Christ College 110: Texts and Contexts I

As a central component to the Freshman Program, "CC-110: Texts and Contexts" begins a rich conversation that will carry you forward from ancient history to modern times. Over the next nine months you, your peers, and your professors will be considering fundamental questions of the human experience from a multitude of cultural, historical, and intellectual perspectives. Together we will study everything from philosophy and drama to spiritual autobiography and the short story. We will also circle the globe as our conversation moves from Greece to Palestine, China, North Africa, Britain, Italy, Germany, Japan, and the United States.

The question at the heart of our first semester is as big as they come: **What is the good life**? How are we to understand our lives together as human beings and our responsibilities to each other? Humans have been asking some version of this question for as long as they have had a language to ask it, but they have answered it in vastly different ways. The first semester therefore begins with three ancient traditions, each of which includes a series of texts that responded to this question and also responded to each other over time. These distinct traditions roughly correspond to three important places in the ancient world: Athens, represented by Plato, Aristotle, and Sophocles; Jerusalem, represented by our biblical texts; and the Middle Kingdom, represented by four Chinese sages.

Each of these cultures produced a rich textual tradition that grappled with how human beings ought best to live together under heaven, how they could best become virtuous and wise, how they ought best to govern themselves. As modern people, we tend to think about issues of belief and ethics as individual matters of personal choice guided by parents, guardians, pastors, close friends, and perhaps a self-help book or two. But in the ancient world, these concerns were not merely private; as we will see they shaped their respective societies and the contours of world history. Chinese learning in the Confucian era cultivated a sense of social and moral order amid the fractious politics of an eroding dynasty and warring states. The ancient Greeks explored the question of the good life through works of epic and dramatic poetry and philosophy that were embedded in the public life of the *polis*, or city-state. The ancient Hebrews examined the same questions through narratives of human history and pre-history, origin stories that explained where their people came from and where they fit among other ancient nations and conquering empires. And the early Christians wrote gospels and epistles as they emerged as a movement within the Judaism of the first-century Greco-Roman world, reimagining Athens and Jerusalem in powerful ways.

We see this confluence eloquently articulated by Augustine of Hippo, whose career roughly corresponded to Christianity's adoption as the official religion of the Roman Empire and whose writings rely on both the classical and Christian traditions. Augustine's *Confessions*—a brilliant combination of philosophy, theology, and autobiography—marks an important transition that points both backwards and forwards in the chronology of our syllabus. Behind his words lay an ancient world in which individuals' relationship with their governing institutions remained relatively static. Yet his own reflections on his life and beliefs also point forward to later Christian interpreters (among them, Martin Luther), writers working within the Christian tradition who would help lay the foundations for a modern experience characterized by change and by individual choice.

This modern era will absorb our attention during the spring semester, and the final two texts of the fall semester advance even further in a modern direction. Machiavelli's *The Prince*, standing at the threshold of modernity, advances a political philosophy based on a ruler's need to maintain power, and it repudiates many of the virtues that the ancient traditions celebrated. Yet Shakespeare demonstrates that, even in a modern world in which the ties to ancient traditions were less stable, the ancient questions of the good life—how best to live and how best to treat each other—could continue to guide us, inspiring great art and great conversation.

You'll be adding your voices to that conversation starting this fall. Welcome!

Fall 2018
CHRIST COLLEGE 110: Texts and Contexts I
Traditions of Human Thought

Syllabus Overview:

Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*	August 21—August 25	Week 1
Sophocles, *Sophocles I*	August 27—September 1	Week 2
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*	September 3—September 15	Weeks 3 & 4
Genesis	September 17—September 29	Weeks 5 & 6
The Gospel of Mark	October 1—October 6	Week 7
Augustine, *Confessions*	October 8—October 20	Weeks 8 & 9
Fall Break	October 11—October 12	
Confucius	October 22—October 27	Week 10
Mencius & Xunzi	October 29—November 7	Week 11 & 12
Freshman Production	**November 8, 9 & 10**	Week 12
Zhuangzi	November 12—November 17	Week 13
Thanksgiving Break	**November 19—November 24**	
Machiavelli, *The Prince*	November 26—December 1	Week 14
Shakespeare, *The Tempest*	December 3—December 8	Week 15

Christ College
Freshman Program Fall 2018
Required Texts

1) Plato. 2000. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*. Translated by G. M. A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett.
ISBN – 978-0872205543.

2) Sophocles. 2013. *Sophocles I: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus*. Edited by David Grene, Richmond Lattimore, Mark Griffith and Glenn W. Most. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
ISBN – 978-0226311517.

3) Aristotle. 1999. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Terence Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett.
ISBN – 978-0872204645.

4) *Genesis: Translation and Commentary.* 1997. Edited and translated by Robert Alter. New York: Norton.
ISBN – 978-0393316704.

5) Confucius. 2006. *The Essential Analects.* Translated by Edward Slingerland. Indianapolis: Hackett.
ISBN – 978-0872207721.

6) *Xunzi: Basic Writings.* 2003. Translated by Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press.
ISBN – 978-0231129657.

7) *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings.* 2003. Translated by Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press.
ISBN – 978-0231129596.

8) Saint Augustine. 2009. *Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. New York: Oxford University Press.
ISBN –978-0199537822.

9) Shakespeare, William. 2016. *The Tempest*. Edited by Peter Holland. New York: Penguin.
ISBN –978-0143128632.

10) Machiavelli, Niccolo. 1998. *The Prince*. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
ISBN – 978-0226500447.

Christ College Required Texts
(Required for Freshman Program and Subsequent CC Courses)

1) *The HarperCollins Study Bible (New Revised Standard Version)*. 2006. Edited by Harold W. Attridge and Wayne A. Meeks. Rev. and updated ed. San Francisco: HarperOne.
ISBN – 978-0060786847.

2) Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. 2016. *They Say/I Say*. 3rd ed. New York: Norton.
ISBN – 978-0393617436.

3) Booth, Wayne C., et al. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press,.
ISBN – 978-0226239736.

Course Requirements include:

1. Thorough reading of assigned texts and supplementary materials.

2. Active participation in class discussion and activities; intellectual engagement at all times.

3. Regular class attendance except in cases of serious illness or emergency. Professor MUST be notified ahead of time about ALL absences.

4. Strict adherence to the Valparaiso University Honor Code, particularly guidelines about plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized multiple submission of written work. Unless otherwise stated, all work submitted must be original for this course and must be written independently.

Valparaiso University Honor Code:
I have neither given or received, nor have I tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid.

5. Submission of formal written assignments on time and in the appropriate format. All work prepared outside of class must be printed **double-spaced; Times New Roman 12 point font; 1-inch margins**. Source documentation and bibliographic style should follow Chicago guidelines. See the CC Style guide included in the back of your syllabus.

6. All work must be submitted in order to receive a final grade in the course.

Student Learning Objectives:

1. Texts and Contexts I & II [CC 110/115]

a. Students will hone the ability to interpret fundamental moral, philosophical, and religious concepts through critical engagement with classical and contemporary texts, engaging both the Christian and tradition and other perspectives.

b. Students will learn to analyze key texts in the humanities and social sciences and to articulate their ideas through the practice of reasoned speech in class discussion.

c. Students will, in their academic writing, frame a thesis-driven argument, gather appropriate evidence to support it, and use good rhetorical judgment along with satisfactory written language skills to present it.

d. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills in their reading, writing, and discussion, to include their reviews of peers' written work.

e. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how various social systems have shaped major texts and ideas over time, and also how those texts and ideas can influence various societies, including their own.

