CNX 100
What is the Examined Life?
T/Thursday 10-11:20
Joseph International Center 101

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Office Hours: Mon. 1-3, Wed. 12-1, and by appointment.

Course Overview: If “the unexamined life is not worth living,” then what exactly is the examined life? This semester we ask this question through a survey of some of the most enduring works of literature, philosophy, social thought, art and architecture. In its own way, each work shines a light on the human condition, directing our attention to fundamental concerns: human nature, death, fortune, knowledge and ignorance, friendship and love, the aims and effects of society, civilization, art, and culture. At the same time, each work is the product of its author’s own examined life, prompting us to consider the life behind the work. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the study of these works puts us in conversation with the authors of these works. In this way, the course introduces us to the practice of the examined life, and initiates us into the community of reflection.

Texts: All texts are available at the College Bookstore.
Hesiod, Works and Days and Theogony, (Hackett Publishing)
Sophocles, Oedipus the King, (Oxford University Press)
Plato, The Trial and Death of Socrates, (Hackett Publishing)
Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, (Hackett Publishing)
Augustine, Confessions, (Oxford University Publishing)
The Rule of St. Benedict, (Liturgical Books)
Chaucer, G., The Canterbury Tales, (Oxford University Press)
Shakespeare, W., Hamlet, (Cambridge University Press)
Rousseau, J, Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, (Hackett Publishing)
Austen, J, Persuasion, (Oxford University Press)
Marx, K., The Communist Manifesto, (International Publishers)
Nietzsche, F., Beyond Good and Evil, (Oxford University Press)
Freud, S., Civilization and its Discontents, (Norton Publishing)
Other required readings available in PDF form on Canvas Course Website.

Course Requirements: Your grade in this course will be determined by four factors. See Canvas Course Website for more detail on each:

1) Short Writings (8): Assigned in connection with reading assignments, or as in-class writings; graded on a ten-point scale: 20%.

2) Long Writings/Peer Edit (4): altogether, 60%.

3) Attendance, preparation and participation: 17%.
4) Historical Context Presentation: A brief presentation of the historical context surrounding one of the works we read. Once during the semester for each student, assigned randomly: 3%.

**Course Schedule:** This schedule is not written in stone. Any changes will be announced in class and on the Canvas Course Website.

Thursday, September 4th: Introductions, Syllabus; *Gilgamesh* Prologue – Bk. III.

Tuesday, September 9th: *Gilgamesh* Bk. IV-XI.

Thursday, September 11th: *Genesis*, Ch. 1-11, Ecclesiastes (PDF).

Tuesday, September 16th: Hesiod, *Works and Days* and selections from *Theogony* [1-232, 456-725, 886-969].

**Long Writing 1, Assigned Tues. Sept. 16th. Draft due Tuesday, September 23rd. Peer Comments returned Monday, September 28th; Re-Write: Sunday, October 5th.

Thursday, September 18th: Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* (entire).

Tuesday, September 23rd: Plato, *Apology* (entire) and selections from *Phaedo* (57a-69e, 114d-118a).

**Thursday, September 25th: No Class


**Wed. Oct. 1st:** 7:30 pm. “Happy” Documentary Viewing and Discussion with Prof. David Merli, Philosophy


**Long Writing 2 Assigned Tuesday, October 7th. Draft due Sunday, October 12th; Peer Comment due Thursday, October 16th; Re-Write due Monday October 20th.

Tuesday, October 7th: Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*: II, III, V-VIII, XV, XVI, XLI, XLVII, XLVIII, LXV, LIV, LXIII, LXXXIII (PDF)

Thursday, October 9th: Augustine, *Confessions* Bks. I-IV.

Tuesday, October 14th: No Class Fall Break.

Thursday, October 16th: Augustine, *Confessions* Bks. V-VIII.

**Sat. Oct. 18th: Field Trip: Spaces for the Examined Life. Please read Rule of St. Benedict. Time/Location TBA.
Tuesday, October 21st: P. Abelard, *The Calamities of Peter Abelard in Abelard and Heloise: The Letters and Other Writings.*


Thursday, October 30th: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* Acts I-III.1

**LW 3 assigned Oct. 30th, draft due Sunday November 8th; peer comment due Thursday N 12th. Re-Write Tuesday, Nov. 15th.**

**Monday Nov. 3rd 8 pm Green Room Theater: Yannis Simonides, Socrates Now (Based on Plato's *Apology*).**

Tuesday, November 4th: *Hamlet*, III.2-fin.; Self-portraiture

Thursday, November 6th: Montaigne, *Essays: To the Reader* (p. 24), 1.8 On Idleness (pp. 26-28), 1.21 On the Power of the Imagination (pp. 36-48), 1.27 That It Is Folly to Measure Truth and Error by Our Own Capacity (pp. 86-91), 1.28 On Friendship (pp. 91-104), 2.10 On Books (pp. 159-173), 2.11. On Cruelty (pp. 174-189), 3.3 On Three Kinds of Relationships (pp. 250-264), 3.8 On the Art of Conversation (pp. 285-311), 3.13 On Experience (pp. 343-406).

Tuesday, November 11th: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (entire).


Tuesday, November 18th: *Persuasion*, Vol II. (pp. 99-203)


**Thurs. Nov. 20th: Jane Austen Movie, Ware House Great Room, 7:30 pm.**


**LW 4 assigned Tues. November 25th, draft due Thursday December 4th; peer comment, Tuesday, December 9th, Re-Write due Tuesday, December 16th.**

Tuesday, December 2nd: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Ch. 1-3, 5


Tuesday, December 9th: Freud: *Civilization and its Discontents*

**Canvas Course Website:**
This course has a Canvas Website. To access the website:

1) Go to: [www.go.fandm.edu/canvas](http://www.go.fandm.edu/canvas).
2) Login using your F&M NetID and Password.
3) Under the “Courses” Tab, click on “CNX 100.10190”.

This website will be the source of many vital documents and resources for the entire semester, including:

- The Course Syllabus
- Weekly Announcements Summarizing Week Ahead.
- Overview of Assignments and Exercises
- Reading Assignment Detail
- Course Policies
- Oral Presentation Schedule
- All assignments and instructions
- An up to date course calendar
- PDFs of Required readings
- Links to websites for required or optional viewing

This website will also be the portal through which you will turn in various assignments, and by which I will grade and return work to you.

It is your responsibility to become familiar and comfortable with using Canvas, and the important documents, resources and information contained there. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.