Course Content and Objectives

Liberal Arts 200B is an interdisciplinary seminar on cultural movements, figures, and art forms of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Focus is on the West with some global comparison. Emphasis is on theoretical perspectives, methods, and research techniques germane to the liberal arts.

Learning Objectives:
1. Be conversant as to the dates and basic cultural aspects of all of the European Middle Ages and Renaissance.
2. Illustrate general knowledge of the cultural movements, important figures, and significant art forms of each era, along with sophisticated knowledge of such pertaining to the era(s) of each student’s special interests.
3. Be familiar enough with the corpus of primary texts and works of art to know whence comes the general academic understanding of the cultural history of these eras.
4. Be conversant in the relevant major scholars and their theoretical perspectives.
5. Be practiced in the techniques of graduate-level research in the liberal arts, particularly with regard to subjects in the medieval period and Renaissance.

Required Texts
Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*
*Beowulf* (trans. Seamus Heaney)
*Song of Roland*
Chretien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*
Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*
Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*
Earsmus, *Praise of Folly*
Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*

Cunningham and Reich

Assorted Readings on Reserve

Course Format
The course will consist of mainly of seminar discussions of readings and of the visual arts, together with some presentation of research by students.
Course Requirements and Student Evaluation

In addition to the completion of all reading assignments by the dates assigned, formal requirements and their correlative grade percentages consist of the following:

1. Regular attendance and fruitful contribution to class discussions; inadequacy in these areas will potentially affect course grades. 30%.

   Part of participation includes being prepared each class night to start the discussion. For each night’s reading, select one passage / quote (no more than a page, but longer than a single sentence) to present to the class. I will call on students randomly over the semester to begin discussion by presenting their quote. You may be called on more than once over the course of the semester. Thus, it is important that you be prepared every night to present your quote.

2. Several short response papers to assigned readings, designed to enhance the quality of both readings and discussions. 40%. You will select four books and write a five-page paper on each of them.

3. A longer paper focusing on a topic of each student’s choice. 17-20 pages each. 30%.

Semester Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27 January</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 February</td>
<td>Byzantium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From late antiquity to the Middle Ages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings: Boethius, <em>Consolation of Philosophy</em>, excerpts, On Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Begin reading <em>Formation of Christendom</em>, Parts I and II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 February</td>
<td>Anglo Saxons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Germanic / Christian / Roman fusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings: Beowulf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>17 February</td>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The rise of Islam. Islamic culture in comparative perspective: Abbasid Spain, Mogul India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings: Qur’an, excerpts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of <em>Formation of Christendom</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>24 February</td>
<td>Carolingians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Art and literature in the age of Charlemagne. Romanesque architecture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings: Song of Roland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 March</td>
<td>No Class, Furlough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10 March</td>
<td>Chivalry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feudalism. Chivalry. The literary tradition of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings: Chretien de Troyes, <em>Arthurian Romances</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17 March</td>
<td>The Crusades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East meets west. The Crusades. Crusader architecture and music.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 9  24 March  High Middle Ages
The High Middle Ages.  Gothic architecture.  Scholasticism.
Readings:  Peter Abelard, *Sic et Non*, excerpts, On Reserve

31 March  Spring Break

Week 10  7 April  Fourteenth Century
Black Death and the Hundred Years War.  The early Renaissance.  The art of Giotto.
Readings:  Cunningham and Reich, Chapter 11
Francois Villon, *The Poems of Francois Villon*, On Reserve
“The Testament,”
“Ballad: I die of thirst beside the fountain”
“The Debate Between Villon and His Heart”
Christine de Pisan,
*Dieu de Jehanne d’Arc*, On Reserve
or at [http://www.smu.edu/ijas/cdepisan/text.html](http://www.smu.edu/ijas/cdepisan/text.html)

Week 11  14 April  Early Renaissance
Literary achievements of the early Renaissance: Francesco Petrarch, Geoffrey Chaucer.
Readings:  Cunningham and Reich, Chapter 12
Boccaccio, *Griselda*, On Reserve
or at [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/decameron.txt](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/decameron.txt)
NB:  Griselda is the last full tale of the text, 10th day, 10th Story
Francesco Petrarch, On Reserve
Letter to Boccaccio and Griselda
or at [http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/griselda.html](http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/griselda.html)
Geoffrey Chaucer
*Clerk’s Tale:  Griselda*, On Reserve,
*Parliament of Fowls*, on reserve
or at [http://omacl.org/Parliament/](http://omacl.org/Parliament/)

Week 12  21 April  Renaissance humanism.
Reading:  Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*

Week 13  28 April  High Renaissance
Readings:  Cunningham / Reich, Chapter 13
Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*
Week 14  5 May  Renaissance in the North
The Northern Renaissance. Art of Albrecht Durer, Jan van Eyck, Hieronymus Bosch, and the writings of Martin Bucer and Thomas More.
Readings: Thomas More, Utopia, excerpts
Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus

Week 15  12 May  Shakespeare and Elizabethan England.
Readings: William Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice