DR. JOHN M. LYNCH

Meeting: Cereus Hall 201, TTh 1:30 - 2:45 or 3:00 - 4:15
Office Hours: Sage Hall South 167, T 9:00 - 10:00, W 10:30 - 11:30, or by appointment.
E-mail: john.lynch@asu.edu

This course provides us with an opportunity to discuss some of the classic questions that humankind has wrestled with over the millennia, such as; what is our place in the Universe? Is the Universe an impersonal one? What is the relationship between the sacred and profane? How does the individual relate to the community? Is there such a thing as free-will, or are we mere puppets in a divinely scripted play? Why do bad things happen to good people? In examining these questions by reading a selection of works from philosophers, poets and other writers, we will aim not to solve these eternal problems, but to examine what Alfred Lord Tennyson described as “the thoughts that shake [hu]mankind.”

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

~ Broadening of your cultural background and historical awareness, particularly with relation to philosophical modes of thought
~ Cultivation of multi-disciplinary perspectives
~ Development of frameworks for self-directed learning and working within a pluralist society
~ Improvement of skills in close reading, critical discussion and evaluation & construction of oral and written arguments.
**REQUIRED TEXTS:** The following works are required for purchase and are available at the ASU Bookstore or online. Only purchase these editions. Failure to bring a text – or use of the wrong edition – counts as an absence. (See below for the policy regarding absences). Do not leave purchasing books to late in the semester; if the Bookstore runs out of copies, the onus is on you to obtain the correct edition before class.


A course reader is available from *Alternative Copy* on the corner of Mill & 10th just west of campus. You will also need to purchase a set of 5x3 index cards (and bring a few to class each day).

Three online readings are available on the Blackboard site under “Content”. While these readings will be made available in electronic form, it is *highly* suggested that you print these out so that you can read and annotate them easily. Experience has shown that students who use laptops in class during discussion rarely are able to make significant contributions.

Readings are to be completed for the class in which they are to be discussed.

**READING TEXTS:** *The Human Event* is a reading-intensive course and you are expected to come to each class having read assignments carefully. The text is central to the class, and your discussions should always balance close-readings of the text with the wider implications of the ideas contained therein. Many of the works we shall study are philosophical in nature, and thus require close and concentrated reading. Casual skimming will (a) not be helpful to you in discussing these works, (b) inhibit you from developing strong paper topics, and (c) cause you to fail any in-class quizzes or written assignments; thus your final grade will suffer. As a minimum following completing a reading, you should be able to answer the following questions:
1. What is the key question being addressed in the work you have read?
2. What are the main inferences/conclusions of the author?
3. What are the main assumptions made by the writer?
4. What are the implications if we take the author seriously? What if not?

To aid you in your active reading, I ask that you maintain a notebook (of questions, thoughts, ideas, outlines and, as a minimum, answers to the above four questions and those contained in the course reader) while doing the reading. I can ask to see this notebook at any stage during the semester and will adjust your participation score depending on the quality of your work. In addition, should I feel that you aren’t adequately prepared for class, I reserve the right to initiate a series of unannounced quizzes or in-class written assignments which will remove points from your participation grade.

Supplemental Resources:

~ We will use Blackboard (http://my.asu.edu) to submit papers.
~ The Barrett Writing Center will be available during the semester to assist students with their papers for all their classes. Directed by BHC faculty and staffed by writing tutors who themselves have completed THE, the Center offers individual tutoring on writing papers for THE and other courses. Its goal is to help you improve your lifelong writing and critical thinking skills, so please take advantage of its services. See http://barrethonors.asu.edu/academics/barrett-writing-center/ for further details

Required Work:

~ Participation – 50% (includes in-class participation, reading journal, quizzes if required)
~ Papers – 50%

Please see the course reader for more explicit guidelines as to grading standards for both participation and written work.

Participation (50%): This class is a seminar; you are thus expected both to have carefully read the assigned reading and to engage in discussion during class-time. As participation is worth 50% of your final grade, it is obvious that failure to participate will result in a grade no better than a 'D' no matter how good your written work may be. Remember, coming to class and having read the assigned reading does not count as
participation; you must contribute to the discussions. In addition, disruptive behaviors such as sleeping during class or conversing with neighbors will immediately (and without warning) result in a zero for participation during a given class, no matter how much you may talk at other times during that period. Failure to actively use your text in class will also result in a penalty. You should aim for a balance between active contribution and active listening – the classroom should not be dominated by single voices.

Here are some of the things you should be doing to maximize your potential as a contributor to discussions: bring in questions about the reading, respond analytically to questions posed by the instructor or fellow students, support your claims with textual evidence, pose and/or address counter-arguments, and interact respectfully with class members by supporting or challenging their ideas. Please read the guide to seminar participation (in the course reader) for further guidelines and tips.

Papers (50%): Your papers must present a clearly organized and persuasive argument relating to the material we have read. You must develop an opinion about the work and use evidence from the text to substantiate your claims. As this course aims to have you think critically about primary sources, i.e. our assigned readings, no secondary material may be utilized in your papers, as you are being judged on the quality of your ideas, the form in which you present those ideas, and your use of textual evidence.

I am a fair grader who expects you to pay close attention to both the content and form of your written work. In general, I tend to return papers with more negative than positive comments – this does not mean that your paper was excessively “bad,” merely that given time and space constraints I am identifying the issues which I feel you can address and thus improve your future writing.

