



**Humanistic Studies Program  
HMST 296 Western Humanistic Tradition 1: Fall 2008**

**Core theme, Fall 2008: What is it to be a woman? What is it to be a man?**

**Women & Men: HMST 296**

This year in HMST 296 we are again concentrating on (**but not exclusively on**) the what-is-it-to-be-human sub-questions: What is it to be a woman/man? The two questions are always interrelated. In seeing our authors’ understandings of one gender, we can also often see their understanding of the other. Very often they are opposing definitions (polar opposites), sometimes they are the same (unisex), sometimes they are complementary, and sometimes they are a combination of all three. As we all know, in the west, except for very recently, women have been perceived to be inferior to men. In fact, in many aspects of life and in some parts of the west or western perceptions this is still true. Some women born in the last few decades (including many in my classes) living in privileged conditions take for granted the principle and the practice of equality of rights for the two genders. Perhaps the situation is more precarious than they think. Because the IDEAS of equality and inequality have a history in the west that goes back to many of the pre-1600 texts that we will read, HMST 296 will consider some of the roots of modern inequalities AND modern concepts of equality –. In brief “we” will see “where we’re coming from” (directly for many, indirectly to greater or lesser degrees for most of us) – like it or not, bad and (often not recognized) good.

**Human Rights: HMST 297**

The man/woman question will continue to be a theme in HMST 297, but there will also be a major Human Rights theme – all human rights (never forgetting the largest group of people whose human rights are always in question – the female half of the human race).

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## Course Schedule

**Please note: While the first month is rather heavy, unlike other courses, the load lessens as you go along, and considerably at the end just when you are doing essays and preparing for final exams for other courses: about 40% of your mark will be completed by October 1, while the last month of the course accounts for about 25%. While there are about 40 pages (10,000 words) of journal entries, the format is informal and there is no formal essay, no heavily weighted mid-term, and no final exam. If you do your journal entries steadily from the outset, you will have no problems and will find the time demand fair. Start by walking steadily, and you'll end by strolling across the finish line**

### **Tues. Sept. 02:**

1 X 250 (See "Introduction to Course" for journal requirements.)

*Assigned journal question: What is it to be human according to the different discourses in (2), (3) & (4)?*

For the connections section: What are the similarities and difference among these texts?

(1) Different views / different discourses / different stories: James Paul Gee. "What is Literacy?" In Vivian Zamel and Ruth Speck, Eds. In *Negotiating Academic Literacies: Teaching and Learning Across languages and Cultures*. Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Earlbaum, 1998. Pp. 51-53.

(2) Psalm 8. *The Jerusalem Bible*.

(3) The "Race of Iron" from **Hesiod** (c. 700 BCE). *Work and Days*. In *Hesiod: Theogony, Work and Days, Shield*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Trans. Apostolos N. Athanassaakis. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2004. Lines 174-196; pp. 71-72.

(4) "Many Wonders" from **Sophocles** (496-406). *Antigone*. Trans. David Franklin and John Harrison. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. Lines 306-350. Pp. 26-28.

*Go, and never darken my towels again*

**Required supplementary reading (unlike all other supplementary readings this one will be included in your reading quiz)**

**Gerda Lerner** 1986 **The Creation of Patriarchy**, Chapter 11, pp. 212-229  
Oxford University Press, New York.

**Thurs. Sept. 04:**

1 X 250

*Assigned journal question: Having read Lerner (previous reading), what is it to be a woman according to these discourses?*

*Assigned journal question: What is it to be a woman according to these discourses?*

(1) “Prometheus” and “The Creation of Pandora” from **Hesiod** (c. 700 BCE). *Work and Days*. In *Hesiod: Theogony, Work and Days, Shield*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Trans. Apostolos N. Athanassaakis. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2004. Lines 49-105; pp. 68-69.

(2) “The Punishments of Adam and Eve” Genesis 3.16-19 (?800-930?). *Oxford Study Bible* (1992)

(3) “Women of Corinth.” From **Euripides** (484-406). *Euripides Medea*. Trans. Michael Collier and Georgia Macheimer. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. Lines 222-287.

(4) **Sappho** (c. 600 BCE). Selected poems in *The Norton Book of Classical Literature*. Ed. Bernard Knox. New York: Norton, 1993. Pp. 223-33.

*I never forget a face, but in your case I'll be glad to make an exception.*

*Supplementary readings for Odyssey (not included in reading quiz):*

(1) “The Earliest Greeks.” By Richard Broxton Onians, “Introduction” to *The Origins of European Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1951. Pp. 1-9.

(2) “Women in the *Odyssey*.” By Sue Blundell in *Women in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995. Pp. 51-57.

**Tues. Sept 09 & Thurs. Sept. 11**

*Groucho 1, Chico 1, Harpo 1* (these are participation groups, see *Introduction to Course*)

**Total entry for FINAL draft (Sept. 30): 1,000 words (2 X 500).**

***Draft submissions not following required format (see Introduction to Course) will not be counted.***

*Two assigned journal question, two entries (suggestion: consider the Lerner reading):*

(1) *What is it to be an ideal woman (aristocrat)? (500 words)*

(2) *What is it to be an ideal man (aristocrat)? (500 words)*

**Homer** (c. 750 BCE). *The Odyssey of Homer* (Bantam Classics) translated by Allen Mandelbaum. We will concentrate on books 6-11 inclusive in class, but you should read the entire work. Items on the reading quiz may refer to any part of the work.

*I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it.*

*Tidbits to think about:*

Xenophanes 570-480 BCE: “But mortals consider that the gods are born, and that they have clothes and speech and bodies like their own. The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have light blue eyes and red hair. But if the cattle and horses or lions had hands and do the works that men can do, horses would draw the forms of the gods as horses, and cattle like cattle” (167-169) in G. S. Kirk et al. *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p.168.

Wife of Bath (Geoffrey Chaucer's (1340-1400 CE)

For, trust me well, it is an impossible [an impossibility]

That any clerk [male scholar, monk] will speake good of wives,

But if [unless] it be of holy saintes' lives

Nor of none other woman never the mo'.