2. Freshman Production

a. Students will demonstrate recognition and sensitivity to cultural differences encountered in creating texts and articulate connections that may transcend them.

b. Students will show an understanding and basic appreciation of the affective dimension of a text.

c. Students will demonstrate an ability to think reflectively and imaginatively about the Freshman Production process.

d. Students will communicate clearly and effectively in both oral and written forms.

e. Students will interact and collaborate effectively in groups and teams.

f. Students will practice the virtues of empathy, honesty, and justice in all endeavors related to the Workshop and Production.

3. Oxford Debates

a. Students will demonstrate the ability to employ research and reasoned argument to better understand social problems.

Access and Accommodation

The Access and Accommodation Resource Center (AARC) is the campus office that works with students to provide access and accommodations in cases of diagnosed mental or emotional health issues, attentional or learning disabilities, vision or hearing limitations, chronic diseases, or allergies. You can contact the office at aarc@valpo.edu or 219-464-5206. Students who need, or think they may need, accommodations due to a diagnosis, or who think they have a diagnosis, are invited to contact AARC to arrange a confidential discussion with the AARC office. Further, students who are registered with AARC are required to contact their professor(s) if they wish to exercise the accommodations outlined in their letter from the AARC.

Class Cancellation:

In the event of a class cancellation or other last minute issues, we will contact you by your Valpo email address as well as posting an announcement on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly. When in doubt, check Blackboard.

Texts and Contexts I: Traditions of Human Thought (CC 110)
Grading Guidelines Fall 2018

Grade Calculation

Students take this course on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis. To receive a satisfactory grade, ***all assignments must be completed and submitted to the instructor***, and an average grade of 70% must be earned for these assignments. The assignments are weighted in the following manner:

First 7 weeks

Due Date	*Topic*	*Writing Assignment*	*Percentage*
August 25	Plato	Essay	10
September 01	Sophocles	Paragraph	10
September 08	Aristotle	Paragraph	10
September 15	Aristotle	Essay	15
September 22	Genesis	Paragraph	10
September 29	Genesis	Peer review essay (due to peer & inst.)	
October 06		Revised essay	25 (p.r. & revision)
		Participation	20
		Total	**100**

Second 7 weeks

Due Date	*Topic*	*Writing Assignment*	*Percentage*
Sat, Oct 20	Augustine	Essay	10
Sat, Oct 27		Revised Essay	15
Thur, Nov 3	Xunzi/Mencius	Essay	10
Fri, Nov 16	Zhuangzi	Revision	15
Sat, Dec 01	Machiavelli	Comparative essay (draft due to peer & instructor)	
Friday, Dec 7		Final revised essay	30 (p.r.&revision)
		Participation	20
		Total	**100**

Grading Scale

A	95-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59
A-	90-94	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66		
		B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63		

Policy on Late Work
It is absolutely crucial for you to complete weekly writing assignments and turn them in on time. Because a late assignment has a nasty ripple effect, we do not grant extensions. However, if a required University-sanctioned event (e.g., for a class or an NCAA athletic event) requires that you be away from campus on the date an assignment is due, you must arrange ***well in advance*** with your ***own professor*** an alternate due date. Normally, such an alternate due date will be ***earlier*** than the original due date. In such cases, you will want to get a head start on writing your paper—which is a good strategy in any event.

The ***first late assignment*** will receive a deduction of one letter grade (=10%) up to 48 hours after the assignment is due. After 48 hours, the assignment will automatically receive an F, but must still be submitted in order to receive a satisfactory grade for the course. ***All subsequent late assignments will receive an F***, but must still be submitted in order to receive a satisfactory grade for the course. All late assignments will be averaged into a student's final grade.

Attendance Policy
Make every effort to be prepared for and attend every class. If you must be absent for an excusable reason (significant illness with doctor's note; NCAA athletic event; required trip for another class), let your professor know ahead of time. Unexcused absences (and repeated tardies, at the professor's discretion) will incur the following penalties to one's ***final grade***:

- The first two unexcused absences will incur no penalty.
- All subsequent unexcused absences will incur a 1/3 letter grade penalty per absence.

Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*

In one of the most famous lines in the history of Western philosophy, Socrates declares in Plato's *Apology*, "the unexamined life is not worth living" (38a). Likewise, in *Euthyphro,* a dialogue we do not read for this class, Plato's Socrates says, "the lover of inquiry must follow his beloved wherever it leads him" (14c). To both Socrates and Plato, this "lover of inquiry," this person who understands the importance of living the examined life, is best termed a "philosopher" ("philosophy" in the ancient Greek literally means "love [*philia*] of wisdom [*sophia*]"). In reading Plato's *Apology,* we not only engage with the very origins of philosophy in the Western world, we see just how far Socrates, one of Western history's most enduring characters, insists on following his beloved philosophy – to the point of death.

By beginning with texts from Plato, Sophocles, and Aristotle, the Christ College Freshman Program spends its first four weeks focused on Athens and the broader culture of Ancient Greece. There are good reasons for this. Ancient Greece represents a moment of such seminal contribution to the development of the Western world that it is sometimes called "the cradle of Western civilization." Though Ancient Greece itself rose and fell over a handful of centuries, beginning around the 8th century to 6th century BCE and ending with a Roman invasion around 146 BCE, a panoply of ideas from Ancient Greece have persisted well past that final date to profoundly influence the shape of Western civilization. From Ancient Greece the West inherits its original notions of democracy, philosophy, science, history, and theatre, alongside pivotal advancements in art, mathematics, music, architecture, culture, and sport (e.g., the Olympics). Of course, we should note, the influence of various Greek thinkers have waxed and waned over time, ancient ideas have been refashioned to fit new eras, and others have been altogether surpassed. Yet, to this day, it is impressive just how often we scratch a modern notion and find some ancient Greek concept at its root. Even more impressive are the many places in which Ancient Greek ideas are still alive, vibrant, useful, and debated today: for example, in ethics, metaphysics, mathematics, political thought, and literary criticism.

Dates for Plato's birth are given from anywhere between 422 to 429 BCE, though it is widely agreed he was born to a family of Athenian citizens with high social standing and political connections, which granted Plato the freedom to pursue philosophy and academics. Like many a young Athenian of his time, Plato was taught informally by Socrates. Rather than formally taking on pupils, Socrates practiced his philosophy peripatetically, that is, engaging with people in public spaces and marketplaces. Plato, however, was the first to establish an educational institution in the West—the Academy.

Plato's mentor Socrates is thought to have been born around 469 BCE and tried in 399 BCE, so Plato learned from him in the final decades of Socrates' life. Unlike Plato, Socrates never wrote a word, so everything that we know of Socrates comes to us through other sources, including Plato himself. The playwright Aristophanes in his play *Clouds* makes Socrates a caricature of all that is impractical, befuddled and wrong about philosophers in general. The historian Xenophon gives a picture of Socrates similar to Plato's but without any account of Socrates' actual philosophical thought. Thus, we have what is commonly called the Socratic problem. Though history suggests Socrates was a real figure—a real Athenian philosopher actually tried and killed by the citizens of Athens—exactly who Socrates was and what he stood for will forever remain something of an enigma, known to us only through the interpretations of others. So it is that when we speak of "Socrates" today we generally mean the Socrates of Plato's writings.

