

Humanties 6: : Great People, Great Ages

Dr. Dean Pickard
Pierce College, Spring 1999

Office: FO 3008, Ph: 710-4398
Hrs: M 6-7, T 3-4, Th 12:30-1:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION: *General description:* An interdisciplinary course which covers leading figures and major cultural developments in an historical period, such as the Greek playwrights and 5th century Athens; Augustine and the Augustinian Age; Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and the Renaissance; Descartes to Kant and the Enlightenment; Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche and the 19th century, etc.

Title and Description of Spring 1999 course: From Modernism to Postmodernism

The term "postmodernism" has been used to refer to a variety of movements in art, literature, and philosophy over the past forty years. Postmodernism, by name, began in the 1950's as a literary movement. By the 1970's it referred to stylistic trends in architecture, painting, music, film, dance, and theater which rebelled against the formal purity of modernist works of art because they were cut off from everyday mass culture. The term "postmodern philosophy" has become a generic term which includes the postmodernism of Lyotard, the poststructural deconstructionism of Derrida, the genealogical critique of Foucault, the reflexive questioning of questioning by Heidegger, the neopragmatism of Rorty, just to name a few of the most well known "postmodern" philosophers. Postmodern philosophy as a critique of modernism, has its roots in Hume, Kant and Hegel, but only constitutes a more pronounced demarcation from modernism in the works of Nietzsche. Nietzsche can be seen as a sine qua non for much of the work of Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida and has had an impact on virtually everyone in postmodern philosophy. The philosophies of Wittgenstein and Dewey have also played a major role in the development in this "movement." Postmodern thinkers are suspicious of classical and modern notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. Against these Enlightenment norms, it sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of scepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities. This way of seeing, so some would claim, has real material conditions: it springs from an historic shift in the West to a new form of capitalism - to the ephemeral, decentralized world of technology, consumerism and the culture industry, in which the service, finance and information industries triumph over traditional manufacture, and classical class politics yield ground to a diffuse range of 'identity politics'.

Is postmodernity just a late form of internal critique characteristic of modernity itself since its inception? Can there be a postmodern ethics or politics that would hold a society together and preserve pluralism, democracy and capitalism? On what basis would we identify with a "we" an "us." Is it still necessary to do this? Can we preserve human dignity and justice without a unifying paradigm? What is the place of the "sacred" and "truth" in a postmodern world?

- Note:** 1. If you drop the class, do so officially or you may receive an automatic F for the course.
2. You are subject to automatic exclusion if you miss 2 weeks of class during the first 12 weeks.
3. If you come to class late or leave early, please sit in the rear of the class. Seats there should be otherwise left empty.
4. **Beepers** should be turned off before entering class.
5. Please see me first for help or complaints.
6. This outline is a basic guide and is subject to revision. Follow announcements in class of any changes.

TEXT: Cahoon, Lawrence, *From Modernism to Postmodernism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

GRADING: 1) Three or four essay exams 3-5 standard typed pages, 100 pts. each. 2) A journal of collected favorite passages from your reading briefly saying why each passage was particularly meaningful for you. 3) Possible scantron 882 true-false/multiple choice quizzes or exams. Late exams are not graded until the end of the semester. Thoughtful, informed class participation can raise the grade.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Assignment DUE</u>
1/13	Introduction	
1/20	Descartes, Rousseau	Intro, Ch 1-2 (50)
1/27	Kant, Burke	Ch 3-4 (21)
2/3	Condorcet, Hegel, Marx/Engels	Ch 5-7 (30)
2/10	Nietzsche	Ch 8 (34)
2/17	Baudelaire, Peirce	Ch 9-10 (21)
2/24	Weber, de Saussure Martinni, Wittgenstein	Ch 11-14 (42)
3/3	Le Corbusier, Freud, Ortega y Gasset	Ch 15-17 (25)
3/10	Husserl, Horkheimer, Adorno, Sartre	Ch 18-20 (47)
	EXAM 1	
3/10	Heidegger	Ch 21 (34)
3/17	Kuhn, Venturi	Ch 22-23 (26)
3/24	<i>Spring Vacation</i>	
3/31	<i>3/31: No Class</i>	
4/7	Derrida, Foucault	Ch 24-25 (46)
4/14	Hassan, Lyotard	Ch 26 (18), Ch 32 (32)
	EXAM 2	
4/21	Rorty, Habermas	Ch 36-37 (43)
4/28	TBA	
5/5	TBA	
5/12	Giroux, Hall	Ch 41-42 (23)
5/17	EXAM 3	