Who painted the lion, tell it me, who?

By God, if women hadde written stories,  
As clerkes have within their oratories,  
They would have writ of men more wickedness  
Than all the mark of Adam [all humans] may redress.

**Tues. Sept. 16**

*Groucho 2*

**Total entry: 500 words (four entries)**

**Journal suggestion (and quiz suggestion): get at the nub of each text. How are they similar? How are they different?**

1 X 200 (usual format)

**Protagoras** (c. 500 BCE). In *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*. Trans. Robin Warefield. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Pp. 205-221.

1 X 200 (usual format)

**Antiphon** (c. 480-411 BCE). In *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists*. Trans. Robin Warefield. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Pp. 258-269.

1 X 50 (one paragraph instead of usual format: What's the nub? How is it different from/same as the others?)

**Calicles** (c. 400 BCE). In Plato, *Gorgias 482c-484d*. In *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1963. Pp. 265-67. .

1 X 50 (one paragraph instead of usual format: What's the nub? How is it different from/same as the others?)

**The Athenian (in Plato)** (c427-c348 BCE). (1) *Laws* (God the Measure: 716 a-d) In *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1963. Pp. 1225-26; p. 1307. .

*Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.*

**Thurs. Sept. 18**

*Chico 2*

Assigned question: none; but you are encouraged to make connections to the current world situation.

**Total entry: 600 words (three entries)**

**Thucydides** (c. 471-400 BCE).

1 X 200

“The Mytilene Debate”

1 X 200

“The Revolution at Corcyra”

1 X 200

“The Melian Dialogue.”

In *Selections from Greek and Roman Historians*. Ed. Charles A. Robinson. New York: Holt, 1957. Pp. 90-107.

*From the moment I picked up your book until I laid it down, I was convulsed with laughter. Some day I intend reading it.*

*Supplementary reading for Euripides:*

(1) “Is female to male as nature is to culture?” by Sherry B. Ortner. In *A Cultural Studies Reader: History, Theory, Practice*. Eds. Jessica Munns and Gita Rajan. London: Longman, 1995. Pp. 492-508.

(2) "The Menace of Dionysius: Sex Roles and Reversals in Euripides' Bacchae." By Charles Segal in *Women in the Ancient World*. Eds. John Peradotto and J. P. Sullivan. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984. Pp. 195-211.

Tues. Sept. 23

*Harpo 2, Groucho 3, Chico 3*

1 X 750

**Euripides** (484-406). *The Bacchae of Euripides*. Trans. Stephen J. Esposito. Newburyport MA: Focus Books, 1996.

*He may look like an idiot and talk like an idiot but don't let that fool you. He really is an idiot.*

*Supplementary reading for Plato and Aristotle:*

"Sex and Reproduction." By Sue Blundell in *Women in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995. Pp. 100-105.

Thurs. Sept. 25

*Harpo 3*

**Plato**

**Total entry: 400 (two entries)**

1 X 200

(1) *Phaedrus* (The Charioteer 244-257c). In *Ibid.* Pp. 475-76; pp. 491-502

1 X 200

(2) *Symposium* (The Ladder of Love 198-212c). In *Ibid.* Pp. 526-7; pp. 550-63. *Republic*. (Book X 614a-621d).

*Groucho: "That's in every contract, that's what you call a sanity clause."*

*Chico: "You can't fool a me there ain't no sanity clause"*

## **JOURNAL 1**

Sunday Sept. 28 **Electronic version of Journal 1** (to Plato, inclusive: 20%) **due on WebCt turnitin function by midnight PT (Pacific Time)**. Word length: minimum 3,750 words, maximum 5,000 (FOLLOW FORMAT INSTRUCTIONS: journals not using proper format will not be read). Submit to turnitin on WebCT. Those preferring to do an originality quiz (Tues. Sept. 30, 7:00 p.m., 688 Sherb, rm. 267) rather than submit to turnitin.com may submit electronic version (Word, file attachment) to our WebCt site by midnight (PT) Sunday, Sept. 30.

**Hardcopy of Journal 1: bring to class on Tuesday Sept. 30** or leave at 688 Sherb, rm. 261 (reception desk, English and French Language Centre)

Tues. Sept. 30.

**Reading Quiz 1: 15% (to Plato, inclusive)**

**(Bring hardcopy of Journal 1 to class or leave at 688 Sherbrooke, rm. 261 (reception desk, English and French Language Centre.)**

*Who are you going to believe, me or your own eyes?*

Thurs. Oct. 2

*Groucho 4*

**Total entry: 450 words (three entries)**

1X250

**Aristotle** (384-322 BCE).

1 X 150

(1) *Nicomachean Ethics*. "Moral Virtue: General Account" Book 2 (pp. 348-352).

1 X 150

(2) *Nicomachean Ethics*. "Friendship" Book 8 (1-8) (pp. 406-411).

In *Great Books of the Western World: 9. Aristotle II*. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952.

1 X 150

(3) Discussion of gender. From *On the Generation of Animals* and *Politics*. In Mary Brody Mahowald, *Philosophy of Woman: An Anthology of Classic to Current Concepts*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994. Pp. 22-31

*We've got to speed things up in this hotel. Chef, if a guest orders a three-minute egg, give it to him in two minutes. If he orders a two-minute egg, give it to him in one minute. If he orders a one-minute egg, give him a chicken and let him work it out for himself.*

Tues. Oct. 07

*Chico 4*

**Total entry: 750 words (three entries)**

1 X 250

**Epicurus** (341-270 BCE). "Letter to Monoecus" and "Principle Doctrines." In *Classics of Political and Moral Philosophy*. Stephen M. Cahn. Ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2002. Pp. 273-80.

1 X 250

**Cicero, Marcus Tullius** (106-43 BCE). "The Dream of Scipio." In *Cicero: Laelius, On Friendship & The Dream of Scipio*. Ed. J.G.F. Powell. Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1990. Pp. 137, 139, 141, 143, 145, 147.