It is difficult, then, to speak of either Plato or Socrates in separation from each other. Indeed, the lines between the two often blur. On one hand, Socrates as we know him could be more or less a creature of Plato's own making. Plato famously wrote in the form of dialogues between two or more discussants (though our main reading, *Apology*, is the least dialogic of all Plato's works). One reason for this style of writing may be that it mimics the method of philosophy practiced by Socrates, called the *elenchus* or the "Socratic method." With this method Socrates refrains from simply lecturing and seeks to answer questions through a kind of back-and-forth exchange with a fellow discussant. In the Platonic dialogues, Socrates is often the central character, and the common reading is that Plato uses Socrates as his mouthpiece—that when Socrates speaks we are hearing Plato's own arguments. This is not an uncontested reading, however, and we can take Socrates as merely one more character in the works of Plato, in which case we are left to guess at what Plato himself thought about the questions his dialogues raise. When we speak today of Platonism we are generally speaking of a philosophy we find most obviously in the mouth of Socrates (as he occurs in Plato's dialogues), and when we speak of Socrates today we are generally speaking of a character we find interpreted for us through the works of Plato.

In this way, Plato's Socratic dialogues almost always feature Socrates questioning some person who represents either an expert or public opinion (or both) on some key concept (e.g., beauty, justice). Socratic dialogues usually start with some chit-chat that eventually leads to one character, usually posed as an expert in some field (e.g., politics, ethics, oration), claiming they understand clearly what some important concept means (in Plato's *Republic*, for example, it's "justice;" in the *Euthyphro* it's "piety"). Socrates then stops the conversation, seemingly impressed that this person is wise enough to understand justice, piety or whatever the concept at hand, and begins to question the expert further. Socrates' investigation soon reveals that the expert's original understanding doesn't hold up to logical scrutiny. Short dialogues will often end with this revelation and questions to further explore, but the longer dialogues usually have Socrates lead his interlocutors through a line of logic that winds up at a completely different understanding than the expert started with. The reader often gets the sense that Socrates' expert interlocutor usually walks away feeling more bullied by Socrates than enlightened. But the dialogues usually also feature an audience, often a crowd of youths, fascinated by Socrates' examination.

Socrates seemed to have envisioned philosophy as necessarily a public practice. His *modus operandi* was to reveal the lack of wisdom in those who claimed to be wise. As such, he frequently came up against and probably offended Athenian social authorities. Moreover, Socrates believed that subjecting our beliefs to this kind of inquiry, particularly on questions of values (e.g., good, bad, right, wrong, the just, the fine), was the best way for a human to live and perhaps a human being's highest purpose, even if only the few that are good at philosophy could ever really manage it. Note that for Plato's Socrates philosophy was not a hobby nor even a career but rather a way of being, a manner of living that Socrates could never give up because he believed it was the best way to live. Perhaps this willingness to contest authority, and this single-minded commitment, are what made Socrates such a charismatic figure amongst the youth of the Athenian upper class.

Plato believed that we move closer to understanding the truth of things when we subject them to honest, logical, well-reasoned examination. But he also seemed to believe that most people are not very good at exercising their reason in an honest, logical way. Probably the most common theme in all of Plato's dialogues is the notion that most of us live fairly befuddled lives, using all sorts of key concepts like "beauty," "justice," "goodness" and "truth" without any real sense of what they actually mean. For Plato, Socrates' philosophical inquiry *via* the Socratic method is the route to more than clarity of mind. It is the way, for Plato, to pursue a well-lived life.

As we read *Apology* we find Plato at the start of his career but Socrates at the end of his life. *Apology*, perhaps the most commonly read work in Plato's writings, gives Plato's account of Socrates' trial before the people of Athens. The term "apology" here is used in the sense of a rational defense. *Crito*, the following dialogue, is a kind of coda to Socrates' trial, where his friends, unconvinced of the justice of Athens' verdict, attempt to persuade Socrates to escape from jail. *Apology* is thought to be among Plato's first writings. Commentators note that the trauma of watching his mentor condemned to death by an Athenian jury—a notably democratic body made up of 501 randomly chosen Athenian citizens—pervades all of Plato's works. Running through Plato's *oeuvre* is the theme of opposition between true human reason and common opinion, and between genuine justice and social/conventional authority. As you read *Apology*, think about this theme and ask yourself what Plato's ideas mean for democracy.

<u>One final note</u>: Plato's works are organized not by page numbers but by Stephanus numbers, named after the fifteenth century French printer Henricus Stephanus who first used them in printing Plato. The Stephanus numbers are along the side margins of each page. Plato's writing is broken into numbered sections (e.g., 34, 35) and each numbered section is broken into five lettered sections (a, b, c, d and e). Instead of referring to points in the text by page number, we refer to the complete Stephanus number (for example, 26b, which you will find is the first full paragraph on page 29 in your text). When we read Aristotle you will find a similar system of reference, though in Aristotle's case they are called Bekker numbers.

Chronology of Ancient Greece

776BCE	Traditional date of first Greek Olympics (from which events are dated)
c. 725	*The Iliad* written down
c. 710	*The Odyssey* written down
735-715	Rise of Sparta in Peloponnesian peninsula
c. 625	Dracon establishes tyranny in Athens
594	Solon's legislation in Athens
586	Oracle at Delphi becomes universal Greek shrine
c. 550	Persian conquest of Greek areas of Asia Minor (Turkey)
c. 513	Birth of Aeschylus
495	Birth of Sophocles
490	Athens defeats Persian invasion at Battle of Marathon
484	Birth of Euripides
480	Greek alliance defeats Persian invasion at the Battle of Salamis
478	Foundation of Delian League against Persia with Athens as leader
472	Aeschlyus' first play
469	Birth of Socrates
468	Sophocles' first play
461	War between Athens and Spartan alliance: First Peloponnesian War
458	Aeschlyus' *Oresteia* performed
456	Death of Aeschylus
455	Euripides' first play
451	Truce between Athens and Sparta; Pericles' law defining citizenship
447	Parthenon begun
445	Thirty years peace between Athens and Sparta
431	Start of Second Peloponnesian War; Thucydides begins his history
430	Plague at Athens
429	Death of Pericles
428	**Birth of Plato**
406	Death of Euripides
405	Death of Sophocles
404	End of the Second Peloponnesian War; Athens capitulates to Sparta; Installation of the oligarchic Thirty
403	Fall of the Thirty; restoration of democracy in Athens
399	Trial and death of Socrates for corrupting the youth of Athens
387	Plato founds the Academy
384	Birth of Aristotle
367	Plato visits Syracuse to educate the tyrant Dionysius II; Aristotle joins the Academy
343	Aristotle in Macedonia as tutor of Alexander the Great
338	Philip of Macedon defeats Athens and Thebes at Chaeronea

Week 1

Reading: Plato, *Apology* and *Crito*

Tuesday, August 21

Read *Apology* (pp 20-42 [17a-42a])

10:30 -11:25 am — Mueller Hall Refectory
Introduction to the Christ College Freshman Program, Dean Susan VanZanten;
Overview of the Aims, Format, and Nuts and Bolts of the Freshman Program, Dr. Edward Upton, Freshman Program Coordinator

11:35 am -12:20 pm — Seminars — MuH Seminar Rooms
Introductions and *Apology*

Wednesday, August 22 — Seminars

Reread *Apology*, focusing on pp 20-27 (17a - 24b)

Socrates opens by imploring the jury "to pay no attention to my manner of speech - be it better or worse - but to concentrate... on whether what I say is just or not" (18a). Why would Socrates open a defense of his life with this point? Why do you think Socrates opposes one's "manner of speech" to the substance of what one says (in this case, whether one is just or not)? Socrates says he is up against two sets of accusers, his immediate accusers (e.g., Anytus, Meletus) and a series of older, more long-standing accusations. What are the accusations against him? Which accusations does Socrates see as the more dangerous and why? Socrates discusses his life's quest for wisdom, and speaks of the Oracle calling him the wisest man in the world. What does Socrates' discussion suggest about human wisdom, and do you agree? What do you make of Socrates' character at this point in our reading? Do you think Socrates is a teacher or not? Is Socrates responsible for the youth that follow him? Are you convinced by Socrates' defense so far?

