignment, I would like you to reflect briefly on your experience using primary and secondary sources in preparing for our Richard III project. Specifically, what has it taught you about the nature of evidence and its reliability? What have you learned about how humans record history, and to what purpose? What challenges do you think historians face in writing history? The only argument I would ask you *not* to make is the old statement that the victors write the history books.

Because this is a reflection essay, I am not looking for a “right” or “wrong” answer. The essay should be based on your own thoughts on the process you have just explored first-hand, and thus should reflect your own frustrations or surprises as you delved through the materials. Thus, I am looking for how thoughtfully you approach the questions, and with what insight you consider your experience.

Due Date:     Final exam  
Length:       Two pages



CHS 1001:Modern Thought  
Mary Beth Simmons  
Informal Paper Topic: A Chapter of Your Autobiography  
Length: 4-5 pages

Remember to title your work, number your pages and staple the paper, Please!

Now that the class has read, discussed and written critical responses on Rousseau's The Confessions and Dillard's An American Childhood, it's time to take a creative approach to these two texts and turn the focus on your lives. It's important to make a very narrow selection of your life, as you only have 4-5 pages in which to work. Remember Dillard's chapter on her mother and her very specific quirkiness. ("Terwilliger bunts one.") As many of you have noted in our class discussions, it is the unique detail of the ordinariness in life that stays with you.

We'll be doing a series of free-writing activities in class to help get you started on the project. One free-write you might want to try on your own comes from Natalie Goldberg's Writing Down the Bones:

*Begin with "I remember." Write lots of small memories. If you fall into one large memory, write that. Just keep going. Don't be concerned if the memory happened five seconds ago or five years ago. Everything that isn't this moment is memory coming alive again as you write.*

While it might be the writer's inclination to write about the "big" events of a life—graduations, getting a driver's license, the death of a pet—remember that it's often the mundane or simple that constructs a life. Remember Dillard's chapter on playing in the snow. Remember Rousseau's passion for reading. "Good or bad was alike to me. I did not choose, I read everything with equal avidity. I read at my bench, I read on errands, I read in the lavatory, and was oblivious of myself for hours on end. I read until my head spun, I did nothing but read."

If you have any questions, please ask! I look forward to reading your chapters.

**Subject: Re: October 3rd Workshop Request**

**Date:** Wed, 17 Sep 2003 12:27:55 -0400

**From:** "Lowell Gustafson" <lowell.gustafson@villanova.edu>

**To:** Mary Beth Simmons <marybeth.simmons@villanova.edu>

Dear Mary Beth,

My writing assignment is for each student to choose two topics from a list of topics that we cover through the course: one from the first half of the course and one from the second. Each student is to write a 5 page draft of a paper about the topic and post it on webct at least one day before that topic is to be discussed in class. The student begins the discussion of that day's topic by reviewing the points made in the paper and then leads a discussion about it. I add to the discussion when it seems fit.

Students are to read the draft on webct before class and write comments about it within two days after class. They are to respond with what they like about the paper as well as what they would want to see revised or added to it.

Then, each student is to consider the class discussion and written comments when they revise the draft for a final version, handed in at the mid term or final exam.

Lowell Gustafson

Mary Beth Simmons wrote:

Dear Colleagues,

On Friday, October 3rd, Core Humanities will host a luncheon and workshop from 12:30-2:00 in the West Lounge of Dougherty Hall. The focus of the workshop will be "How to Construct an Effective Writing Assignment". The agenda includes a brief presentation on the components of carefully crafted informal and formal writing assignments.

In preparation for this workshop, I would like to ask each faculty member to provide me with a copy of one successful Core writing assignment s/he has used. These may be assignments for informal or formal writing tasks. N.B.--we will NOT be scrutinizing these assignments during our workshop. The purpose of the collection is to "share the wealth" and put together a packet of these assignments for distribution at the workshop.

Please give me your assignment either as a hard copy or attachment by next Thursday, 25 September. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Best,

Mary Beth Simmons

9-5358

**Subject:** [Fwd: Antigone paper]

**Date:** Wed, 24 Sep 2003 11:07:37 -0400

**From:** "Mark Shiffman" <mark.shiffman@villanova.edu>

**To:** marybeth.simmons@villanova.edu

Mark

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:** Antigone paper

**Date:** Sat, 30 Aug 2003 06:17:54 -0500

**From:** "Mark Shiffman" <mark.shiffman@villanova.edu>

**To:** "Mark Shiffman" <mark.shiffman@villanova.edu>

**CC:** Fall03-CHS-1000-010@villanova.edu ,Fall03-CHS-1000-004@villanova.edu  
Fall03-CHS-1000-D04@villanova.edu

**Antigone Assignment**

**Due:** In class September 15

**Length:** 1200-1500 words (4-5 pages)

**Topic:** Compare the decision made by Antigone to the decision made by the Melians in Thucydides. Consider the following questions -

1. What kind of decision are they each faced with?
2. What is at stake for them and what are the risks?
3. What motives lead them to choose as they do?
4. What expectations do they have about the consequences of their respective decisions?
5. How do the differences between them affect the degree to which you approve of their actions and admire their characters?