1 X 250

**Epictetus** (c.55-135 CE). *The Manual*. (**Stoicism**) In *Greek and Roman Classics in Translation*. Charles T. Murphy et al. New York: Longmans, 1949. Pp. 637-52.

*Groucho: Do you follow me?*

*Margaret Dumont: Yes!*

*Groucho: Well, you better stop following me, or I'll have you arrested.*

Thurs. Oct 09

*Harpo 4*

**Total entry: 500 words (two entries)**

1 X 250

**Marcus Aurelius** (121-180 CE). (**Stoicism**) *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius: Books One & Two* (pp. 253-9) In *Great Books of the Western World: 12. Lucretius, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius*.

1 X 250

**Sextus Empiricus** (fl. 260 CE) (**Scepticism**) *Outlines of Scepticism: Book 1: Chapters i-xiii* (80). Ed. Julia Annas and Johnathan Carnes. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Pp. 1-22.

*If any form of pleasure is exhibited, report to me and it will be prohibited.*

*Supplementary readings for Hebrew Bible and Middle Assyrian Code:*

(1) "Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature." By F. Charles Fensham in *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Ed. Frederick E. Greenspan. New York: New York University Press, 1991. Pp. 176-192.

(2) "Notions of the Community and the Exclusion of the Female in Jewish History and Historiography." By Leonie J. Archer in *Women in Ancient Societies*. Eds. Leonie J. Archer et al. New York: Routledge, 1995. Pp. 53-69.

Tues. Oct. 14

*Groucho 5*

**Total entry: 600 words (four entries)**

**Hebrew Bible** (all from Oxford *Study Bible* (1992))

1 X 250:

(1) Genesis 1-3 (the creation and the fall).

1 X 250:

(2) Deuteronomy AND The Middle Assyrian Code (this latter from Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin. *Old Testament Parallels*. New York: Paulist Press, 1997. Pp. 114-123.

1 X 50 (one paragraph: answer question: Why do you think this is included in the coursepack?):

(3) Exodus 3 (1-15)

1 X 50 (one paragraph: answer question: For you, what is the most striking aspect of this song?):

(4) The Song of Songs.

*Groucho: Chicolini, when were you born?*

*Chico: I don't remember. I was just a little baby.*

*Supplementary reading on St. Paul:*

"Neither Male nor Female." By Averil Cameron in *Women in Antiquity*. Ed. Peter Walcott. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. Pp. 26-35.

Thurs. Oct. 16

*Chico 5*

**Total: 500 words (two entries)**

**Christian Bible** (*The Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible*)

1 X 250

**Matthew** 5, 6, 7 (pp. 30-36);

1 X 250

**Paul 1 Corinthians** 7 (pp. 297-8); 11.2-11.16 (p. 302); 13 (pp. 304-5); **Galatians** 3.23-3.29 (p. 337); 5.13- 6.10 (pp. 339-40); Ephesians 5.22 to 6.9 (pp. 350-1); **Colossians** 3.1-3.15 (p. 366); **1 Timothy** 2 (p. 386); **Hebrews** 11.1-13 (p. 417);

*Groucho: Why a four year old child could understand this. Run out and get me a four year old child, I can't make head or tail out of it.*

*Supplementary reading on concepts of women & St. Augustine:*

(1) Concepts of Women; (2) St. Augustine's Concept of Women. Sister Prudence Allen. *The Concept of Women*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 1997. Pp 1-6; pp. 218-36.

Tues. Oct. 21

*Harpo 5*

1 X 250

**Augustine, Saint** (354-430 CE). Selections from Book XV (pp. 65-76); Book XXII (pp. 121-27). *City of God*. From *St. Augustine: On the Two Cities: Selections from The City of God*. Ed. F. W. Strothmann. Trans. Marcus Dods. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1957. Book VIII.1-11 (Augustine and Plato). In *Great Books of the Western World: AC1 G72 v.18*. Pp. 264-72.

*Remember men, we're fighting for this woman's honour; which is probably more than she ever did.*

Thurs. Oct. 23

*Groucho 6*

1 X 250

Anglo-Saxon Poetry

**Anonymous** (ca. 875). "The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer." In *The Battle of Maldon and Other Old English Poems*. London: Macmillan, 1965. Pp. 108-11, 116-119. \*PR1508 C7.

*"Why don't you bore a hole in yourself and let the sap run out?"*

Tues. Oct. 28 **NOTE: THIS IS THE LAST ENTRY FOR JOURNAL 2**

*Chico 6*

**Total: 450 words (two entries)**

1 X 200

**Abelard, Peter** (1079-1142) and **Heloise** (1101-1164). *Letters*. From Constant J. Mews, *The Lost Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard*. Trans. Neville Chiavaroli and Constant J. Mews. New York: St. Martin's, 1999. Pp. 226-39.

1 X 250

**Maimonides, Moses** (1135-1204).

From the *Mishneh Torah*. In Isadore Twersky, ed. *A Maimonides Reader*. West Orange NJ: Behrman, 1972. Book 1 (Knowledge): Basic Principles: Chap 1, Chap 2. (pp. 42-47); Laws Relating to Moral Dispositions and Ethical Conduct: Chaps 1-7 (pp. 51-64); Book Seven (Seeds): Gifts to the Poor: Chap. 10 (135-139)

*Well, I thought my razor was dull until I heard his speech.*

*And that reminds me of a story that's so dirty I'm ashamed to think of it myself.*

Thurs. Oct 30 **NOTE: THIS IS THE FIRST ENTRY FOR JOURNAL 3 Chaucer is NOT included in Journal 2 nor on Reading Quiz 2**

*Harpo 6*

1 X 250

**Chaucer, Geoffrey** (c.1345-1400). *The Canterbury Tales*: "The Wife of Bath's Prologue." Translated by "Librarius" <http://www.librarius.com/canttran/wf1ltrfs.htm>

*Either this man is dead or my watch has stopped.*



## JOURNAL 2

Sunday Nov. 02 **Electronic version of Journal 2** (to Maimonides, inclusive: 20%) **due on WebCt turnitin function by midnight PT (Pacific Time)**. Word length: minimum 3,750 words, maximum 5,000 (FOLLOW FORMAT INSTRUCTIONS: journals not using proper format will not be read). Submit to turnitin on WebCT. Those preferring to do an originality quiz (Tues. Nov. 04, 7:00 p.m., 688 Sherb, rm. 267) rather than submit to turnitin.com may submit electronic version (Word, file attachment) to our WebCt site by midnight (PT) Sunday, Nov. 02.

