

CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION C1101 SECTION 032

Essentials

Instructor	Mariana Beatriz Noé (mbn2123@columbia.edu)
Classes	Mondays and Wednesdays 6-8 PM
Classroom	41 5686 1553 (Zoom)
Password	wisdom
Office Hours	Mondays 8-9 PM and Fridays 3-4 PM
CC Reading Group	Fridays 4-7 PM
CC Chats	Fridays 1-3 PM

Course Description

The central purpose of Contemporary Civilization is to introduce students to a range of issues concerning the kinds of communities—political, philosophical, social, moral, and religious—that human beings construct for themselves, and the values that inform and define such communities. Founded in 1919 as a course on war and peace issues, Contemporary Civilization has evolved continuously while remaining a constant and essential element of the Columbia College curriculum. The course asks students to read closely texts in various traditions of argument and to construct arguments of their own, both in speech and in writing, about some of the explicit and implicit issues that these texts raise.

Required Materials

You can find all the required articles, chapters, and supplementary readings on our CourseWorks page (see Files > Texts). We will also read the following books:

- Plato, *Republic* (Hackett, translated by Grube, revised by Reeve)¹
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford WC, translated by Ross, revised by Brown)²
- Aristotle, *Politics* (Oxford WC, translated by Barker, revised by Stalley)³
- *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* (Oxford)⁴
- *Saint Augustine, City of God* (Penguin, translated by Bettenson)⁵
- *The Qur'an* (Oxford WC, translated by Abdel Haleem)⁶
- Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Oxford WC, translated by Bondanella)⁷

¹ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/12461598>

² <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/14137357?counter=2>

³ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/14150391>

⁴ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/11481115?counter=1>

⁵ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/1143524?counter=2>

⁶ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/7702429>

⁷ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/14153857>

- Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy* (Oxford WC, translated by Conaway Bondanella & Bondanella)⁸
 - Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (Broadview Press, translated by Johnston)
 - Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford WC, edited by Gaskin)⁹
 - Locke, *Political Writings* (Hackett, edited by Wootton)¹⁰
 - Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings* (Hackett, translated by Cress)¹¹
- The remaining readings are already uploaded to CourseWorks.

The books listed above can be purchased as print or digital copies through the [Columbia University Bookstore](#), [Book Culture](#), etc. Digital and print copies of most books can be borrowed from Butler Library using the online library catalog, and digital editions can also be rented from the Columbia University Bookstore. I provide the CLIO links for most of the books but be aware of the following facts:

- (a) Not all books are accessible through Butler Library.
- (b) Some books might be available only for a short period of time a day.
- (c) Some books can be borrowed only by one person at a time.

Now, I know that buying all the books is not an option for many of you. In that case, please do have in mind that Columbia and Barnard students who identify as first-generation, low-income students can use [Columbia's](#) or [Barnard's](#) "First-Generation, Low-Income" (FLI) Partnership Libraries. Please visit their website for more information about how to borrow from the FLI Library's collection of digital and print copies of books, and a guide to other low-cost options. If you still have any difficulty obtaining the required texts, please contact me.

Schedule

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| 1) Sept 9 | <u>A History of Ideas vs. A History of Emotions</u>
Appiah, "There Is no Such Thing as Western Civilisation"
Nussbaum, "Implementing Rational Compassion: Moral and Civic Education" |
| 2) Sept 14 | <u>Being Afraid of Justice</u>
Plato, <i>Republic</i> I, II, III |
| 3) Sept 16 | Plato, <i>Republic</i> IV, V, VI |
| 4) Sept 21 | Plato, <i>Republic</i> VII (up until 521c), VIII, IX |
| 5) Sept 23 | Plato, <i>Republic</i> X
Manson, "Columbine: Whose Fault Is It?" |

