

THE MAKING OF THE MODERN MIND  
HON 1020 – RENAISSANCE, REFORMATIONS, REVOLUTIONS

SPRING SEMESTER 2007

CLASS MEETS: 1:00-1:50 Daily  
CLASS LOCATION: DMC 224  
PROFESSORS: Mr. Terry Chamberlain, Fine Arts 25, #3213  
Dr. Marc Clauson, Collins 17, #7934  
Dr. David Mills, Founders 316, #7986  
Dr. John Mortensen, DMC 112, #7734

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The freshman honors sequence is an attempt to develop an integrated understanding of the development of Western civilization. Historical inquiry of this kind is an exercise of the imagination engaged with various evidences. We do not know, nor will we ever know, exactly what happened two hundred or two thousand years ago. Instead, we seek to explain events by asking specific kinds of questions, gathering information in the form of primary sources (letters, diaries, legal records, etc.), and then weaving the data into a narrative answer to these questions. Because neither our questions nor our evidences are ever perfect, no historical narrative is perfect. Yet even our flawed and fragmented inquiries can help us to grapple with the questions and complexities of our own historical contexts, and we can in fact talk in terms of the truth about our cultural history, as long as we do so with humility and a willingness to learn from others.

With these facts in mind, we will examine those cultural artifacts that help us construct a picture of the ever-changing structures of life and thought during the past several thousand years of Western civilization. We will examine the artistic expressions, the written records of philosophical inquiry, and the historical accounts that have emerged from various cultures within the Western tradition. As we study these evidences, we will examine the presuppositions of various individuals and groups, looking at how they used history, art, and abstract conceptual inquiry to orient their lives. It is our hope that as we do so, not only will we strengthen our critical thinking about art, history, and philosophy, but also our critical self-reflection. We desire to recognize the truth wherever we encounter it, to engage our world with a humble sensitivity to our own limits, failures, and historical conditioning as well as that of others, and to rely upon God to glorify himself in and through those limits, failures, and conditions. It is truly God that is the hero of the story we will be exploring this year.

In the spring semester we continue this survey, beginning with the aftereffects of the sweeping cultural changes referred to under the headings of the Renaissance, Reformations, Scientific Revolution, and Modern Philosophy. We will observe the full flowering of these tendencies in the Enlightenment and beyond, and we will begin to see as well the questions that are raised against these impulses, questions that ultimately find their fullest expression to date in our contemporary postmodern age.

## COURSE GOALS:

After completing this year-long sequence of courses (HON-1010 & 1020), the students should:

1. Understand more fully the key ideas, people, and events that have helped to shape contemporary Western ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.
2. Be more skilled in the critical evaluation of ideas, both their own and those of others, from the perspective of a Christian worldview.
3. Be able to communicate more effectively what they believe, and why they believe it, especially in dialogue with those whose worldviews differ from theirs.
4. Value truth, no matter where it is found, and be able to integrate a coherent picture of truth from its multiple sources.
5. More fully appreciate what it means to live humbly, yet courageously, by faith in dependence on God, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

## TEXTBOOKS:

González, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Present Day*.  
Prince Press, 1994.

Lawhead, William F. *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.  
Wadsworth, 2002.

Taylor, Daniel. *The Myth of Certainty: The Reflective Christian and the Risk of Commitment*.  
InterVarsity Press, 1986, 1992.

Walford, John. *Great Themes In Art*. Prentice Hall, 2002.

Additional selected readings will be handed out in class or accessed online.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

You will be required to do the assigned readings and submit online reading reports at the time of the class for which the readings are assigned. For each assigned reading, a full reading report must be submitted according to the guidelines provided. These readings must be turned in on time – no credit is given for late assignments. Your completion of these assignments will account for 20% of your final course grade.

At the end of each unit of the course, you will be required to submit a written essay that summarizes, interacts with, and applies the material from that unit. These will be written outside of class, and will be graded by the teaching team. There will be a total of 3 such essays, each worth 15% of your final course grade, for a total of 45%.