**Hardcopy of Journal 2 bring to class on Tuesday Nov. 04** or leave at 688 Sherb, rm. 261 (reception desk, English and French Language Centre)

Tues. Nov. 04

**Reading Quiz 2 (15%): Aristotle to Moses Maimonides Bring Journal 1 hardcopy to class.**

*Zeppo: Dad, I'm proud to be your son*

*Groucho: You took the words right out of my mouth. I'm ashamed to be your father*

*Supplementary reading on Christine de Pizan:*

"Life of the Author [Christine de Pizan]." By Glenda K. MacLeod in *Christine de Pizan: Christine's Vision*. Trans. Glenda K. MacLeod. New York: Garland, 1993. Pp. xi-xxii.

Thurs. Nov. 06

*Groucho 7*

1 X 250

**Christine de Pizan** (c.1364-c.1430): **1**

(1) From *Avision-Christine* [Christine's Vision] Book 3. In *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Charity Cannon Willard. New York: Persea, 1993. Pp. 6-26.

(2) Poems selected from: *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Charity Cannon Willard. New York: Persea, 1993. Pp. 41-58

*Those are my principles, and if you don't like them... well, I have others*

Tues. Nov. 11

*Chico 7*

1 X 250

**Christine de Pizan** (c.1364-c.1430): **2**

*The Book of the City of Ladies*. Trans. Earle Jeffrey Richards. New York: Persea, 1982. pp. 1-33 (Part 1: 1-13).

*Groucho: You know I think you're the most beautiful woman in the world?*

*Woman: Really?*

*Groucho: No, but I don't mind lying if it gets me somewhere*

Thurs. Nov. 13

*Harpo 7*

1 X 250

**Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni**. (1453-1494). *Oration on the Dignity of Man*. In *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*. Ed. Ernst Cassirer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948. pp. 223-54.

*Groucho: Well, that covers a lot of ground. Say, you cover a lot of ground yourself. You better beat it - I hear they're going to tear you down and put up an office building where you're standing. You can leave in a taxi. If you*

*can't get a taxi, you can leave in a huff. If that's too soon, you can leave in a minute and a huff.*

Tues. Nov. 18

**Total journal entries : 350**

Groucho 8

1 X 150

**Companions of Francisco Pizarro.** In Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: Norton, 1997. Pp. 67-74.

1 X 200

**Erasmus, Desiderius** (1466-1536). *The Sileni of Alcibiades*. In Thomas More *Utopia, with Erasmus's The Sileni of Alcibiades*. Trans. David Wooton. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999. Pp. 169-191.

*Groucho: Why a four year old child could understand this. Run out and get me a four year old child, I can't make head or tail out of it.*

Thurs. Nov. 20

Chico 8

**1 X 250**

**Castiglione, Baldassare** (1478-1529). *The Book of the Courtier*. Extract from *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Fifth Edition. Vol. 1. New York: Norton, 1986. Pp. 434-54. Full text on reserve:

Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*. Trans. Charles S. Singleton. New York: Doubleday, 1959.

*Groucho: We must remember that art is art. Well, on the other hand water is water isn't it? And east is east and west is west. And if you take cranberries and stew them like applesauce they taste much more like prunes than rhubarb does. Now uh...now you tell me what you know.*

**Class 25:** Tues. Nov. 25

**Total journal entries: 500**

Groucho 8

1 X 250

**(1) More, Thomas** (1478-1535). *Utopia*. Extract from *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Fifth Edition. Vol. 1. New York: Norton, 1986. Pp. 434-54. Full text on reserve: Thomas More *Utopia*. Trans. David Wooton. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999. Pp. 169-191.

**(2) Where we started the course.**

1 X 250

*Assigned journal question:* What are the assumptions about humans and universal reality that underlie this story? In other words: briefly define the discourse. In the connections section concentrate on the similarities to and differences from other discourses we have seen.

**Prologue: The Story."** In Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry. *The Universe Story*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992. Pp. 6-15.

*GROUCHO: "You know, I'd buy you a parachute if I knew it wouldn't open."*

*CHICO: "Haha you're crazy, I got a pair of shoes."*

**Class 26:** Thurs. Nov. 27

**Final Reading Quiz: 10%**

**Hardcopy of Journal 3 Tues. Dec. 04, at class or at 688 Sherbrooke, rm. 261 (reception desk, English and French Language Centre).**

### **JOURNAL 3**

Sunday Nov. 30: **Electronic version of Journal 3** (Chaucer to Swimme and Berry, inclusive: 10%) **due on WebCt turnitin function by midnight PT (Pacific Time)**. Word length: minimum 2,100 words, maximum 2,800 (FOLLOW FORMAT INSTRUCTIONS: journals not using proper format will not be read). Submit to turnitin on WebCT. Those preferring to do an originality quiz (Tues. Dec. 04, 7:00 p.m., 688 Sherb, rm. 267) rather than submit to turnitin.com may submit electronic version (Word, file attachment) to our WebCt site by midnight (PT) Sunday, Dec. 02.

**Hardcopy of Journal 3:** at 688 Sherb, rm. 261 (reception desk, English and French Language Centre) by Tuesday, Dec. 04.

CHICO: "I would like the west better if it was in the east".

