

Core Curriculum CC 202: Core Humanities IV

“From Enlightenment and the Romantic Revolt to the Modern World”

Boston University College of Arts & Sciences

Spring 2022 Syllabus

Lectures: Tuesdays 12:30-1:45pm in Tsai Auditorium, 685 Commonwealth Avenue
Course Credits: 4.0

Seminars:

B1 with Christopher Ricks, cricks@bu.edu	TR 9:30-10:45am in EIB 106
B2 with Joyce Hope Scott, hopescot@bu.edu	TR 11am-12:15pm in AAS 102
B3 with Yuri Corrigan, ycorriga@bu.edu	TR 2-3:15pm in CAS 114A
C1 with George Vahamikos, ghv@bu.edu	MWF 9:05-9:55am in CAS 114A
C2 with Kyna Hamill, kyna@bu.edu	MWF 1:25-2:15pm in CAS 114B

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Department Office: CAS Room 119, open 9-5, Monday-Thursday, core@bu.edu

Course Description. The four semesters of the Core Humanities follow a historical sequence so that works can be studied as an evolving conversation about the enduring questions of life. Throughout, our goal is to discover what the greatest works of the past have to say to us here, right now. In CC 202, the fourth and culminating semester of our humanities study, we take up questions including... What is Enlightenment? What is the supreme principle of morality? What constitutes a just society? How do works of philosophy, literature, and the arts inspire ethical reasoning, and can they guide our judgment about ethical questions at stake in the world today? We examine these and other questions of social hierarchy and political power, subjectivity and its relation to reason, in Voltaire, Kant, Goethe, Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, English Romantic poetry, Dickinson, Whitman, Nietzsche, Chekhov, and the music of Beethoven. The course ends in the first years of the 20th century with Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* and Du Bois’ *The Souls of Black Folk*.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

Philosophical Inquiry and Life’s Meanings

- To demonstrate knowledge of notable works in philosophical thought, make meaningful connections among them, and be able to relate those works to your own life and those of others.
- To demonstrate the reasoning skills and possess the vocabulary to reflect upon significant philosophical questions and topics such as what constitutes a good life, right action, meaningful activity, knowledge, truth, or a just society.

Ethical Reasoning

- To be able to identify, grapple with, and make a judgment about the ethical questions at stake in major contemporary public debates, and engage in a civil discussion about it with those who hold views different from your own.
- To demonstrate the skills and vocabulary needed to reflect on the ethical responsibilities that face individuals (or organizations, or societies or governments) as they grapple with issues affecting both the communities to which they belong and those identified as “other.”

Writing

- To write as a means to learn from and engage with important works of literature, philosophy, music, and art.
- To craft responsible, considered, and well-written arguments about these works, using modes of expression appropriate to the situation.

- To read with understanding, engagement, and critical judgment, and converse thoughtfully about these works.
- To share your written work, and to practice evaluating the validity of arguments, including your own.

Instructional Format, Course Pedagogy, and Approach to Learning. Students are required to attend all lectures and seminars. If a student is unavoidably absent from lecture, lecture video recordings will in most cases be available via links at www.bu.edu/core/cc202. This site, however, is intended for review purposes only, and is monitored. Individual seminar leaders will note attendance in seminar.

Lectures will focus on the cultural contexts, main concepts, and philosophical topics in the works studied, drawing connections among them and to the ongoing themes of the course. In seminar, students will explore key ideas raised in lecture, explore ethical questions posed by the works we are studying this semester, and address these questions within the context of major contemporary public debates, through civil discussion as well as through their own writing. Active participation is crucial. Reading and writing assignments will be distributed throughout the semester, including a final thesis-driven paper with ample opportunity for feedback on steps along the way. As designated by individual seminar leaders, students will also demonstrate their comprehension and critical evaluation of key ideas raised in lecture. Individual seminars will vary in the direction they take, but the common CC 202 final exam will focus on questions and topics specifically raised in lecture.

Lecture sessions will be recorded on Echo360 for the benefit of registered students who are unable to attend live sessions (either in person or remotely) due to illness or other special circumstances. Recorded sessions will be made available to registered students via the Blackboard section associated with CAS CC 202 A1; access this by logging in at learn.bu.edu or by using the link at bu.edu/core/cc202. Students may not share such sessions with anyone not registered for the course and may not repost them in a public platform.