⁸ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/14062895>

⁹ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/14117162>

¹⁰ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/14931659>

¹¹ <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/12455215>

- 6) Sept 28 Looking for Happiness
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I, II (1-6), III (1-5)
- 7) Sept 30 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* V (1-7), VI (1-8 and 12), VII (1-3), VIII (1-12), X (entire)
- 8) Oct 5 Aristotle, *Politics* I (1-9, 12-13), II (1-5), III (1-13), IV (1-5)
- 9) Oct 7 Despair and Faith
Hebrew Bible, *Ecclesiastes* (entire)
Hebrew Bible, *Exodus* 1-24
Hebrew Bible, *Deuteronomy* 1-6
Hebrew Bible, *Samuel* 2, 8-10, 17-20
- 10) Oct 12 Love and Guilt
New Testament, *Galatians* (entire)
New Testament, *Romans* (entire)
New Testament, *Matthew* (3-7)
- 11) Oct 14 Freedom to Sin
Augustine, *City of God* I (only the preface), IV (1-4), XII (1-9 and 21-23), XIV (1-17 and 24-28), XV (1 and 6-7), XIX (13-17 and 24-27)
- 12) Oct 19 Compassion and War
Al Qur'an, *Suras* (in this order) 1, 114, 112, 111, 107, 98, 81, 74, 56, 45, 43, 42, 39, 26, 17, 10, 4, 3, 2
- 13) Oct 21 Solitude and Knowledge
Al-Ghazali, *The Rescuer from Error*
Ibn Tufayl, *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*
- 14) Oct 26 A New Notion of Happiness
Aquinas, *The Summa of Theology* (pp. 30-38, 44-53)
Aquinas, *On Kingship* (pp. 14-29)
Aquinas, *The Summa Against the Gentiles* (pp. 1-7)
- 15) Oct 28 The Sad Prince
Machiavelli, *Prince* (entire)
- 16) Nov 4 Passion-less Institutions
Machiavelli, *Discourses* I (preface, 1-6, 9-13, 16-18, 55, 58), II (preface)
- 17) Nov 9 The Consequences of Disgust
Council of Castile, "El Requerimiento"
Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico

Guamán Poma de Ayala, “Appeal Concerning the Priests”
 Vitoria, “On the American Indians” (pp. 231-251, 264-265, 271-272,
 277-291)

- 18) Nov 11 A Modern Reply to “The Consequences of Disgust”
 Walker, “Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World”
 Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” And “Extracts From
 a Lecture Before Various Anti-Slavery Bodies in the Winter of 1855”
 King, “Letter From Birmingham Jail”
 Baldwin, “A Talk to Teachers”
 Davis, “Political Prisoners, Prisons and Black Liberation”
- 19) Nov 16 Time for Hope
 Luther, “Preface to Romans”
 Luther, “On Governmental Authority”
 Luther, “Twelve Articles of the Swabian Peasants”
 Luther, “Friendly Admonition to Peace Concerning Twelve Articles”
- 20) Nov 18 Trusting Reason
 Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* (introduction and preface)
 Descartes, *Meditations* 1-2
- 21) Nov 23 Descartes, *Meditations* 3-6
- 22) Nov 30 Fear as a System
 Hobbes, *Leviathan* “To My Most Honor’d Friend”, “Introduction”,
 chapters 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16
- 23) Dec 2 Hobbes, *Leviathan* 17, 18, 19, 21, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and “A Review, and
 Conclusion”
- 24) Dec 7 Harmonious Egoism
 Locke, *Second Treatise*: 1-9, 18, 19
- 25) Dec 9 Loving Yourself
 Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (entire, including the
 “Letter to the Republic of Geneva” and the preface. Please do not skip
 note 15)
- 26) Dec 14 Union of Feeling
 Rousseau, *Social Contract* I and II (entire), III (1-4 and 15), IV (1-2 and 8)

Learning Goals

Our class has three learning objectives. By the end of the semester, students will have improved their ability to speak thoughtfully, think creatively, and write with precision. Assessments are geared toward these skills.

What does “speak thoughtfully” mean? It means that you clearly state what you think, in an organized and precise manner. When you interact with others, you engage with their point of view and listen to them charitably. If you disagree, you first point out the idea (not the person) that you don’t agree with and you explain why. If someone else points to a problem in the view you hold, you take the time to consider it.

Training and assessment: in class **Participation** (which requires **Attendance**) trains you to elaborate arguments on the spot. The **Exit Interview** at the end of the semester tests your argumentative skills in the context of a conversation (with me, one-on-one, 4 questions about the topics covered in class).

What does “think creatively” mean? It means that you read the texts with care and understand what they state (and what they don’t). You analyze the proposals with care and check that they are coherent, convincing, useful, insightful. For any text, you are able to come up with a further example, argument in favor, objection, question.

Training and assessment: you have to answer 10 pieces of **Door Homework**. I post them online a few days before class and they are due 2 hours before class. They are usually question about the content of the text we are going to discuss in class. This analytical skill is put into work in the **3-Page Essays**.

What does “precise writing” mean? It means that you can state your interpretation clearly and concisely (brief but comprehensive) at the beginning of your essays, that you can follow with arguments in favor of your interpretation, respond to objections to your interpretation, and finish by recapitulating your interpretation (and adding a further insight or advantage of your interpretation that others do not have).