Thursday, August 23 — Seminars

Reread *Apology*, focusing on pp 27-42 (24b-42a)
Read *Crito*, pp 43-54 (43a-54e)

10:30-11:25 am
Now Socrates turns to address his immediate accusers. What charges has Meletus brought against Socrates? What is Socrates' argument in 25b, where he uses the analogy of the horses? Is it convincing? How do you evaluate his defense overall? Throughout this section Socrates insists that he will always strive to do what is right and just, but this insistence, he says, both makes him unpopular and, where it comes to politics, threatens his life. What does this say about democracy? Socrates suggests he finds the verdict and punishment unjust. But he has been tried legitimately by the courts of his time. What grounds does Socrates have to say that the verdict is unjust? What does this say about justice in general? How can we tell what is just and what isn't if not by the verdict of a jury elected to make decisions about justice? What do you make of Socrates' "divine or spiritual sign?" What does Socrates mean when he says he is like a "gadfly" (30e)? How does this "gadfly" role make him, as Socrates says, "the god's gift" to Athens? Do societies need people to play this gadfly role? Do you agree that the unexamined life is not worth living for humans? What does *Apology* suggest about the costs of the examined life - and what do those costs say about whether it is really worth living or not? Do you think Socrates goes about his defense in the right way, or do you think he should have made greater appeals to the emotions of the jury, begging and imploring with many tears and parading his sons before them?

11:35 am -12:20 pm

Consider *Crito*, 44c and 44d, where Socrates and Crito quickly debate whether or not one should pay attention to the opinion of the majority. What is Socrates's point, what is Crito's, and whose is better? Crito offers Socrates a way of escape and at 46b Socrates, philosopher to the end, says that before he can escape he has to examine whether or not it is the right thing to do. Is Socrates "too committed to philosophical examination"? Crito says that what Socrates is doing—refusing to save his own life—is unjust, but Socrates insists it is the just thing to do. What are Socrates's arguments? Do you agree with Socrates? Why or why not? If Socrates really believes the verdict unjust, how can adhering to it be the just thing to do? Why doesn't he just reject the jury's authority? Does Socrates really owe Athens what he suggests he owes Athens in his speech between 51c and 53a?

NB: First Drama Workshop of the Year, MuH Refectory, 8:00-10:00 pm (Please see Freshman Drama Workshop Syllabus for complete schedule of meetings.)

Saturday, August 25

Writing assignment due at **noon**.

Sophocles, *Antigone*

Historical and cultural context

The first literary text we are reading in the Freshman Program, Sophocles' *Antigone*, is a tragedy first staged sometime during the mid-fifth century BCE in Athens. The era in which it was produced, often referred to as the classical age of Athens, witnessed a spectacular flowering of democratic politics (e.g. Pericles), art and architecture (e.g. the Parthenon), philosophy (e.g. Socrates), as well as drama. Tradition holds that Sophocles was born c. 495 BCE and lived until 405 BCE, thus spanning almost the entire fifth century. His death came just before the Athenian defeat in the terrible and protracted Peloponnesian War when the Greek city-states no longer were united against a common enemy, as in the Persian wars, but had taken up arms against one another. As the war dragged on, the democratic traditions of Athens became increasingly fragile, and oligarchies mounted two short-lived coups in 411 and 404 BCE. Even the 'love of wisdom' (in Greek, *philosophia*) for which Athens was famous fell on hard times; new doctrines and new modes of teaching helped undermine both traditional beliefs and confidence in the power of reason.

In one sense the emergence of theater at a time of intellectual, social, and political turmoil is not surprising. Theater in classical Greece was not just an entertainment or cultural event—though people were certainly entertained—but an important part of the social and political life of the community with a substantial influence on politics, moral values, and community history. It was one of *the* central activities by which the Greeks tried to understand who they were as human beings and as citizens. Tragic performance grew out of the liturgies for an annual public festival dedicated to the god Dionysus (or, as he is known in Latin, Bacchus). This community festival, the Greater Dionysiad, took place each spring, lasted five days, and had the entire population of Athens as its audience. Wealthy benefactors financed the event, while the state subsidized the cost of admission for the poor and suspended all non-essential business for the duration of the festival. By the fifth century, the Dionysiad had become a cross between a theater festival, a religious celebration, a major spectator event (like, say, the Rose Bowl or a U2 concert), and a town meeting. Before the actors took the stage, festival benefactors received public acclamation, the male children of Athens' war dead marched across the stage in full battle dress, and tribute exacted from Athens' allies was paraded for all the citizens to see. Thus the connection between the civic and the aesthetic, the political and the theatrical, was quite clear to Athenians, even if it was imprecisely defined.

The contest itself pitted three playwrights against one another, with each offering a set of four plays (three tragedies on a related theme plus a satyr play for comic relief). Furthermore, the playwright also served as the director of and usually the lead actor (*protagonist*) in his works. Ten appointed judges, one from each tribe among the Athenians, viewed all the productions, and at the climax of the festival they awarded each playwright first, second, or third prize. Our playwright, Sophocles, won his first victory in 468 BCE, when he was approaching the age of thirty, defeating the great Aeschylus (*Oresteia, Seven Against Thebes*). He would win again with his production of *Antigone* a quarter century later, drawing on the legendary family of the Theban king, Oedipus. For more on this legend and Sophocles' treatments of it, see "Introduction to the Theban Plays," pages 5-13 in your Grene and Lattimore text.

The structure of Greek tragedy

Greek tragedies generally share a common structure. The drama begins with a *prologue*—usually a set speech, but in *Antigone*, a dialogue—which establishes the setting and provides necessary background information. Thereupon follows the *parodos*, a choral song that accompanies the entrance of the Chorus. As they make their way into the *orchestra* (or 'dancing place') by way of ramps on either side of the stage, they sing and dance in a manner reminiscent of a Broadway musical. The scenes of action and dialogue between the main characters are called *episodes*. An *episode* will often include an *agon* (pl. *agona*), literally a contest or struggle, but in the context of a tragedy, it is a debate, a contest of words. The *agon* almost always features a long speech from each of the 'contestants' (usually two) and a fast-paced exchange of one-liners. Such an exchange, known as *stichomythia*, amplifies the emotional intensity of the conflict between the characters. The Chorus remains in front of the stage in the *orchestra* throughout the play, sometimes silently witnessing the action above them, sometimes commenting upon it, sometimes interacting as a character with the main characters. Between each *episode* is another choral song called a *stasimon* (pl. *stasima*) which provides much needed relief from the dramatic intensity of the *episodes* as well as a perspective on what has just taken (or is about to take) place. *Episodes* and *stasima* alternate until we come to the *exodos*, or the choral song that accompanies the exit of the Chorus from the stage.