Courseware and Communication: Course communication will take place via announcements and handouts in lecture and seminar, and email messages sent from core@bu.edu and from the accounts of individual seminar instructors. Lecture media, handouts, and readings can be accessed via www.bu.edu/core/cc202. Your seminar leader may make use of a course site specific to your section, for sharing assignment materials, readings, and other resources. Seminar-specific course sites can be accessed via www.learn.bu.edu.

Writing is an essential component of the Core Curriculum and is coordinated closely with the Boston University Writing Program. Charley Binkow will serve as the Writing Fellow for CC202. Core Writing Fellows are graduate students familiar with the works read in the Core who are available to work with you one on one and support you at any stage of the writing process. To make an appointment, consult the online reservation instructions at www.bu.edu/core/writing. An online writing handbook is available at the same webpage.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Grading Rubric. Your seminar instructor determines your final grade, based on the following components: participation 20%; seminar papers 60%; final exam 20%. Attendance at lectures and seminar discussions is an important part of the course. Absences from lecture and seminar will be weighed seriously by your seminar leader, and will bring down your final grade.

Writing will be a main focus of this course and, accordingly, writing assignments and reflective consideration on the nature of good writing will be ongoing throughout the course. Although specific writing assignments will vary from seminar to seminar, assignments will include both short and longer, comprehensive thesis-driven papers. Ongoing work on such papers will include such elements as submission of a proposal, outline, annotated bibliography, draft introduction and preliminary draft. For the final paper in particular, you will have multiple opportunities for feedback before submitting the paper. Other possible assignments will include reflective papers on genre-specific writing, summaries and analysis as a means to better understand the works studied, and peer-review of written works.

Because this course is based on your own engagement with the texts and ideas we will encounter, attendance at lectures and seminar is crucial. Consistent, thorough, daily preparation and vigorous class participation are keys to success. In short, read the books and be prepared to think and speak. Laptops are not allowed in lecture, as we will all require your complete attention. This is a matter of courtesy as well as good practice for future courses and meetings.

A comprehensive **final exam** is also required for this course. The exam will be largely essay-driven and possible prompts for the essay portion of the exam will be distributed at least a week before the exam.

COMMUNITY OF LEARNING: CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Accessibility, learning and testing accommodation. We assume that all of us learn in different ways. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please talk to your discussion course leader as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for accommodations that will satisfy both your learning needs and the requirements of the course. The Office of Disability & Access Services is the office responsible for assisting students with disabilities. If you have a disability that interferes with your learning (whether visible or invisible, physical or mental), you are encouraged to register with this office. Disability & Access Services will work with you to determine appropriate accommodations for your courses, such as additional time on tests, staggered homework assignments, or note-taking assistance. This office will give you a letter outlining the accommodations you need that you will share with your teachers; specific information about your disability will remain private. Letters of accommodation should be presented as soon as possible to ensure that student needs are addressed from the start of the course. Contact Disability & Access Services at access@bu.edu and 617-353-3658; learn more at www.bu.edu/disability. Please note that Boston University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Religious Observance. Boston University's policy on religious observance will be adhered to in this course.

Dates, and Policies Regarding Late Work and Exams. Your seminar leaders will determine how papers and other work should be submitted, as well as the penalties assigned for late work. It is possible for you to take a make-up version of the final exam if you have an exam scheduling conflict or three exams scheduled on the same day. Contact the office via core@bu.edu, and your seminar leader, if this is the case. Please be sure to keep a back-up copy of all papers written.

Academic Conduct. All members of the University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity; we have the same expectations of each other in this course. Seminar leaders take the issue of plagiarism seriously and expect all the work you do in this course to be your own. Plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct in this course can result in a failing grade for the course and/or referral of the case to the CAS Academic Conduct Committee, which may impose penalties up to and including expulsion from the University. Your best rule is to make sure you cite every source you employ, using quotation marks and providing citation whenever you use someone else's words. If you have questions about what plagiarism is and how it differs from the appropriate use of other people's work, consult the Academic Conduct Code (www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code) or speak with your instructor. Lectures may not be reproduced in any form or otherwise copied, displayed, or distributed without the written permission of the instructor. Please note in particular that selling or buying lecture notes or summaries is prohibited in this class and may result in disciplinary action under the BU Code of Student Responsibilities.