## HUMANISTIC STUDIES HMST 296/297 WESTERN HUMANISTIC TRADITION 1 & 2

### **Purpose of the Humanistic Studies Program**

*Quid est homo?* (Seneca)

The past is not dead. It is not even past. (William Faulkner)

**What is "Humanistic Studies"?** The "humanities" – philosophy, history, literature, classics, the social sciences, religion -- everything found in the Arts calendar – study and attempt to answer (or attempt to show that there is no answer) to the general question: **What is it to be human?** The Humanistic Studies Program allows you to address this question thematically across disciplinary boundaries.

### **HMST 296 & 297 HUMANISTIC TRADITION 1 & 2**

Prof. Robert Myles, 688 Sherbrooke Street West, rm. 267

Office Hours: Friday: 8:30-10:00:

[robert.myles@mcgill.ca](mailto:robert.myles@mcgill.ca) 514-398-3320

Of necessity (there are only six credits of required courses), the courses concentrate on the cultures of the Western tradition, a tradition shaped primarily by the activities, philosophies, religions and general cultures of ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, and medieval Europe, by the culture of the Enlightenment and the aftermath the horrors of the First and Second World Wars. While many of the effects of this tradition have been positive (at least for our species), some of them have been horrendous (for our species and for others). Some think that the present situation of the human race and even the biosphere in which we live is precarious because of what we, human beings, have done, are doing, and don't do. What are we, something constant and changing, or both? What are the many answers to the question what is it to be human? Can we change the world for the better?

The dividing line between the two courses is the year 1600 (roughly).

These are, above all, *reading and writing* courses. You respond to your reading primarily by writing in your journals (50%), by demonstrating careful reading through objective quizzes (40%) and by participating in a your class discussion groups (10%). Class format is lecture and discussion.

The key to the courses: IMAGINATION. Listen!

Icicles hung round me; hail showers flew.  
The only sound there, was the sea booming –  
The ice-cold wave – and at times the song of the swan.  
The cry of the gannet was all my gladness,  
The call of the curlew, not the laughter of men.  
The mewling gull, not the sweetness of mead.  
(From *The Seafarer* – in this coursepack)

Did you hear the human voice? A Saxon, about 900 BCE, wrote that but you can hear him still. There is something “human” that crosses the centuries. What is it? Alone, in a dangerous, isolated place, with no friends near. “The past is not dead. It is not even past” (William Faulkner). Hearing this voice is possible because of the magic of writing:

Nothing is so purely the trace of the mind as writing, but also nothing is so dependent on the understanding mind. In its deciphering and interpretation a miracle takes place; the transformation of something strange and dead into a total simultaneity and familiarity. This is like nothing else that has come down from the past. The remnants of the life of the past, what is left of buildings, tools, the contents of graves, are weather-beaten by the storms of time that have swept over them, whereas a written tradition when deciphered and read, is to such an extent pure mind that it speaks to us as if in the present. That is why the capacity to read, to understand what is written, is like a secret art, even a magic that looses and binds us. In it time and space seem to be suspended. The man who is able to read what has been handed down in writing testifies to the sheer presence of the past.

(Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 145)

Although much is lost in translation, although much is strange because the world is constantly changing we can still read texts from the past and hear a lot about ourselves and about other people who are both like and unlike us.

Certain voices from the past and present have been deployed in the coursepacks for 296 & 297. *To some degree*, all of us, regardless of our cultural heritage are related to these voices. *To some degree*, these voices are also related to each other. *To some degree*, many of these voices have contributed to constructing -- for good and/or ill -- the culture(s) in which we find ourselves today.

Hegel says that “The course of history does not show us the Becoming of things foreign to us, but the Becoming of ourselves and of our knowledge.” One may critique certain assumptions in this statement (what are they? one object of the course is to help you spot these), but it seems irrefutable that we have many ideas that are not our own, many of our concepts and understandings are received (French: *idées reçues*). If you ask “*Why do I think the way I think?*”, sometimes the answer might be (and often we do not even know it): *to some degree, because of Plato, of Aristotle, of Genesis (even if we are not practicing Jews, Christians, or Moslems), of the Sermon on the Mount (even if we are not Christians), Heloise and Abelard, of Mary Wollstonecraft (even if we do not consider ourselves feminists), of Darwin, of Nietzsche, . . . .* An assumption of the course is that, for better or worse, directly or indirectly, both the civilization and the savagery of the west are the products of a tradition that we can trace back (because of writing) for about three thousand years. This tradition is marked by *continuity and change*: the words that define history.

“*What is it to be human?* Some people (e.g., Richard Rorty in our 297 coursepack) think this question is unanswerable. Indeed, as the material selected will indicate or suggest, there are many, perhaps

innumerable answers, some of them are contradictory, indeed some of the texts in themselves may contain contradictions. However, I hope these courses will show that all of them are true – *to some degree* – in revealing the human condition, the human predicament -- what it is to be human.

Why do this? One important and perhaps useful reason is to be able to answer a bit better the question, “Why do I think the way I think?” Whether we know it or not, much of what we think is *related* to voices from the past. Relations to the past and the present, which are neither us nor not us, are real, whether we know it or not. Knowing relations to be relations, interpretable and re-interpretable, may increase the quality of our consciousness -- which some think a benefit. The course assumes that the advice of the Oracle of Delphi, *Know thyself*, is advice worth following -- and a lifelong task.

### **HMST 296: The Western Humanistic Tradition 1: Fall 2008**

#### **Texts:**

*Coursepack: HMST 296 WESTERN HUMANISTIC TRADITION 1.*

Homer. *The Odyssey of Homer*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. New York: Bantam Classics, 1990. (\$9.40 taxes included)

Euripides. *The Bacchae of Euripides*. Trans. Stephen J. Esposito. Newburyport MA: Focus Books, 1996 (\$11.50 taxes included).

All available only at the **Word Bookstore, 469 Milton**, cash or cheque, Mon.-Tues.-Wed. 10:00-6:00, Thurs.-Fri. 10:00-9:00, Sat. 11:00-6:00; 845-5640.

