

Humanities Institute

Essay Assignments

HUM 516 Twentieth Century Humanities

Texts:

Gloria Fiero. *The Humanistic Tradition, Book 6*. NY: McGraw-Hill, 2005.
 Bedford Anthology, Vol 6. NY: St Martins, 2004
 Marvin Perry. *An Intellectual History of Modern Europe*. NY: Houghton-Mifflin. 1993.
 Daniel Kolak. *The Longman Standard History of Philosophy*. NY: Pearson, 2006.
 Marilyn Stokstad. *Art History: Vol 6. Ancient Art*. 3rd Edition. Prentice-Hall, 2009.
 Jared Diamond. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies*. NY: Norton, 1997.
 Cubism. Olga's Art Gallery. Online.
 Expressionism. Olga's Art Gallery Online.
 Dadaism. Olga's Art Gallery Online.
 Surrealism. Olga's Art Gallery Online.

Instructions for Essays: Students will post their essays on the discussion board. The original essay should be 1,000 words. Students will read each others' essays, and then will respond with a 150-250 word thoughtful and well-considered post for at least two of their fellow students' essays.

UNIT	WEEKS	TOPICS	READINGS
I		Literature	
	1-3	Modernism Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) Heart of Darkness James Joyce (1882-1941) Franz Kafka (1883-1924) T. S. Eliot	Perry, Ch 9 Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 30-96 Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 366-401. Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 423-459. Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 473-501.
	Theme: The Modern Condition	The events of the early twentieth century had a profound impact on thinkers and writers, many of whom reacted to the wars, devastation, political change, technological progress by attempting to capture the experience (both psychological and physical) in writing. As a result, modern fiction probes the meaning of human progress and the nature of the self and self-concept in the face of overwhelming and fragmenting forces. Please discuss the ways in which the works in this unit explore the human condition and compare and contrast their ways of depicting life and the self.	
	4-6	Postmodernism Jorge Luis Borges Gabriel Garcia Marquez Milan Kundera Theatre of the Absurd	Fiero, chapters x-x; Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 648-658 Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 924-932 Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 1001-1016 Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 770-780
	Theme: Identity and the Self	While modernism was in many ways a positivist movement which aligned itself with the idea that human invention (both technological and institutional) could create a living utopia, postmodernism calls into question all modernism's certitudes. For postmodernists, reality is a construct, teleology is suspect,	

and the self / identity is multiple. Myth and magic are within the realm of possibility and envisioning, time is not linear, and the nature of perception of distorted and fragmentary. In the readings for this unit, identify the postmodern elements, discuss them and then compare and contrast them.

7-9	Globalism	
	R. K. Narayan	Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 781-796
	Chinua Achebe	Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 1017-1112
	Leopold Sedar Senghor	Bedford, Bk 6, pp. 884-886
	Derek Walcott	Bedford, Bk 6, 1113 - 1126

Theme: Encounters As the old colonial empires fell apart, and countries gained independence, new voices emerged. They told a different story than those from the old, colonial countries, and their message was one that sought affirmation of existence. The emphasis on telling one's own story in one's own words and in one's own language yielded literature that provided a wide view of the human experience. Please discuss the different writers and explore the ways in which they viewed their encounters with the old regime, and also new ones with the new world order. Provide examples to support your points.

II Art

10-12	Modernism	Fiero, Book 6, ch 32, 33 Stokstad, Book 6, p 31
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Theme: Modernism Please provide an overview of the main trends and movements in modern art, including cubism, expressionism, Dadaism and surrealism.

III Philosophy

13-15	Existentialism Sartre (1905-1980)	Perry, Ch 11 Longman, 274-302
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Theme: Freedom The twentieth century represented a time of great challenge to both organized religion and socio-political constructs. Technological advances converged with human desire and ambition in ways unparalleled in their destructive aftermath. When philosophers viewed the events of the 20th century, many pointed to the failings of religion and spirituality to curb human cruelty, and they asked how the human individual could respond, with ethical regard and a sense of responsibility. What emerged was a series of thoughts and ideas that exhorted the individual to be responsible and responsive to life and liberty in the here and now. A way of dealing with the individual's anomie and angst was also an outgrowth of this new philosophical outpouring. Please describe existential and analyze a work by Sartre, pointing out the elements that make it resolutely existential.

IV Finals

16	Review, Annotated Bibliography, Research Paper	
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