Readings: In Core, we prioritize using physical copies of the reading. Books can be purchased through BU's Barnes & Noble, though you will often find much cheaper versions online. are expected to be able to consult readings in class—so make sure that you have them with you in some form (books or print outs) during your seminar section's discussions. If the cost of books presents a problem, please reach out to Prof. Corrigan, or to our Core director Prof. Kyna Hamill at kyna@bu.edu. We can make sure you get copies of the necessary books.

Over the course of the semester, we will be reading all or much of the following books:

- Voltaire, *Candide*, trans. Wootton (9780872205468)
- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Gregor & Timmermann (9781107401068)
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe's Faust*, trans. Kaufmann (9780385031141)
- Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. Jones (9780141439518)
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. The 1818 Text* (9780143131847)
- *English Romantic Poetry: An Anthology*, ed. Appelbaum (9780486292823)

- Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (9780486284996)
- Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (9780451419170)
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Diethe (9780521691635)
- Anton Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*, trans. Nelson, Pevear & Volokhonsky (9781559364843)
- W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (9780451532053)

Be sure to obtain these *specific* editions. In addition, the following readings will be distributed to students in lecture, in hard copy:

- Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance”
- Emily Dickinson, selected poems

CC 202 SPRING 2022 LECTURE SCHEDULE

Lecture 1, Tues. 1/25: Voltaire (1694-1778)

Lecturer: James Schmidt (History)

Reading: *Candide*

Lecture 2, Tues. 2/1: Kant (1724-1804)

Lecturer: Sally Sedgwick (Philosophy)

Reading: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and “What Is Enlightenment?”

Lecture 3, Tues. 2/8: Goethe (1749-1832)

Lecturer: Peter Schwartz (World Languages & Literatures)

Reading: *Faust*

Lecture 4, Tues. 2/15: Austen (1775-1817)

Lecturer: Joseph Rezek (English)

Reading: *Pride and Prejudice*

Tues. 2/22: No lecture; substitute Monday schedule

Reading: *Pride and Prejudice*

Lecture 5, Tues. 3/1: Shelley (1797-1851)

Lecturer: Charlotte Gordon (Endicott College)

Reading: *Frankenstein*

Thurs. 3/3: Special event! Mathias Hanses will deliver a talk titled “Cicero with Local Applications: W. E. B. Du Bois’ Views of the Ancient Mediterranean at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” as part of the *Black Classicism: Moving Forward* lecture series. RSVP via bit.ly/Hanses-BU-2022.

March 5-13: Spring Break – no classes

Lecture 6, Tues. 3/15: Beethoven (1770-1827)

Lecturer: Elizabeth Seitz (Boston Conservatory at Berklee)

Listening: *Ninth Symphony* via www.bu.edu/core/cc202

Lecture 7, Tues. 3/22: English Romantic Poetry

Lecturer: Karl Kirchwey (English)

Reading: selections from *English Romantic Poetry*

Lecture 8, Tues. 3/29: Emerson and Douglass

Lecturer: Maurice Lee (English)

Reading: Emerson, "Self-Reliance"; Douglass, *Narrative of the Life* (incl. preface and opening letter)

Lecture 9, Tues. 4/5: Dickinson and Whitman

Lecturer: Anita Patterson (English)

Reading: selections from Dickinson and *Leaves of Grass*

Lecture 10, Tues. 4/12: Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Lecturer: Paul Katsafanas (Philosophy)

Reading: *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Lecture 11, Tues. 4/19: Chekhov (1860-1904)

Lecturer: Yuri Corrigan (World Languages & Literatures)

Reading: *The Cherry Orchard*

Lecture 12, Tues. 4/26: Du Bois (1868-1963)

Lecturer: Joyce Hope Scott (African American Studies)

Reading: *The Souls of Black Folk*

Lecture 13, Tues. 5/3: TBA

May 4 *Last Day of Classes*

May 5-8 *Study Period*

Final Exam: Thu 5/12, 12-2 PM in Tsai Auditorium