

Jon Stewart
BISLA
Rorty Room

Fall Semester 2019
Tuesday and Thursday
14:40-16:10

Syllabus
Western Civilization II: The Modern World

This course traces the history and culture of the modern world from the end of the Middle Ages in the 15th century to the present day. It examines the rediscovery of ancient science and culture in the Italian Renaissance with its ideals of humanism and reason. This corresponded to the period of Columbus' discovery of the New World and the conquests of Cortés in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru, which marked the beginning of the European colonization of the Americas. This class will further explore the foundations of the key Western values in the works of the Enlightenment philosophers. We will examine the response to the Enlightenment ideas in the writings of the Romantics and the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel. We will end with texts that treat the crisis of the modern condition from representatives of the schools of Existentialism and Critical Theory. Key themes in the course will be the role and value of human knowledge. We will also explore the ideal of reason and its limitations. This raised the question of the status of knowledge in relation to traditional belief. Is knowledge a good thing? Does it come at a cost? Is there a unique Western spirit or *logos*? Is there some aspect of human life that is forgotten when we are concerned with knowledge alone? We will also examine the struggle of reason with religion and traditional belief.

Instructor: Jon Stewart

M.A. (Philosophy, 1986), Ph.D. (Philosophy, 1992), Dr. habil. (Theology, 2003), Dr. habil. (Philosophy, 2007). Research fellow at the Institute for Philosophy at the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Email: js@jonstewart.dk

Office Hours

By appointment.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

The course assessment will consist of the following:

20% One in-class written midterm examination

20% One in-class written final examination at the end of the semester

50% A series of unannounced quizzes throughout the course of the semester

7% Class participation

3% Attendance

Participation

The course consists primarily of readings and in-class discussion. The readings build on one another, and so it is imperative to keep up with them. The class discussion will be dedicated to coming to a better understanding of the texts. For this reason attendance is mandatory. Only two unexcused absences per term will be accepted.

Computer and Cell Phone Policy

You may use your computers and tablets in class to take notes or to read the text, but during the class period it is not permitted to use WiFi or to access the internet. Please turn off your cell phones during class. No surfing or texting during class is permitted.

Texts

- The Portable Renaissance Reader*, ed. by James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin 1977.
- Luther [1520]: *The Freedom of a Christian Man* in *The Protestant Reformation*, ed. by Hans J. Hillerbrand, New York: Harper 1968.
- Bartolomé de las Casas [1552]: *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, trans. by Nigel Griffin, London and New York: Penguin 1992.
- Hume [1757], *The Natural History of Religion* in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, vols. 1-4, Edinburgh: Adam Black and William Tait 1826, vol. 4, pp. 435-513.
- Rousseau [1762], *Emile or On Education*, trans. by Allan Bloom, New York: Basic Books 1979.
- Lessing [1779]: *Nathan the Wise*, trans. by Ronald Schechter, Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martins 2004.
- Kant [1784], "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, trans. by Donald L. Colclasure, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2006.
- Blake [1789]: *Songs of Innocence and Experience with Other Poems*, London: Basil Montagu Pickering 1866.
- Schiller [1795]: "The Veiled Statue at Sais" in *Schiller's Complete Works*, trans. by Charles J. Hempel, vol. 1, Philadelphia: I. Hohler 1861, pp. 98-99.
- Shelley [1818], "Ozymandias" in *Miscellaneous and Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, London: William Benbow 1826, p. 100.
- Tennyson [1842], "Ulysses" and "The Lotos-Eaters" in *Poems*, vols. 1-2, Boston: William D. Ticknor 1842, vol. 1, pp. 88-91, pp. 175-177.
- Hegel [1827], *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, One-Volume Edition, The Lectures of 1827*, ed. by Peter C. Hodgson, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press 1988.
- Camus [1942], *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. by Justin O'Brien, New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1955.
- Horkheimer [1947], *Eclipse of Reason*, London and New York: Continuum 2004.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1		
Sept 17	Course Introduction and The Renaissance	
	Marsilio Ficino, "The Golden Age in Florence" (1492)	pp. 79-80
	Erasmus of Rotterdam, "An Age of Gold" (1517)	pp. 80-84
	Jacques Lefèvre D'Étaples, "The Restoration of the Gospel" (1522)	pp. 84-86
	Loys le Roy, "The Excellence of This Age" (1575)	pp. 91-108
Sept 19	The Reformation	
	Luther, <i>The Freedom of a Christian Man</i> (1520)	pp. 4-18, 24-28
Sept 20	The Age of Exploration	
	Bartolomé de las Casas, <i>A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies</i> (1552)	pp. 5-17, pp. 42-56, pp. 127-130
	(attention: special class meeting on Friday)	