Understanding the context and conventions of Greek tragedy can help us avoid following later interpretive conventions that might lead to misunderstanding. For example, readers often assume Greek tragedy hinges upon a fatal character flaw (*hamartia*) in the protagonist. But what Aristotle called *hamartia* is better translated

as ‘miscalculation’ or ‘error of judgment.’ And so, rather than treat all the characters as simple victims of a singularly overweening pride, we should attentively examine the particular choices, words, motives, and responses of the central characters. A corresponding and equally misleading interpretive convention is to associate the chorus with a single, morally reliable perspective, when choruses actually function as characters with particular and often conflicting points of view. All this suggests how your own careful reading and informed responses to the text can serve as a hedge against formulaic reductions that fail to do justice to the complexity of these classic dramas.

Week 2

Reading: Sophocles' *Antigone*

Monday, August 27 TA Sessions

Read Sophocles' *Antigone* in its entirety before class.

Paragraph Assignment: Ismene wants to keep Antigone's contemplated "crime" secret. Antigone insists that Ismene should make it public. Based on your interpretation of the text, why do you think they disagree?

Discussion questions: Both Antigone and Ismene refer to their parents and their family history. Do the two sisters relate to that family history and interpret it in the same way? How do they differ?

Tuesday, August 28 Seminars

Reread *Antigone* l. 1-630.

10:30-11:25 am
What is Creon's understanding (162-210) of the relationship between personal bonds, like family and friendship, and civic bonds or loyalties? How far do these ideas go to explain Creon's prohibition of the burial of Polyneices? Why should Creon be so quick to accuse the guard, and later Teiresias, of taking bribes? Characterize Creon as a leader? What is the best evidence for your characterization?

11:35 am -12:20 pm
Why does Antigone refuse to let Ismene share her punishment? What does this refusal tell us about the relationship between the two sisters? What are Antigone's reasons and her motives for burying Polyneices, based upon your reading up to line 630? Do Creon and Antigone seem more like or unlike one another up to this point in the tragedy?

Wednesday, August 29 Seminars

Reread *Antigone*, l. 582—end.

Both Antigone and Haemon advance arguments to persuade Creon to change his mind about his edict. What are these arguments? How do they differ from one another? Is Creon's opposition to them based more upon their alleged lack of cogency or upon his disdain for the persons making them? Does Creon act more on the basis of reason or emotion? What about Antigone? Reconsider your answers to Tuesday's question about Antigone's reasons and motives for burying Polyneices. How would you change your answers, and why might you consider doing so based upon what Antigone says and in the second half of the play? Do you think that the new reasons and motives that come to light in the last part of the play were always consciously present in Antigone's mind, or do you think she discovers them only when she faces imminent death? Does the chorus change its attitude toward Antigone and/or her actions during the course of the play? Why? In what ways is Antigone's punishment fitted to her character, her particular "crime," and her motives for committing it?

Thursday, August 30

Read *They Say, I Say*, Introduction and chapter 1

10:30 am -11:25 am MuH Refectory Plenary

Lecture by Dr. Samuel Graber, Christ College
"Writing for the Academy: Argument, Ethos, Style"

11:35 am -12:20 pm
Seminar Discussion: *Antigone* and writing Introductions Seminars

8:00-10:00 pm	MuH Refectory	Plenary

Lecture by Professor Andy White, College of Arts and Sciences
"The Theatre of Ancient Greece"

Christ College All College Picnic	Mueller Hall Grounds	5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 1

Writing assignment due at **noon**.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

How do I live a good life? What does it mean to be a good person?

There are lots of ways to think about what we mean by "ethics," but these are the ethical questions the ancient Greeks tend to draw our attention to: questions of what the Good Life – the life well lived – actually is. In 21st century America, talk of "the good life" conjures images of lazy summer days by the pool, being waited on by hotel staff and having all the money and material luxuries we could desire. "Ah, this is the good life!" we smile. But for Aristotle, as with most ethicists, the approach is different. Ethics, for Aristotle, is a question of the quality of your character. The word "ethics" actually comes from the ancient Greek word for character ("ēthos"). It is, for Aristotle, the question of what it is to be a good person, with the idea, as he suggests through his ethical writings, that a person of good character tends to perform good actions and live a good life overall.

So what is it to be a good person? Many of us in the modern Western world, when we try to answer that question, immediately imagine a set of moral rules and prohibitions somewhere – a set of "thou shalts" and "thou shalt nots." To know these rules is to know your right from wrong, and a good person is the one who knows and does the right thing. This is a way of approaching morality that today's philosophers call "deontological," and we'll study an author in the Spring semester commonly considered a major proponent of deontological thinking: Immanuel Kant. Aristotle, however, living more than two millennia before Kant, approaches the question of ethics in an entirely different way.

Not that we should let the age of Aristotle's ideas fool us. His basic approach is one that continues to influence how we think about "the good life" in contemporary times. For example, many people, when asked what makes a good person, start listing off what they consider to be high quality character traits. "A good person is a nice person," we might say, or "A good person is kind." While "niceness" and "kindness" "aren't actually traits that Aristotle praises, this general approach to thinking about what it means to be a good person is entirely in line with Aristotelian ethics. Philosophers today still point to Aristotle as a fundamental figure in what they call "**virtue ethics**:" a way of thinking about questions of the human good by focusing on the virtues – the high qualities, the traits of excellence – that constitute a person's character. The *Nichomachean Ethics*, along with his *Politics* and *Eudemian Ethics*, are the texts we still turn to for studying Aristotle's ethical theory.

Aristotle was born the son of a court physician in 384 BCE in Stageria, Thrace – a *polis* or city-state north of the region we know as Greece today. He was intelligent enough, and from a family of enough means, that he was sent to Athens at the age of seventeen to study at Plato's Academy. There he stayed until Plato's death in 347 BCE, at which time Aristotle wandered away from Athens, travelling to various places studying the natural world. In 343 BCE he took a position as tutor for Alexander the Great. In 335 BCE he returned to Athens and established his own school, the *Lyceum*. There he researched and lectured on almost every subject of inquiry imaginable to an ancient Greek, including biology, physics, metaphysics, psychology, ethics, politics, poetry, drama, theology, history, rhetoric and the visual arts. Aristotle, it seems, was interested in knowledge of the world in general, and he didn't limit himself to particular subject matters in that pursuit.

That said, most of this full body of work is actually lost to history. Of the approximately 200 works Aristotle is thought to have produced only 31 survive today. We know that, like Plato, Aristotle wrote dialogues, and by accounts those dialogues were very good reads. The Roman writer Cicero is observed to have said that while Plato's prose is silver, Aristotle's is like a flowing river of gold. And yet, as you read the *Nicomachean Ethics*, flowing rivers of gold might be the last image you conjure to describe it. Like most of Aristotle's surviving works, the *Nichomachean Ethics* is a collection of Aristotle's lecture notes from when he taught at the *Lyceum*. Many of these works, including the *Ethics*, were actually collected and bound together by students. Famously, Aristotle's surviving works can be a frustrating read, sometimes weirdly organized, with ideas popping up, disappearing and popping up again. He often follows one thought and then decides to double back. The *Ethics* won't be the hardest book you read in Freshman Program, but know that if you find it tasking at first you're not alone.

