

CC 202 Core Curriculum Humanities Honors Seminar
Spring 2000
Syllabus

Humanities Honors seminars meet in room 227 of the College of Arts and Sciences building.

Course requirements include reading of assigned texts; presence at, and participation in, honors section lectures and discussions on the dates given below; for each text, a 1-2 page paper to be turned in at the beginning of the Honors discussion concerned with that text; a 5-page paper on a topic or text from the honors meetings; and successful completion of a short semiformal interview with honors professors at the conclusion of the course. Each 1-2 page paper will be graded pass/fail. A letter grade will be assigned for the 5-page paper and the Honors interview, taking into account previous work on the papers and in class. Final grade will be assigned by regular Core discussion leader in consultation with the faculty conducting the honors seminars.

Theme: The theme of the course is "Second Thoughts." Each of the sessions will be concerned with the revision of ideas or texts.

1/14/00, 4:00: **Introduction**

1/24/00, 4:00: **Enlightenment Revisions: Professor Susan Jackson**
Reading: Diderot, Rameau's Nephew

2/7/00, 4:00: **Revisions of Myth: Professor Goldsmith**
Reading: Moliere, Don Juan

2/28/00, 4:00: **Translation: Professor Brittain Smith**
Reading: Selections from Goethe's Faust, Part I

4/3/00, 4:00: **Poetic Revision: Professor Ricks**
Reading: Selections from the poetry of Wordsworth

Friday,
4/28/00, 4:00: **Philosophical Revisions: Professor Devlin**
Reading: Selections from Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy

**CC 202 Core Curriculum Humanities IV
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Assignment 1

(A) Read Diderot's dialogue "Rameau's Nephew."

(B) Write a cogent 1-2 page response to the following question: After devoting fifteen years to editing the Encyclopedia, why might Diderot have decided against publishing "Rameau's Nephew" during his own lifetime?

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Assignment 3

Revision by Addition: The End of Goethe's Faust, Part II

Faust, Part II, Act V

Translated by Walter Arndt

Interpretive Notes by Cyrus Hamlin

Translated by Stuart Atkins

The idea that Faust might be saved occurred to Goethe quite early; he mentions it in letters written when Faust I is barely underway. Goethe wrote the end of Faust II (Faust's death and salvation) in 1800-01, as he was completing Faust I. He worked on other parts of Faust II for many years, and did not complete Act V until 1830, two years before his death. So in Act V we are looking, as so often in Faust, at work from different periods of Goethe's life blended together. When he finished Faust II, Goethe sealed the manuscript in an envelope, instructing that it be posthumously published.

Throughout Part II, Faust has been involved with "The Emperor," a kind of generalized Holy Roman Emperor whose presence brings in political, social, and economic themes. As Act V begins, the Emperor has granted Faust some land on the seacoast, so Faust can carry out his great project: pushing back the sea and reclaiming land for human use. In Act IV, we have seen Faust choose this "one great thing" in preference to success in war, fame and honor, pleasure and dalliance, etc. He says, speaking of the sea: "Forward it steals, and in a million starts, / Sterile itself, sterility imparts; . . . / There wave on wave imbued with power has heaved, / But to withdraw--and nothing is achieved! / Which drives me near to desperate distress! / Such elemental might, unharnessed, purposeless! / There dares my spirit soar past all it knew; / Here I would struggle, this I would subdue. / And it is possible! . . . / [To Mephistopheles:] This is my wish, in this dare further me!"

Faust's project has been successful. In the first scene of Act V, a Wayfarer comes to the cottage of Philemon and Baucis, an old couple who have lived all their lives on some land adjoining the land that Faust owns. Faust wants their land, and has offered in exchange a new plot of land reclaimed from the ocean. The old couple do not want to move.

(A) Read the text and the footnotes (they are important--as, for instance the notes on Philemon and Baucis). Read the "Interpretive Notes" from the bottom of p. 341 (where it says "Act V") through p. 345.

(B) In 1-2 pages, answer one of the following questions:

(1) Does Faust deserve to be saved? If not, why is he saved? If so, why does he deserve it? You will need to take into account the final actions and events of his life, any changes in character, anything he seems to have learned or not learned, and the role of the various sinful women (including Gretchen) in the final scene, who sing as Faust's soul is borne to heaven.

(2) Faust is sometimes taken as Goethe's meditation on, or even prophecy concerning Western man. Based on Act V, what is Goethe's interpretation of Western man ("man" here, remember, means "human," and includes both sexes)? What is Western man's nature, and to what might this lead?

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Assignment 4

Wordsworth and Revision

(A) Read and compare the assigned passages. The selections, with one exception, are from versions of Wordsworth's long poem The Prelude

From The Prelude

The adventure with the boat and address to the power that "gives to forms and images a breath"

From the 1799 "Two-Part Prelude," ll. 81-129 ("They guided me")	p. 1
From Book I of the 1805 <u>Prelude</u>	pp. 2-3, left columns
From Book I of the 1850 <u>Prelude</u>	pp. 2-3, right columns

"Old Man Traveling" or
"Animal Tranquility and Decay"

p. 3

(B) A short research assignment: Write a 2-page sketch of the history of the composition and revisions of Wordsworth's Prelude, relating the various versions to his biography.