#### **Evaluation:**

**50%: Reading Journals (Journal 1: 20%; Journal 2: 20%; Journal 3: 10%)** see below.

**40% Reading Quizzes: 40% (Quiz 1: 15%; Quiz 2: 15%; Quiz 3: 10%)** see below.

**10%: Class participation:** see below

#### **Notes on Evaluation Procedures**

##### **Theme of journal**

*Quid est homo?* (Seneca): “What is it to be human?” with special emphasis on: What is it to be a woman/man? (see page 1)

What you are looking for is other people’s answers. Each particular author, like every particular human being, has a **story** to tell in which their views of what it is to be human is explicit and/or implicit. Your job is to pick it out and try to define that **story**. A story is a narrative in time and space: where do we come from, why we are here, where we are we going, why is life the way it is (evil/good, pleasure/suffering, justice/injustice, beauty. Even the story that there is no story is a story (and we’ll see that in HMST 297). We also live within **discourses**, a way of seeing the world. Seeing the world as a female, a male, an anthropologist, a geographer, a farmer, a Christian, a Jew, a Moslem, an atheist, a carpenter, a Platonist, a Stoic, a Canadian, a Quebecer, a socialist, a geologist, a female, a capitalist, a liberal, a conservative – these are all discourses. **Discourses** are linked with **identities** and both are linked with **stories**. All entail **beliefs** about what human beings are by **nature** and by **culture**. For example: Aristotle (as we shall see) thought women were inferior to men by nature -- he had a scientific

explanation, but it turned out to be just a story (but one that affected the lives of millions of men and women). Genesis has another story telling why females should submit their wills to men. Sociology argues that female inferiority is socially constructed, this is another story. We use stories and discourses to define who we are, to identify ourselves, we all have multiple **identities**. This is another theme you should address, for example, what is it to be a wife, a mother, a husband, a ruler, a peasant, a Greek, etc. for Homer. See below for more discussion of this.

### Length

The title of your journal is: “*What is it to be human?*”

- (1) All texts must be commented on – the minimum number of words per entry is clearly indicated. **Please put word count after each entry.**
- (2) Although you are not encouraged to do so, **you may exceed the minimum total for the journal by up to 1/3**. The minimum and maximum are indicated in the coursepack. **Please put total word count for the entire journal at the end of the journal.**

### Format, Style, & Content of Journals

Your journal does not need formal essay format. It may be paragraph-style, point-style, whatever style you like – *as long as it is divided in three sections as described below*.

- (1) Documentation style is not important, *but documentation, if you use outside sources, is very important*. Put down a complete web page if you have picked up some ideas there, and the full name of the author and text for books and articles (detailed publication data is not necessary, though page numbers of quotations or including paraphrasing are).
- (2) When quoting from the coursepack put the page number.

Each entry, then, ***must have the following sections format:***

- (1) **Q&A** (Questions and answers). Some questions are assigned. Unless specified you choose the questions. Some particular questions are suggested below.
- (2) **Connections:** This is a good place to bring in the theme (What is the story? What is the discourse? What are we by nature and culture?) by showing similarities and differences with other “texts” (in e – may include references to films, songs, architectural structures, etc.) previously encountered in the course pack or elsewhere. Major connections (negative/positive) with other texts both in this coursepack and the coursepack for HMST296 should be made.
- (3) **Personal response:** a place to note your personal, views, thoughts and/or reactions to the readings. But note carefully the advice given in the Mark Objectives below.

**Journals not having this 3-section format will not be marked.**

### Suggested Questions for the Q&A Section of Your Journal

**Note: Some questions are assigned. If there are no assigned questions (the majority of cases), you choose the question or questions (you may address more than one). However, you should get to the heart of the reading and not waste your words on minor matters,**

#### Main questions:

- 1) The primary theme this year is: What is it to be a woman/man. Sometimes questions on this theme are assigned, sometimes they are not. If the issue is of some importance in a text that does not have an assigned question on the matter, you should try to address it to some degree,

2) What is it to be human? More specifically how does this author/text, according to his or her *story*, consider human beings to be by *nature* and by *culture*? This is a good approach to the woman/man question (among many others).

Some starting thoughts: is it in our **nature** to fly? No. But it is in our **nature** to create the **culture** that allows us to figure out how to fly in machines. It is in our nature to fly, not as it is in the nature of bird or bee to fly, but in our nature to be able to generate a model, by a culture of cumulative knowledge -- by using symbols, to think, to write, to calculate -- to figure out how to fly. In humans, are bipedal motion, tool use, expanded brain size, sign use, and thought, the products of nature and/or culture? What is differentiates a female human being from a male human being, by nature and/or culture? What is a tribe, a nation by nature/and or culture?

3) What is (are) the discourse(s)? What is the story?

How the author/text, explicitly or implicitly, considers us to be by nature and culture is revealed in the author's "story" -- the story also reveals the authors' views of nature and culture. Hesiod and the Hebrew and the Christian bibles have obvious explicit stories of where we humans comes from, where we go, why we behave the way we behave, why we suffer, why we die, what happens to us when we die. All authors -- tacitly, implicitly, or explicitly -- subscribe to a story about human nature and so also to human culture. With Augustine we see the Christian story and the Platonic story (and many other stories), with Maimonides the Hebrew story and the Aristotelian story (and many other stories). Hobbes, Wolstencraft, Marx, Nietzsche, Rushdie -- they all have their stories. In all cases, in all texts, if they are not explicitly stated, you should be asking: **What is this author's story about what it is to be human? In so doing you will be able to articulate some of the author's assumptions and presuppositions about what it is to be human.**

#### **Some other ideas for questions:**

When reading these are some of the questions you may identify in the authors' **stories**: look for them:

##### The gender question

What is it to be a man or a woman?

Does the author think there is a difference? What? Why? By nature (for all time and all places)? By culture (specific to a particular people and time)?

##### The logos (rational principles) questions

Is there an order in the universe?

Is there a God?

Is there life after death for humans?

Is there purpose to anybody, anything?

Are things as they are by chance and/or design?