Training and assessment: the **Ungraded 1-Page Essay** gives you the opportunity to write your first argument. I provide a substantial amount of feedback here, in order to prepare you for the **3-Page Essays** that are graded.

Rubrics

Attendance

Attendance				
Criteria	Ratings			Pts
You have to be present in class, preferably with your camera on.	1.0 pts Present every class and up to 2 unexcused absences	0.5 pts 3 unexcused absences	0.0 pts More than 3 unexcused absences	1.0 pts
Total Points: 1.0				

Thoughtful Speaking

Thoughtful Speaking				
Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Thoughtful conversation on our "Exit Interview".	1.0 pts You are able to respond to my questions, admit when you don't understand them, reformulate your thoughts, come up with examples on the go.	0.0 pts You don't recognize texts, concepts or authors studied during the semester.		1.0 pts
You ask questions in class, make comments, share ideas, present objections, respond to others in the chat.	1.0 pts At least once per week	0.5 pts Once every 2 weeks	0.0 pts No talking in class	1.0 pts
Total Points: 2.0				

Creative Thinking

Creative Thinking					
Criteria	Ratings				Pts
Handing in the "Door Homework" before each class.	2.0 pts Hand-in 23 or more pieces of "Door Homework"	1.5 pts Hand-in 20 or more pieces of "Door Homework"	1.0 pts Hand-in 17 or more pieces of "Door Homework"	0.0 pts Hand in 16 or less pieces of "Door Homework"	2.0 pts
Total Points: 2.0					

Precise Writing

Precise Writing							
Criteria	Ratings						Pts
2-page essay (diagnostic) I will show you how to: 1) Be precise 2) Be structured 3) Engage with the texts	0.0 pts A range	0.0 pts B range	0.0 pts C range	0.0 pts D range			0.0 pts
4-page essay. I will ask you to: 1) Be precise 2) Be structured 3) Engage with the texts	2.0 pts A range	1.5 pts B range	1.0 pts C range	0.0 pts D range			2.0 pts
8-page essay. I will ask you to: 1) Be precise 2) Be structured 3) Engage with the texts 4) Be creative	3.0 pts A+	2.5 pts A range	2.0 pts B range	1.5 pts C range	1.0 pts D range	0.0 pts F	3.0 pts
Total Points: 5.0							

Academic Honesty and Integrity

Columbia College is dedicated to the highest ideals of integrity in academia. Therefore, in Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization, any instance of academic dishonesty, attempted or actual, will be reported to the faculty chair of the course and to the dean of the Core Curriculum, who will review the case with the expectation that a student guilty of academic dishonesty may receive the grade of “F” in the course and be referred to dean's discipline for further institutional action.

On each assignment, paper, and exam, you must affirm that you have upheld the Honor Code, which reads as follows: “I affirm that I will not plagiarize, use unauthorized materials, or give or receive illegitimate help on assignments, papers, and examinations. I will also uphold equity and honesty in the evaluation of my work and the work of others. I do so to sustain a community built around this Code of Honor.”

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to receive a letter outlining the accommodations to which they are entitled. Contact information for ODS can be found in the next section.

Student Resources and Services

The Writing Center (310 Philosophy Hall)

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center>

uwp@columbia.edu or (212) 854-3886.

Academic Success Programs

<http://www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/asp>

asp@columbia.edu or (212) 854-3514

Counseling and Psychological Services (8th floor, Lerner Hall)

<https://health.columbia.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services>

Emergencies: (212) 854-2878

Columbia: (212) 854 2284

Barnard (212) 854-2092

Disability Services

<https://health.columbia.edu/disability-services>

disability@columbia.edu or (212) 854 2388

Mindfulness Resources

<https://quietkit.com/> (basic meditations)

<https://chrisgermer.com/meditations/> (small variety of meditations)

<https://insighttimer.com/> (55000 free meditations + sleep aids + anxiety tools)

Student Services for Gender-Based and Sexual Misconduct

<https://studentconduct.columbia.edu/resources/studentresources>

ssgbsm@columbia.edu or (212) 854-1717

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

24/7 free and confidential support: (800) 273-8355

Chat online: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat

Rape Crisis/Anti-Violence Support Center

<https://health.columbia.edu/content/sexual-violence-response>

Emergencies: (212) 854-4357

Appointments: (212) 854-4366 or (212) 854-3500