

Integrative Studies 5: History and Philosophy of Western Civilization (Ancient World to Middle Ages)

In this course we will look at history—as we humans have recorded it—and we will come to grips with the question: “What is history?” In previous courses, you practiced analytic reading—looking for the details of the author’s presentation. The emphasis was on making sure that you understood the meaning of each work on its own, and all the relevant details, before discussing how it related to the other works in the course.

In this course, let us assume that we possess the necessary analytic skills to allow us to shift to an emphasis upon synthetic reading. We are concerned with the overall pattern of a text and its relationship to all other texts in the course and to those in the core sequence.

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Texts

Required

Aeschylus, *Oresteia*
Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles or Summa Theologica*
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Aristotle, *On the Heavens*
Augustine, *City of God*
Book of Job
Book of Revelation
Dante, *Inferno*
Genesis, chapters 1–11
Gospel According to Mark

Herodotus, *Persian Wars*
Hildegard of Bingen, selections
Homer, *Iliad*
Plato, *Republic*
Ptolemy, *Almagest*
Sappho, poetry
Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*
Virgil, *Aeneid*

Also required are the following:

Myths of the Ancient Near East, including versions of the Inanna/Ishtar and Gilgamesh legends
At least one Roman Stoic

Optional

The following works should also be included, space permitting:

Abelard and Heloise, Letters
Aristotle, *Poetics*
Bible selections (other than those required in Humanities 3)
Burgundian Code
Cicero, *Republic*
Code of Hammurabi
Dante, *Purgatorio*
Dante, *Paradiso*
Hesiod, *Theogony*
Justinian, *Digest of Roman Law*
Lombard Laws
Magna Carta
Rule of St. Benedict

The following works should also be included, space permitting:

A history from the Roman period(s), selected from among the following: Josephus, Livy, Plutarch, Sallust, Suetonius, Tacitus

A work by a medieval woman other than Hildegard, selected from among the following: Catherine of Siena, Claire of Assisi, Hadewijch, Mechthild of Magdeburg

A work of poetry or fable, selected from among the following: *Beowulf*, Chretien de Troyes, *Lais of Marie de France*, *Song of Roland*

Works by medieval philosopher-theologians, selected from among those in the compendium *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Hyman and Walsh, editors)

Any of the following works may also be used:

Abelard, "My Misfortunes"
Any play by Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Euripides, or Sophocles other than those required in Humanities 2
Aristotle, "Constitution of Athens"
Plotinus, *Enneads*
Poetry from the Greek and/or Roman periods
Porphyry, "Letter to his Wife Marcella"

Secondary works, particularly those emphasizing historical concerns, may also be used in this course.

Course Readings

A list of the books and articles used in this course follows in the order in which they are read. Additional assignments will be announced in class.

Eliade, Mircea, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*
Myths from Mesopotamia
Hesiod, *Theogony*
New Jerusalem Bible
Homer, *The Iliad*
Sappho, Poetry
Aeschylus, *Oresteia*
Herodotus, *Histories*
Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*
Plato, *The Republic*
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Aristotle, *On the Heavens*
Ptolemy, *Almagest* (xeroxed selections)
Virgil, *The Aeneid*
Josephus, *The Jewish War*
Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*
Augustine, *City of God*
Hyman and Walsh, eds., *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*
Hildegard of Bingen, *Book of Divine Works*
Marie de France, *The Lais*
Dante, *The Divine Comedy 1: Inferno*
Adams, Henry, *Mont St. Michel and Chartres*

Goals and Objectives

Integrative Studies 5 and 6 form the capstone of Shimer's core curriculum. Arranged chronologically, the two-course sequence is designed to illustrate the nature and content of the ongoing "Great Conversation." Readings from the rest of the core can be fitted into this

chronology; where appropriate, these readings are welcomed into the dialogue. However, because of the reading load and limited class time, I urge all class members to avoid bringing in materials which are not held in common, and to eschew personal anecdotes except where they are truly applicable and enlightening.

One result of engaging in the Great Conversation is that we will all become clearer about our own assumptions and beliefs as we encounter those of others. This process, as Euthyphro discovered, can be painful; so we need to treat each other and ourselves with respect and give each other careful listening, genuine questioning, and thoughtful responses. All of our readings were written by and for communities and are to be read in that spirit. Some of these are communities that you would not choose to join. You are not being asked to accept or believe in what those communities believed. You are being asked to understand and empathize with those communities—to try to imagine what it might have been like to live there, thinking and doing what they thought and did. This is not easy, but it is possible.