OTHER ISSUES:

Attendance: In accordance with Barrett policy, you are allowed two absences (excused or otherwise) without penalty. Three absences will result in loss of 10% from your final grade (i.e. a B will become a C); four absences will result in a zero for participation. Note that arriving late for class or not bringing your printed text to class both count as an absence.

Plagiarism: You are obviously expected not to engage in any form of plagiarism, which according to the ASU Student Code of Conduct, means representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own. Plagiarism is an act of fraud - it involves both stealing someone else’s work and lying about it afterward. Note, that for an act to count as
plagiarism, the representation does not have to be intentional. See http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity for ASU policies regarding academic dishonesty. While I will not be enacting Dante’s punishment for fraud, as a minimum punishment, detection of plagiarism will result in failure of the course (with an XE grade) and expulsion from Barrett. An ‘XE’ grade on your transcript denotes failure due to academic dishonesty and will preclude you from entry into any reputable graduate or professional school. The bottom-line is, DON’T PLAGIARIZE!

Grades: Final numeric grades will be converted to plus/minus grades. No extra credit will be offered, so don’t ask. During the semester, grades for individual assignments will be posted online (along with a running total of absences). Final grades will be available on myASU after finals week.

Grade Appeals: Grades can only be contested in writing (not by e-mail) and not before the class period following return of the assignment. Please enclose all relevant material (i.e. the paper as I returned it to you) with your appeal, which should engage the comments, and criticisms I have made. Avoid claiming that because you worked hard, you deserve an 'A' – it is assumed that you worked hard. In case of further action, you are directed to the “Procedure on Student Academic Grievances” that is available on the Barrett website.

Incomplete: The grade of “I” (Incomplete) can only be given when a student, who while doing otherwise acceptable work, is unable to complete a course (i.e. in this case the third and final paper) because of illness or another condition beyond their control. Documentation of this is required before the assignment is due.

Cell Phones: I switch my phone off when I come to class; you should do so as well. If you’d rather be texting or surfing the Internet while class is in session, please do so elsewhere. It is insulting both to myself and your classmates.

Food: In accordance with ASU policy, eating will not be allowed in the classroom as it distracts others.

E-mail: Please ensure your ASU mailbox (or wherever it is being forwarded to) is not full. If an email gets returned to me, I will not attempt to resend the message. It is your responsibility to ensure that communication is possible.

If you have not received a reply to an email within two working days (i.e., excluding weekends), please resend the message. I do not deal with email outside of normal workday hours (i.e. outside M-F, 9 to 5).
If you are emailing me a document (e.g. a thesis and/or topic sentences) for feedback, do not attach the document in its native format. Instead, cut and paste the text into the email body. That way I can more easily offer feedback. I ignore e-mails that contain attachments.

**Appointments:** If I set up blocks of appointments to discuss papers, you need to honor the appointment that you make. If you fail to turn up without notifying me 24 hours in advance, your paper will be docked one grade point. Coming to the meeting unprepared will result in a similar penalty.

**Respect for Diversity:** Barrett is committed to creating a diverse learning environment, which is broadly defined as a place where cultural diversity is valued and respected. I hope that you will contribute your unique perspectives to this effort by respecting others’ identities and personal life histories and by considering and raising issues as appropriate to course content.

**“Adult” Material:** Some of the works we will be reading will be concerned with “adult” themes and may use language that is colloquial and often vulgar. This is particularly true of our examination of Aristophanic comedy. The translation we will use includes frank discussions of religion, politics and sex, areas of fundamental importance to any society. One of Aristophanes’ aims was to create humor within these areas, while encouraging his audience to think about them in ways that were discouraged or even forbidden outside the theatre. For those made uncomfortable by such provocative theatre, our engagement offers an opportunity to ask why one reacts in this way.

Please inform me if you expect to have problems with this material so that we can come to a mutual agreement regarding any alternatives.

**Last Word:** Please read this syllabus carefully. By attending the next class you declare that you have read and understood all the above and associated documents in the course reader. I, for my part, will attempt not to change any of the major policies or deadlines without sufficient due notice and discussion with the class as a whole.
SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND DUE-DATES

Readings marked [B] are books, those marked [O] are online in Blackboard. All others are in this reader.

Aug 23  Epic of Gilgamesh [B]
       25  Hesiod’s Theogony and Works and Days [B]

Aug 30  Homer’s Iliad [B]
           continued.

Sep  1  continued.

Sep  6  Bereshit
       8  continued.

Sep 13  Book of Job [O]
       15  Workshop: Writing a THE paper.

Sep 20  “Women & Sexuality in Ancient Greece”
       22  No class - Paper #1 due via Blackboard and in print by 3:00pm.

Sep 27  Aeschylus’ Agamemnon [B]
       29  Sophocles’ Antigone [B]

Oct  4  Euripides’ Bakkai [B]
       6  Plato’s Euthyphro

Oct 11  Aristophanes’ Clouds
       13  The Q Gospel

Oct 18  Sun Tzu’s Art of War
       20  Dhammapada

Oct 25  Cicero’s On Duties [O]
       27  Cicero’s On Friendship and The Dream of Scipio

Nov  1  Lucretius’ On the Nature of Things
       3  No class - work on your paper as needed
       5  Paper #2 due via Blackboard and in print by 3:00pm.

Nov  8  Lucretius’ On the Nature of Things
           continued.

Nov 15  Boethius’ Consolation of Philosophy
           continued.

Nov 22  Dante’s Inferno
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<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>No class - Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Dante’s Inferno</td>
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<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Montaigne’s Of Cannibals</td>
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<td>Dec 6</td>
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