Additionally, you will be required to compose a 500-word “integrative essay,” drawing upon the resources of your Christian worldview to provide a response to an issue of contemporary significance. More details about this assignment are provided on a separate handout. This assignment will be worth 15% of your final course grade.

Lastly, you will also be required to read 500 pages of material on your own, in addition to any specific readings assigned in class and listed on the schedule below. These readings should be divided evenly between the following four categories: Art, History, Literature, and Philosophy. You will also be required to maintain daily (or nearly so) reading of both the front page and the op/ed pages of a major metropolitan newspaper (a minimum of 75 days of reading for the semester). Your completion of these reading requirements will be worth 10% of your final course grade.

Because we are striving to learn together as a community, class participation will contribute 10% of your final course grade. Class attendance, attentiveness, and contribution to the life of the learning environment are included in this category. Many of the course expectations (see below) speak to this category of your grade.

#### GRADING SCALE AND RATIONALE:

We recognize that by enrolling in MOMM, you have taken on a challenge above and beyond the requirements for general education coursework. While we wish to challenge you academically so that you might refine and strengthen your academic skills and intellectual abilities, we do not wish to penalize you for taking on the extra challenge of honors coursework. Thus, the 4 major writing assignments (3 unit essays and 1 integrative essay) are graded on the equivalent of a 5-point scale, while the daily work and other corollary assignments (reading reports, integrative reading, and class participation) are graded on the equivalent of a 4-point scale. We hope that the result of this grading strategy is one that shows you where you have room to improve on written work, encourages you to be faithful in the daily details of the course requirements, but does not unfairly penalize you for your commitment to honors coursework.

The 5-point grading scale (for Unit Essays and Integrative Essay):

		B+	80-82	C+	71-73	D+	62-64	F	56
A	87-100	B	78-79	C	69-70	D	60-61		
A-	83-86	B-	74-77	C-	65-68	D-	57-59		

The 4-point grading scale (for Reading Reports, Integrative Reading, and Class Participation):

		B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	60-62	F	59
A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

It is our hope that as students and professors in this year-long course, we will not remain autonomous individuals, but will instead develop into a close-knit community of learners. To that end, we should esteem each other more highly than ourselves and endeavor to serve one another with our actions, attitudes, thoughts, and words. Here are some practical suggestions of how you can do so as you participate in this course this year:

1. Be faithful in attendance.
2. Be attentive and involved, contributing to the life of the class, participating in discussion, taking notes, and using your abilities to their fullest in the context of this class.
3. If you take notes on a laptop computer, show respect for your professors and your fellow students by unplugging your wireless card (if you have one) and not using your computer for any activity other than taking notes (e.g., IM-ing, game playing, surfing, emailing, checking your stocks, selling your organs on ebay, etc.).
4. Have a positive attitude about the course material, readings, discussions, assignments, and people in the course.
5. Work to build bonds of community with others in the class. Don't expect it to happen automatically, or assume that others will reach out to you if you don't reach out to them. Start now to live out the truth of I Corinthians 12.
6. Sleep enough (but not in class!). Live a balanced life that provides you the physical, emotional, and spiritual resources necessary to invest fully in this class and the lives of those around you.
7. Stay on top of the workload, and don't give up. Turn in your work on time. If you are struggling, please talk to one of us professors. We're here to help.
8. Don't stress out over grades. There's no such thing as a satisfied perfectionist. We grade on a 5-point scale in this class in order to take off some of the pressure. We want you to strive for excellence, but we also don't want to penalize you for taking on the extra challenge of Honors courses.
9. Keep a sense of humor about it all, and enjoy this time in your life.
10. I don't actually have a 10<sup>th</sup> suggestion. I've just been so influenced by David Letterman that I feel uncomfortable with a 9-item list.