As facilitator of Integrative Studies 5 and 6, I will also host your senior thesis. In that capacity, I will provide a timeline for due dates and help you find a first and second reader for your project.

Please note: If you have not written a research paper, you must do so before the end of this semester in order to register for Integrative Studies 6. You may write your research paper in any of your courses this semester—including this one.

Course Requirements

1. *Protocols:* Each student will write one protocol covering a single lengthy work. Your protocol should summarize what the class found most important in the work, and you need to hand (or e-mail) the protocol to each of us in a timely fashion—i.e., within a week of the discussion of the work. Protocol grades will count for 10 percent of your grade in the course.
2. *Class Attendance:* Because of the glut of reading materials as fodder for discussion, lateness and absence will seriously impair the class's ability to treat materials in depth. Many works will be discussed in one session only. There is obviously no way to make up missed classes. So the rule of thumb is: *Don't miss!* At the far end of acceptability, if you miss or are substantially late to five class periods, you are subject to dismissal from the class upon your next absence.
3. *Discussion:* Discussion techniques should be carefully attended to. As seniors, you can expect at least the following from yourselves, from me, and from one another: mutual respect, thorough preparation, careful listening, genuine questioning, and thoughtful responses. In addition, we should be able to joke without rancor, to promote lively as well as courteous dialogue, and occasionally to have bells ring and lights pop as things we've all been thinking about come together.

Note: Class attendance and discussion make up 90 percent of your grade.

Syllabus

Friday, 9/3 Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*

Wednesday, 9/8 *Myths of Mesopotamia: Gilgamesh*, Standard version, pp. 39–135

Descent of Ishtar..., pp. 154–162
The Epic of Creation, pp. 228–277

- Friday, 9/10 Hesiod, *Theogony*
New Jerusalem Bible: Genesis, Exodus (ch. 19–24);
Deuteronomy (ch. 5–27)
- Tuesday, 9/14 Homer, *The Iliad*, Books 1–12
- Friday, 9/17 Homer, *The Iliad*, Books 13–24
- Tuesday, 9/21 Sappho (all); *The Oresteia: Agamemnon*
- Friday, 9/24 *The Oresteia: The Libation Bearers* and *The Eumenides*
- Tuesday, 9/28 Herodotus, Books 1 and 2
- Friday, 10/1 Herodotus, Book 3
- Tuesday, 10/5 Thucydides, Books 1 and 2 (through the Policies of Pericles)
- Friday, 10/8 Thucydides, Books 3 and 5 (Melian Dialogue only),
6 (pp. 447–470), 7 (Oligarchic Coup only)

DEAN'S BREAK

- Friday, 10/15 Plato, *Republic*, Books 1–5
- Tuesday, 10/19 Plato, *Republic*, Books 6–10
- Friday, 10/22 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: Books 1–6, 8, 9
Aristotle, *On the Heavens* (omit Book 2, ch. 1–12)
- Tuesday, 10/26 Ptolemy, *The Almagest* (selections)
- Friday, 10/29 Virgil, *The Aeneid*
- Tuesday, 11/2 New Jerusalem Bible: Gospel of Mark, Gospel of John
- Friday, 11/5 New Jerusalem Bible: Acts 1–9; Revelation
- Tuesday, 11/9 Josephus, *The Jewish War* (selections)
- Friday, 11/12 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*: Books 1–4
- Tuesday, 11/16 Augustine, *City of God* (selections)

Friday, 11/19 Augustine, *City of God* (selections)

Tuesday, 11/23 Philosophy in the Middle Ages: Boethius (pp. 128–132);
Anselm (pp. 149–152); Algazali (pp. 267–283)
Maimonides (pp. 390–419); Bacon (pp. 480–488);
Aquinas (pp. 558–564)

THANKSGIVING

Tuesday, 11/30 Hildegard, *Divine Works* (Forward, Visions 2 and 8, Letters),
Marie de France, *Lais*

Friday, 12/3 Dante, *Inferno*: Cantos 1–14

Tuesday, 12/7 Dante, *Inferno*: Cantos 15–34

Protocol Assignments (Sign up for one)

1. Creation Myths _____
2. The Torah _____
3. Homer _____
4. Sappho and Aeschylus _____
5. Herodotus / Thucydides _____
6. Plato _____
7. Aristotle / Ptolemy _____
8. The Gospels _____
9. Philosophy in the Middle Ages _____
10. Hildegard / Marie de France _____
11. Dante _____
12. Mont St. Michel and Chartres _____