A child of ancient Greece and a student of Plato, many of Aristotle's ideas are similar to his former teacher's. But they're more famous for their deep disagreements. Plato – if we take his character of Socrates as a mouthpiece for his own philosophy – saw the world we live in as a shifting, ever-decaying place of mere appearances. Truth, for Plato, was not to be found in such a world. Instead, Plato sought truth in a realm of universal ideals he called the Forms. Plato looked to logic and geometry, which he thought stayed universal and constant, to cut through the world of ever-shifting mere appearances and reveal to us the realm of truth. Famously, he argued at points that poetry and an eye kept too close on the empirical world only clouded and corrupted our thinking. Aristotle – again, the son of a doctor – was of an entirely different intellectual

disposition. He was more like a biologist or scientist of today. Aristotle disavowed the whole idea of a transcendent realm of ideal Forms in which we must seek the truth. Aristotle thought the truth about the world was contained in the world itself. His method was more empirical. His approach to knowledge was to understand Nature and the natural order of the cosmos – which, he held, shaped and defined our lives (for example, if you want to know what's good for human beings, you have to learn something about our empirical nature – about how nature actually designed human beings. You'll see this in class when we discuss the way Aristotle thinks about human beings having a natural *telos*, by which he means something like a natural purpose or end).

Because of his disposition, Plato didn't trust the ideas of the people, who he thought were too drawn into the world of mere appearances. Aristotle, on the other hand, while he probably thought the average Greek citizen could study and think harder than they did, tended to take popular ideas seriously. If the people had a commonly held belief, a belief that had persisted over time, Aristotle tended to think that belief was worth investigating – that it probably had (or at least *might* have) something to say about the nature of the thing in question. This assumption of Aristotle's features prominently in his philosophical method. As you read Aristotle you'll notice that when he asks a question he often starts investigating it by presenting two or three common beliefs on the subject. Common beliefs tend to be his starting point, and then he proceeds to agree or disagree, intellectually strengthening them or pulling them apart, on a journey to his own conclusions.

Plato and Aristotle stand together as two of the most massive figures in Western intellectual history. They hold profound sway over not only our understanding of ancient Greek thought but also, and more importantly, the development of ideas throughout Western civilization. Whatever their standings as philosophers in their own time, the works of both figures have been read and lauded in every century since their deaths, by Romans, Muslims, Christians and modern secular thinkers. Raphael's famous painting *The School of Athens* illustrates the dominance of these two thinkers over Western thought by placing them at the painting's central perspective point, the rest of the painting revolving around them, as they debate: Plato pointing upward to indicate his pursuit of ideals, Aristotle pointing down to indicate his more empirical approach to knowledge. For those centuries in the medieval era when Islam was the most intellectually and technologically advanced civilization in the West, Muslims studied and preserved the books of Aristotle, ultimately passing them on to European Christians. From there, Aristotle's thought took so central a place in European intellectual life that St. Thomas Aquinas, one of Christianity's most important thinkers, referred to him as simply "The Philosopher." From approximately 1100-1700AD, higher education in Europe consisted primarily of studying the works of Aristotle and debating in a style modeled by Aristotle's works – a framework for critical inquiry we call Scholasticism. Several of the key philosophical and political texts seen as fundamental to the early modern era – some of which we'll read in this year, like Machiavelli's *Prince* and Kant's *Grounding* – can be read in part as resistances to or rejections of the profound command Aristotle held over intellectual Europe at the time.

In 323BCE, after 13 years at the Lyceum, Aristotle left Athens for the last time. Despite his central place in how we understand and conceive of Athens today, Aristotle was never entirely accepted as an Athenian, simply because ancient Greek life didn't work that way. Because of his birth and his travels he was always associated with other places, including Macedonia, Alexander's home. It's thought that anti-Macedonian sentiment in Athens played a role in Aristotle's leaving. The kind of anti-philosopher sentiment aimed at Socrates in Plato's *Apology* may have figured into his decision as well. As the story goes, Aristotle said he left Athens so they couldn't sin twice against philosophy – the first "sin" being when Athens put Socrates to death. He died one year later on the island of Chalcis.

Week 3

Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Monday, September 3 TA Sessions

Read *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I (Note: an * in the text indicates a reference to the translator's notes in the back of the book. Be aware that some of these notes are *interpretive*.)

Paragraph assignment: What is the special function of a human being and what does this have to do with being good?

Discussion questions: What does Aristotle mean when he says that things have a natural *telos* (a purpose, function, end)? Is his account too general? Can you generate a list of goods and activities that begin with "the point" of a toaster and end with "the point" of human life?

Tuesday, September 4 Seminars

Read Books I and II.

10:30-11:25 am
What does Aristotle mean by political science? How do you react to the claim that a youth is not a suitable student of political science? Why does Aristotle dismiss the pursuit of pleasure and honor as candidates for the good life? Why does he dismiss the moneymaker's life? What do his reasons assume about the structure of human life? Do you think there are natural standards of well-being for human life? Why or why not? What is a "complete" good and how is it different from qualified goods? Examples? What are external goods, goods of the soul, and goods of the body? Do you agree that a person cannot be entirely happy if they look utterly repulsive, are solitary, childless, friendless, or if their children or friends are bad or have died? What do you think of Aristotle's assumption that the various opinions about happiness are probably "correct on one point at least"? What are the implications of the claim that neither animals nor children can be considered happy? Why do we need an entire life in order to be happy and what puzzle arises from this claim? What is Aristotle's view of the soul, and how does he analyze the different elements of our person?

11:35 am -12:20 pm
What is a virtue of character and how is it acquired? What are virtuous actions and how are these determined? What is the role of habituation? Why is upbringing so important? Do you think it right to say someone is good because they are virtuous out of habit? What role do pleasure and pain play in being virtuous? Can a person, for Aristotle, think she is happy but actually (by Aristotle's estimation) be unhappy? Can a vicious person perform good actions? Why is it not possible to commit adultery with the right person, at the right time, and in the right way? Why are some virtues closer to their corresponding excess than to their deficiency? Aristotle says that there are many ways to err but only one way to be correct, but he also says that we must examine what we ourselves drift into easily. So how much pizza should a human being consume? How can we tell?

Wednesday, September 5 Seminars

Read Book III, ch. 1-9

NOTE: The first two-and-a-half books of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* represent a kind of introductory overview to Aristotle's theory of ethics. The rest of the book details the ideas he introduces here. As our first week with Aristotle reaches its conclusion, contemplate the wider picture Aristotle has presented in regards to what he means by the "good," "happiness" (eudaimonia), "virtue" and the excellent person.

In Book III ch. 1-5, Aristotle discusses (and in some cases defines what he means by) voluntary and involuntary action, decision, deliberation, wish and responsibility. For Aristotle, what's your role in your own virtue (or lack of it)? Who's responsible for your virtue (or lack of it)? What, for Aristotle, is the place of your decisions and deliberations in your virtue (or lack of it)? What kind of decisions

and deliberations does he think excellent people make, and what does that tell you about Aristotle's overall theory of ethics?

Thursday, September 6 MuH Refectory Plenary

10:30-11:25 am Lecture by Dr. David Western, Christ College

11:35 am -12:20 pm Seminar Discussion

Saturday, September 8

Writing assignment due at **noon**.