##### The ethical questions

Is there justice? By nature and/or culture?

What is human dignity?

Why do humans suffer?

Why are different people or peoples treated differently?

Why moral evil (suffering (physical, mental, material loss) humans cause for each other)?

Why natural evil (suffering caused by disease, natural disasters, accidents, etc.)?

How are “moral” and “immoral” determined? What is “virtue,” “vice”?  
Why cruelty, genocide, torture?  
Why kindness, altruism, compassion, heroism, self-sacrifice?  
What is “good”?

The epistemological question  
How do we know what we know? reason? sensation? experience? imagination?  
Is what we know true? false?  
What is faith?

The psychological questions  
What are emotions, passions (hate, love, desire, guilt), perception?  
Why and what pleasure and pain?

The cosmological question  
How are humans related to other beings (animal, vegetable) and elements (air, water) in the biosphere?  
The aesthetic questions  
Art, culture, and nature?  
How is art defined? What is its function?  
What is beauty? Is it connected to the good? (see ethical questions)  
What is ugly? Is it connected to the bad? (see ethical questions)  
What of order, disorder, aesthetically speaking?  
Truth (knowledge) and art: any relationship? (linked with epistemology)  
Art: any link with a transcendent reality?  
Art, reason and passion?

**40% Reading Quizzes: 40% (Quiz 1: 15%; Quiz 2: 15%; Quiz 3: 10%):**

These reward careful reading. Different types of multiple choice questions, e.g., identifying which text a quotation comes from; identifying different characters in a text; identifying connections, differences, similarities between/among texts/authors; identifying themes, movements, etc.

**10%: Class participation: a guaranteed mark**

1. Each student will be assigned to one of three groups, Groucho, Chico or Harpo.
2. These group names are put before certain dates – 8 dates for each group.
3. On the date for your group you must attend the class (**the whole class**) and **hand in a DRAFT entry for your journal assignment for that day.** (You will be marked on the content of the final entry that makes it into your journal.)
4. You are NOT marked on the CONTENT of the DRAFT. You must do a “good faith” (honest) entry and it must be typed. If you do this 8 times you get 10/10 – easy!
5. If you miss a class you lose 2/10 – this means that after missing 5 of the 8 classes assigned the mark for participation is 0/10.
6. **If you must miss a class** you have been assigned you may get permission to do another entry on another day. This means you must attend another group session other than your own and hand in a draft journal entry. To get permission e-mail me on the WebCT site for the class (my filing cabinet) with an explanation BEFORE the class you must miss.
7. Your draft entry will be put in an envelope circulated during class. You must sign your FULL NAME (no initials) on the envelope.



## Journal Objectives (Grades)

### Question: How can the readers evaluate your journal objectively?

Here are the Journal Objectives (by Sara Amin and Robert Myles)

NOTE ON THE EXCEPTIONAL CATEGORIES (“B+” and above) AND THE AVERAGE (“B”) AND BELOW AVERAGE CATEGORIES (“B-“and below): The difference between these categories is found mainly in the consistency of the quality of your journals in the entries. Thus, while you might do what’s required for the higher grades in some of your entries, or do some parts of what’s required in the above descriptions, you do not do them THROUGHOUT your entries and the journal. Also note that what’s required for an “A”, “A-“, and “B+” and IS VERY DEMANDING, also, background, being raised in an environment where reading is a major pastime, having developed a love of writing, having followed a strong Liberal Arts program in CEGEP or high school, etc., will affect your mark. If you are in U1, it may seem unfair that some of the students in the class who are in U3 have more background than you, but when you get to U2 and U3, you will have background because of this course that others do not – generally, things will even out.

A (outstanding): *Generally*: The journal is clearly written, well-articulated and shows creativity and historical consciousness – the author is clearly able to *imagine* other times, other conditions, and other people, without being astonished, for example, that ancient peoples often did not hold generally accepted modern views. This requires developing an objective critical viewpoint, one that might differ from one’s often uncritically assumed beliefs. The “A” journal shows a very high level of critical analysis. Moreover, in the “A” journal all three sections have been done as required, entries make arguments that are backed up by at least one of the following: citations of page numbers from texts, quotes from texts, reference to class discussions/lectures, outside sources.

*Specifically*: A journal that receives “A” has done the following:

*Questions Section*: Entries in the “A” journal interpret and discuss one or more of the questions the author is posing and/or answering, explicitly and/or implicitly regarding the human condition, human nature and humanity. Often, the “A” journal discusses the main questions here, but sometimes it may focus on other interesting questions. If this is case, in the “A” journal, the main question always shows up elsewhere in the connections or personal response section of that entry, or even in a connections section of another entry. For example, in the entry for *Phaedrus* a student might have focused brilliantly on the question of madness, or the nature of soul, among other issues. However, at some point the “A” journal will also integrate the question of love, the heart, after all, of the *Phaedrus*. Entries, generally, should also bring in, at some point, the theme being focused on in the course (in 2003-2004 for 296 it was “the story” and “being good,” for 297, there is a similar theme: “Assumptions about the nature of reality and the nature of human beings: the moral consequences”). This pattern and all these elements may not be in every single entry in the “A” journal, but OVERALL, GENERALLY, they will be.

*Connections section*: The “A” journal COMPARES and CONTRASTS the text under discussion with other texts in the coursepacks address similar ideas in different ways, with similar or different answers. If Sappho and Plato are connected on the question of love, the connections section of the “A” journal will address (1) what they are saying about love and how they are different/similar, (2) how they are saying it —poem/interpersonal, emotional vs. dialectic/interpersonal to objective-ideal, and (3) where and why the differences/similarities might occur (woman vs. man (perhaps), subjective vs. objective, different assumptions and concerns about being human? And so on. The “A” journal may sometimes brings in “outside” (not in the coursepacks) “texts” (and these may include films and songs) but not at the expense of excluding major connections that exist in the coursepacks, for example in the “A” journal, Montaigne will be connected with several key thinkers we have already encountered, many of whom he mentions himself.