Week 2

Sept 24 **No class**

Sept 26 **No class**

Week 3

Oct 1 **The British Enlightenment**

Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (1757), Sections I-IV pp. 435-458

Oct 3 Hume, *The Natural History of Religion*, Sections V-XI pp. 458-483

Oct 4 Hume, *The Natural History of Religion*, Sections XII-XV pp. 483-513
(attention: special class meeting on Friday)

Week 4

Oct 8 **The French Enlightenment**

Rousseau, *Emile*, “Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar” (1762) pp. 266-267,
pp. 275-291

Oct 10 Rousseau, *Emile*, “Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar” pp. 292-313

Week 5

Oct 15 **The German Enlightenment**

Lessing, *Nathan the Wise* (1779), Acts 1-2 pp. 23-62

Oct 17 Lessing, *Nathan the Wise*, Acts 3-4 pp. 62-96

Week 6

Oct 22 Lessing, *Nathan the Wise*, Act 5 pp. 96-115

Oct 24 Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” (1784) pp. 17-23

Week 7

Oct 29 **No class: Reading Week**

Oct 31 **No class: Reading Week**

Week 8

Nov 5 **Midterm Exam**

Nov 7 **Romanticism**

Blake, *Songs of Innocence* (1789) pp. 3-15, pp. 18-21
Blake, *Songs of Experience* (1794) pp. 49-57, p. 69, p. 73
Blake, “Auguries of Innocence” (ca. 1803) pp. 96-101

Week 9

Nov 12 Schiller, “The Veiled Statue at Sais” (1795) pp. 98-99
Shelley, “Ozymandias” (1818) p. 100
Tennyson, “Ulysses” (1842) pp. 88-91
Tennyson, “The Lotos-Eaters” (1842) pp. 175-177

Nov 14	Hegel, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</i> (1827): Introduction	pp. 75-99
Week 10		
Nov 19	Hegel, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</i> : The Concept of Religion, B. The Knowledge of God: 1. Immediate Knowledge, 2. Feeling, 3. Representation	pp. 128-151
Nov 21	Hegel, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</i> : The Concept of Religion, B. The Knowledge of God: 4. Thought C. The Cultus	pp. 151-161, pp. 189-197
Week 11		
Nov 26	Hegel, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</i> : The Consummate Religion, Introduction	pp. 391-407, pp. 413-416
Nov 28	Hegel, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</i> : The Consummate Religion, A. The First Element: The Idea of God In and For Itself	pp. 417-432
Week 12		
Dec 3	Hegel, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</i> : The Consummate Religion B. The Second Element: Representation, Appearance, 1. Differentiation	pp. 432-452
Dec 5	Hegel, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</i> : The Consummate Religion B. The Second Element: Representation, Appearance, 2. Reconciliation	pp. 452-470
Week 13		
Dec 10	Hegel, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</i> : The Consummate Religion C. The Third Element: Community, Spirit	pp. 470-489
Dec 12	Existentialism Camus, <i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> (1942)	pp. 3-28
Week 14		
Dec 17	Camus, <i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i>	pp. 51-65, pp. 119-123
Dec 19	Critical Theory Horkheimer, <i>Eclipse of Reason</i> (1947): "Rise and Decline of the Individual"	pp. 87-109
Week 15		
Jan 7	Horkheimer, <i>Eclipse of Reason</i> : "On the Concept of Philosophy"	pp. 110-126
Jan 9	Final Exam	