Week 4

Monday, September 10 TA Sessions

Book III, ch. 10-12 and Book IV

Paragraph assignment: Identify a virtue that you found particularly surprising and/or compelling and describe how Aristotle understands that virtue and its importance.

Discussion questions: If Aristotle thinks of virtues of character as means between two extremes, what are the extremes that each virtue is a mean between? Do you agree with his characterization of the virtues? Does he leave anything out? Does he include anything that you think is either vicious or morally neutral? Does he misidentify the mean and extreme states at any particular point?

Tuesday, September 11 Seminars

Read Book VI and Book VII ch. 1-9

10:30-11:25 am
As Aristotle conceives it, what's the relationship between reason and emotion in an example of virtue? How is each virtue Aristotle lists related to an emotion or appetite? How is virtue related to pleasure, pain and appetite? Why does Aristotle use a word the translator translates as "choiceworthy?" Why doesn't Aristotle simply say a thing is always virtuous or it isn't? Is Aristotle's view of virtue, in your mind, flexible? What is "insensibility?" Why is it rare, and why is it nevertheless vicious (cross-reference 1151b 25)? Would you agree that magnificence is a virtue? What exactly is pusillanimity, beginning with how you pronounce it? What name would you give to the virtue concerned with small honors? Can you think of examples of someone being *too* mild, friendly, truthful, or witty? How do you think Aristotle thinks we become brave and temperate (that is, how do we become virtuous people)? How much say do we have in it? What does Aristotle mean by "continent" and "incontinent?" Do you agree a person can be continent or incontinent?

11:35 am - 12:20 pm
Near the end of Book VI Aristotle writes, "[W]e fulfill our function [that is, we achieve *eudaimonia*, we are happy] insofar as we have prudence and virtue of character; for virtue makes the goal correct, and prudence makes the things promoting the goal correct" (Book VI, ch 12, §6). For Aristotle, we are not *eudaimon* until we are virtuous in both character and intellect. But of course, Aristotle thinks there are many different parts of the intellect. He wants us to understand the difference and see their role in being virtuous and happy. What is prudence (*phronesis,* otherwise translated as "practical wisdom")? How is it different from what Aristotle thinks of as understanding, knowledge or wisdom? What vital roles do these virtues of intellect, particularly prudence, seem to be playing in human virtue? How is prudence different from understanding the law of gravity or knowing how to bake bread crispy on the outside, chewy on the inside? How would Aristotle describe the imprudent person?

With what level of certainty can we know that we are doing the right thing? Do you know someone in your life you would describe as "morally smart"? How so? How did they get that way?

Wednesday, September 12 Seminars

Read Book X ch 9
Read the *Politics*, Book I ch 1-2, Book II chs 9, 12

What does the *Ethics* suggest about how the society we live in shapes our individual character, and what do you think about that? At the beginning of the *Ethics*, Aristotle says the question of ethics is only a subset of political science, and twice in the *Ethics* he tells us humanity is by nature a "political animal." He stresses politics again on the last page of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and it seems a direct segue into the first page of Aristotle's book on politics (called, not illogically, the *Politics)*. For Aristotle, what *is* a "*polis*" (or city)? For what purpose, according to Aristotle, does the *polis* exist "by nature"? Why does he say humanity is "by nature a political animal"? What for him makes us "political," in a way that goes beyond the mere fact that we socialize as "bees and other gregarious animals" do? What role does Aristotle see language playing in our political nature, and how for Aristotle are these things – politics, language, the *polis* – essential elements in his notion of ethics? What do you think Aristotle means when he uses the term "by nature?" What are your thoughts on the way Aristotle frequently appeals to human nature as a way of defining who we are? Do you agree with how he thinks about human nature?

How does Aristotle conceive of justice, and does it fit or challenge the way you think about justice? If the principle of justice for Aristotle is that "those who are equal should have assigned to them equal things," does Aristotle mean by equality what you expect him to mean? What's the role of "merit" in his notion of justice, and do you agree that "where people differ from one another there must be a difference in what is just and proportionate to their merits." Do Aristotle's ideas fit with or challenge the contemporary notion that everybody deserves equal rights and respect? Why does Aristotle insist that it's just for the best flute players to receive the best flutes? Do you agree with him? What are the implications of Aristotle's arguments about flutes and flute players if we consider not just flutes but other things: money, fame, job opportunities, political power, university degrees, votes, the right to speak in public, etc.? Can you imagine arguments both for and against Aristotle's notion of justice?

Thursday, September 13 Seminars

Read Books VIII and IX & Book X ch. 6-8

<u>10:30-11:25 am</u>
What are Aristotle's three types of friendship? Specifically, how might a single friendship fulfill or not fulfill the three distinct types of friendship? Do the three types of friendship hold, for Aristotle, the same worth? Or does he hold a type or types in higher esteem than others? Is a friendship, for Aristotle, always a good thing? Do you agree with Aristotle's notion that there are different kinds of friendships in life and with how he thinks we should value them? Why for Aristotle are friendships between unequals less stable, desirable, and satisfying than those between equals? Are some people not worthy of our friendship? Can you think of an example of a friendship you desire but which you probably do not deserve? Consider what Aristotle says about the equality/inequality of people here and think back to how he's approached ethics across the whole book. Does Aristotle think about equality – particularly between people – the way we do today? What do you make of what Aristotle thinks about equality?

<u>11:35 am - 12:20 pm</u>
Think back over the list of virtues. One book is spent on those of temperance, courage, generosity, magnificence, magnanimity, self-esteem, mildness, friendliness, truthfulness, and wit. Then an entire book is devoted to justice. And finally, two whole books are devoted to friendship. What makes friendship so important to Aristotle? Why does he spend a sizable portion of these two chapters discussing friendship in relation to wider social institutions – family, community, the entire polis? Is Aristotle correct in placing familial relations under the heading of friendship? Is he correct in thinking about friendship as something that matters – crucially – for politics? Why doesn't he leave friendship a matter between a small group of non-familial individuals, as we might assume today? Under what

conditions should friendships be dissolved? What exactly does Aristotle mean when he says that self-love is integral to good friendships, and how is self-love different from selfishness? Finally, but crucially, how is Aristotle's discussion related to ethics, anyway? How for Aristotle is friendship central to *eudaimonia* and the Good Life?

Saturday, September 15

Writing assignment due at **noon**.

Genesis

Genesis is the name of the first in a collection of books regarded by Jews and Christians as sacred writings through which God speaks or is revealed. What Christians call the Old Testament, Jewish readers call the TANAK, which is an acronym for *Torah* (the Teachings), *Nebiim* (the Prophets), and *Ketubim* (the Writings). The *Torah* contains the first five books of the Hebrew Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The *Prophets* include "historical" books like Joshua, I and II Samuel, and I and II Kings, as well as prophetic books like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, and Malachi. The *Writings* include a variety of "historical" books along with texts such as Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. To these books Christians added their own sacred texts, which consist of four gospels (narratives about Jesus), epistles (letters written to early Christian communities), one "history" (the Book of Acts), and an apocalyptic writing (the Book of Revelation). They then referred to the Hebrew Scriptures as the Old Testament, and their additional texts as the New Testament. Some Christians also included certain Jewish texts written between the periods in which most of the Old Testament and the New Testament were written. These texts are called the Apocrypha and include such books as 1 Maccabees, Tobit, Baruch, and 2 Esdras.