*Personal responses*: both personal feeling and personal belief often come, some people even write

poems, but the “A” journal goes beyond the “feeling,” the “A” journal will not simply say “I hate Aristotle because of this or that” and simply dismiss him. The “A” journal will *criticize* and agree, may express strong like or dislike, or expressed boredom or frustration, but the A journal will have *imagined* and understood some of the important contexts of the text, and their effects, if any, on *today* and on the *author of the journal*. The “A” journal might also point out inconsistencies or contradictions in logic, the effects, unconscious and conscious, of the author’s assumptions (the “story”), spoken or unspoken. The “A” journal consciously attempts to connect its author’s experience/thinking/understanding to those of the author of the text being considered.

A- (excellent): This journal is at an exceptionally high level; a little less consistent and imaginative than the “A” journal. Typically, discussions of the themes were omitted more often, a few major misunderstandings of the texts occur (of matters that were discussed in class – if you skip class do very good background research on your own), a few crucial connections are missed. A few too many personal responses fail to engage the texts imaginatively or critically.

B+ (very good) What is required of the three sections is generally done very well indeed, and sometimes exceptionally well. The “B+” journal articulates points clearly to the reader; it makes frequent references to the texts; it makes many of the key connections with other texts. The personal response shows imagination and critically based personal expression. Like the “A-”, but less so – more of the shortcomings, less consistency.

B (good) (1) Some very good moments, but generally nothing to write home about. Often, one of the three sections is consistently done poorly throughout nearly all entries –OR, generally, entries are weak in one of the three sections, BUT the writing is sound, clear, accessible, and citations are clearly indicated. Although, in general, the “B” journal displays understanding of some of the important points about the text, the journal does not really go towards ANALYSING the text and the authors in relation to their assumptions or the implications of what they are saying. Little *imagining* of other perspectives. Finally the journal does not go very much beyond what has been said in the class/presentations/lectures, i.e., there’s very little personal analysis of the text and much regurgitation of what has been said in class. (2) Often a paper may potentially be “B+” but its hard to tell because the writing is not sound. This means that the reader is constantly shifting from content to form in order to interpret what this type of “B” journal is saying (the reader has to reread and say him- or herself “I think this means that”). Sometimes the problem is weakly developed writing and/or vocabulary skills, sometimes lazy expression is the problem; sometimes it is simply an inability to imagine an audience. Make an appointment to see your prof and/or TA if this is you. Often, these journals also lack citations from or references to texts.

B- (fair): (1) Combination of “B” (1) and “B” (2) (see above).

(2) In addition to what’s happening with “B”(1) journals, all the sections are done but, frequently, more than one of the sections are done poorly OR the questions/answer section (or the connections) section reflects a lack of understanding of what the texts are saying; making claims about the text without evidence. Entries do not cite text/references/discussions/presentations/ lectures in general—that is, entries do not show signs that one has read the texts actually or even engaged with them during discussions/presentations.

C+, C, D (weak to bad): (1) In addition to what’s happening with ‘B-‘ journals, one of the three sections is consistently missing OR any given section is missing in any entry. Entries do not reflect any real substantial effort at trying to understand the text or engage with the text—they are poorly written, unclear, basically absent of analysis and critical/personal engagement with the text, and fail to address what the author/text is trying to get at. (2) Often journals in category (1) have missing entries, but sometimes journals are submitted with many good or high quality entries but are missing entries –

missing just a few entries will get the journal down to C+ level very quickly.

F: Many entries are missing; those that are done are poorly done (see C+, C, D).

### **Journal Plagiarism Protection & Prevention**

Although I disagree with Plato and Aristotle on many things, I agree with them in their belief that cheating and other evil acts are soul-destroying. Most of you, on this issue, are also Platonists and Aristotelians – you think that cheating is soul-destroying. Another thinker in your coursepack, Antiphon, believes we should follow rules only if we want to or if we think we will get caught and punished if we break the rules. A few students in the class are of this school. **To prevent dishonest students from even thinking of cheating, to keep the playing field even for the honest students, to allow the instructor and the TA to spend all their time responding to journals rather than playing cop, to relieve students who prefer not “to lend” their journals to cheaters of that pressure (while allowing them to share their journal insights with others without the anxiety of theft), and to relieve the prof of having to totally revise the coursepack every year, this course uses turnitin** This is a text matching program that compares current student journals to those previously submitted for the course plus a massive database that includes web sites on our texts and authors, as well as papers from term paper mills and other sources.

Initially, some students find this demand a little insulting, because they know that they are honest. But there is nothing personal here – most students are complete strangers to their markers.

Some students think that they are surrendering “intellectual property” to a private, for-profit company. Actually, while your material goes into a data base along with millions of other texts (many of them officially copyrighted), this data base is not searchable (test: you cannot google and find your paper) and it has been secure for many years. In fact, since turnitin.com is an American company, you can be sure that they have all the bases covered for fear of litigation in a litigation-crazed country. Think of this also – turnitin protects your material (some Profs are cheaters too), for now and for as long as turnitin is in business.

Students who have used the system seem to have appreciated its value to them and their instructors. The system has been used by my classes for the past five years. During that time only 3 students (less than 1%) have chosen not to use turnitin and to do an originality quiz (a choice you have too). Nevertheless, if turnitin.com disturbs you, please do not hesitate to participate, without prejudice of course, in an originality quiz.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

**Evidence of plagiarism will be referred immediately to the associate dean for a decision on disciplinary actions, which can include failure of the course and/or a permanent note on the student transcript. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is no defence.** Therefore, you will be expected to visit and read McGill’s Student Guide to Avoid Plagiarism at <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/studentguide/>. The site includes a number of links that will help you understand and avoid plagiarism. We also suggest you go to the site, “How Not to Plagiarize” <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>

### **Policy for Late Submission of Journals**

Minus one grade category for each day late: e.g., a journal evaluated as a B+ becomes a B on the first day late, a B- on the second day late, a C+ on the fourth day late, a C on the fifth day late, a D on the sixth day late.