**Subject: Re: RSVP and Assignment Deadline...**

**Date:** Fri, 26 Sep 2003 14:13:14 -0400

**From:** "Joseph Prud'homme" <joseph.prudhomme@villanova.edu>

**To:** Mary Beth Simmons <marybeth.simmons@villanova.edu>

Hi Mary Beth:

Here is what I have in mind for an upcoming assignment:

Compare and contrast Aristotle's idea of human perfection with the Socratic ideal of perfect integrity. Then answer the questions: Which view of human perfection do you find more compelling, and why?

Best,

Joseph Prud'homme

Mary Beth Simmons wrote:

> Hi Joseph,

>

> Thanks for the note.

>

> Did you send your assignment?

>

> Thanks,

> MBS

>

> Joseph Prud'homme wrote:

>

>> Hi Mary Beth:

>>

>> I have been out of town; sorry for the delay in responding. I am

>> definitely going to attend, and I look forward to it. Let me send you

>> my writing assignment later in the day.

>> Thanks,

>> Joseph Prud'homme

>>

>> ----- Original Message -----

>> From: "Mary Beth Simmons" <marybeth.simmons@villanova.edu>

>> Date: Wednesday, September 24, 2003 10:09 am

>> Subject: RSVP and Assignment Deadline...

>>

>>> Good Morning,

>>>

>>> Thanks to those of you who have already gotten back to me with

>>> your writing assignments

>>> and RSVPs.

>>>

**Subject: Re: RSVP and Assignment Deadline...**

**Date:** Fri, 26 Sep 2003 09:41:01 -0400

**From:** "Linda Boettcher" <linda.boettcher@villanova.edu>

**To:** "Mary Beth Simmons" <marybeth.simmons@villanova.edu>

Hi Mary Beth, I will be at the luncheon. At this point, I do not have an assignment that has been really successful. I think the one that has been most helpful thus far entailed having the students locate each definition of piety in Plato's Euthyphro. Along with each definition that had to trace why this definition was inadequate. This gave them good practice in logically thinking through arguments. I'm not sure if this is the kind of thing you are thinking of...Linda.

----- Original Message -----

From: "Mary Beth Simmons" <marybeth.simmons@villanova.edu>

Date: Wednesday, September 24, 2003 10:09 am

Subject: RSVP and Assignment Deadline...

> *Good Morning,*

>

> *Thanks to those of you who have already gotten back to me with*

> *your writing assignments*

> *and RSVPs.*

>

> *I need to hear from the rest of you by tomorrow.*

>

> *My thanks,*

> *Mary Beth*

>

>

>

**Subject: Re: October 3rd Workshop Request**

**Date:** Wed, 17 Sep 2003 16:34:24 -0700

**From:** "Heather Goodman" <heather.goodman@villanova.edu>

**To:** "Mary Beth Simmons" <marybeth.simmons@villanova.edu>

Using the Bible readings "Ruth", "Job", and "Jonah", you will write a paper that shows how characters' sense of self is confirmed or dissuaded by those around them. You will address specifics from each of the three readings to prove your case, and you will conclude by applying what you have written about the characters to your own life. The paper should be 3-5 pages long, and must be revised with the help of the writing center. The paper is due Thursday, September 18.

Hope all is well. Thanks.

Heather Goodman

----- Original Message -----

**From:** "Mary Beth Simmons" <marybeth.simmons@villanova.edu>

**Date:** Wednesday, September 17, 2003 7:53 am

**Subject:** October 3rd Workshop Request

- > Dear Colleagues,
- >
- > On Friday, October 3rd, Core Humanities will host a luncheon and
- > workshop from 12:30-2:00
- > in the West Lounge of Dougherty Hall. The focus of the workshop
- > will be "How to Construct
- > an Effective Writing Assignment". The agenda includes a brief
- > presentation on the
- > components of carefully crafted informal and formal writing
- > assignments.
- > In preparation for this workshop, I would like to ask each faculty
- > member to provide me
- > with a copy of one successful Core writing assignment s/he has
- > used. These may be
- > assignments for informal or formal writing tasks. N.B.--we will
- > NOT be scrutinizing these
- > assignments during our workshop. The purpose of the collection is
- > to "share the wealth"
- > and put together a packet of these assignments for distribution at
- > the workshop.
- >
- > Please give me your assignment either as a hard copy or attachment
- > by next Thursday, 25
- > September. Please contact me if you have any questions.