Scholars study the Bible in a variety of ways and from different perspectives. Some focus on the structure and history of the text and the relation of its language to other texts from similar eras and places. Others consider what the German academics called "*Heilsgeschichte*," the "history of salvation," in which the Old Testament is understood to be filled with anticipatory references to the New. Some literary scholars examine the way the whole text or parts of it convey meaning through narrative, images, and other forms of literary expression. Biblical scholars may tease out from the text through careful analysis of vocabulary, grammar, and structure the various voices of its writers or groups of writers. Historical or anthropological scholars might view the text in light of what it tells us about life and culture at the time. Each of these approaches can either counter-balance or complement those practiced in liturgical or personally confessional settings.

We will be reading the entirety of Genesis in Robert Alter's translation. Like the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), which we will use for the Gospel of Mark, Alter's *Genesis* translates the original Hebrew text of Genesis into English. Any translation from one language to another attempts to strike a balance between literal accuracy and readability, and various translations of the Bible gravitate towards one end of the spectrum or the other, with the NRSV falling in the middle. Alter's translation, however, represents as accurately as possible the original Hebrew at the expense of readability in English. The Biblical Hebrew of Genesis has grammatical properties and a lyrical vocabulary wholly foreign to English. For example, in Biblical Hebrew, there are no verb tenses as we think of them; whereas in English we have past, past perfect, present, future, etc., Biblical Hebrew only has something like "actions completed" and "actions ongoing." Also, Biblical Hebrew generally does not use subordinate clauses but rather connects strings of words and clauses in a chain with the connective Hebrew letter, "waw," which is usually translated into English as "and." Finally, in contrast to Greek, the Hebrew of Genesis is limited in vocabulary, so moving from Hebrew to English often involves adding nuance in order to reduce monotony or to provide clarity. Biblical Hebrew is an earthy, visceral language, and its idioms often become abstractions in the translation to English. For example, in Hebrew, to be angry is to have a "hot nose" towards someone or something; this idiom is translated as the more abstract emotion "anger" in English. In the end, Old Testament translators usually lean far to the side of readability over linguistic accuracy by adding subordinate clauses, English nuances of tense, and abstract or more precise vocabulary, and Alter fears these alterations overly obscure the meaning the text had for its original audience—a sin he calls the "heresy of explanation." He therefore offers us a translation that retains the lack of tense, the lack of subordinate clauses, and the "earthiness" of the Biblical Hebrew. The result is a translation intended to emphasize the "otherness" of a text that is the product of a thoroughly "non-Western" culture that existed several thousand years ago.

The Book of Genesis presents material that has been read as closely and intently as any text we are likely to encounter. Linguistic analysis of the material shows that one strand of the narrative refers to God as "Yahweh" (the personal name for God, represented in Hebrew by four consonants "YHWH"—the unpronounceable "tetragrammaton") and another as "Elohim" (the generic Hebrew term for "god/gods"). These two distinct strands have different emphases as they recount the origins of the Hebrew people. Though they do not always tell the same story, both voices have been considered essential, and appear together as vital point and counterpoint for those responsible for preserving the story. The first eleven chapters of Genesis present a "universal history" of creation and humanity. In the total context of Hebrew Scripture, these chapters form a kind of prologue to the story of the Hebrew people themselves, which begins in Genesis 12 with the calling of Abraham and the account of his relations with YHWH.

Week 5

Readings: *Genesis*, Chapters 12-50, Translation and Commentary by Robert Alter. Robert Alter, "Genesis as a Book," xxxix-xlvii in *Genesis*.

Monday, September 17 TA Sessions

Read Genesis 12-50 in Alter's translation <u>in two sittings</u>: 12-27 in the first sitting; 28-50 in the second sitting (You will need about two hours per sitting in a quiet, uninterrupted place for this task. Note that "12-50" refers to chapters not page numbers, here and below.)

<u>Paragraph assignment</u>: Does Abraham's life, as it unfolds from Genesis 12 through Genesis 25 seem "good" or "blessed" in Aristotle's senses or in some other sense that you can specify?

<u>Discussion questions</u>: Three times in the narrative a man tries to pass his wife off as his sister (Gen 12; 20; 26): Why is this theme repeated and what function does it serve in the narrative? Note the similarities in the betrothal type-scenes of Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 24) and Jacob and Rachel (Gen 28): How are these scenes central to the plot? Jacob's life is characterized by deceit (both perpetrated by him and against him): Where else in the narrative thus far do you see this theme, and how is the text implicitly commenting upon it? Jacob and his father-in-law Laban finally have a frank confrontation regarding their tortured relationship, calling on their respective gods to judge between them (Gen 31): Does the text lead us to have sympathy for one character over the other? Both? Neither? What is surprising about Jacob's preparations for his reunion with Esau (Gen 32-33)?

Tuesday, September 18 Seminars

Reread Genesis 12-50 in Alter's translation, esp. 24-27; 37-47

<u>10:30-11:25 am</u>
Why does Rebekah scheme to secure Isaac's blessing for Jacob rather than for Esau? Is she like Antigone in that she is simply obeying what she takes to be the divine will? Or are there deeper motives? What might these be, and do they involve an understanding of family as they did with Antigone? What kind of a man is Esau? Is he more or less like his father than Jacob? Is he more or less deserving of blessing than Jacob? What would Aristotle say about the strength of the appetites that seem to motivate both Esau and Jacob? Is Rebekah wise in preferring Jacob to Esau? Does the narrator think she is justified in using deception to bring about what she wisely or unwisely wants? What kind of a woman is she? Can you determine what kind of woman she is by what she does and says in accordance with Abraham's servant's test questions at the well?

<u>11:35 am -12:20 pm</u>
Jacob benefitted from a parent's preference for him over his brother. And then Jacob in turn obviously preferred one son, Joseph, over his brothers with apparently disastrous results. So let us turn now to the longest continuous narrative in all of Genesis, the story of Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37-47). Joseph has learned well from his father the practice of deception. What are Joseph's motives for the prolonged deception of his brothers in Egypt? Is he seeking revenge? Is he testing them, as God tested Abraham? Is he trying to find out who *they* are and who *they* have become before he reveals himself? Or is he preparing them really to recognize him when he finally does reveal himself? Why are multiple deceptions necessary? Can you explain what the brothers reveal and what Joseph learns during each step of the process? Why is Benjamin so critically important to the plot?

Wednesday, September 19 Seminars

Read Genesis 34-46 in Alter's translation.

The death of Isaac is followed by (yet another!) genealogical list: How do these lists function in the narrative, and do they relate to any other emerging themes, such as the theme of covenant? In Potiphar's house, we find yet another (attempted) illicit sexual encounter (Gen 39). What do you make of the entire *Genesis* narrative's preoccupation with sexual relationships? What are the complex linkages among sexual relationships, family structure and function, and covenant throughout *Genesis*? Consider the various formulations of covenant through the text, e.g. in Genesis 12, 17, and 22. How do they differ, and what is the significance of the difference?

Thursday, September 20 MuH Refectory Plenary

Review Genesis 12-50 in Alter's translation.

10:30-11:25 am Lecture by Dr. Fred Niedner, Department of Theology

11:35 am -12:20 pm Seminar Discussion

Consider all that what we have discussed to date. What is it about human beings that leads them to behave in some of the distressing ways we have witnessed, e.g sometimes deadly sibling rivalry, intergenerational conflict, struggles in child-bearing, deception, domination, etc. Are these human failings the result of vice, as Aristotle would understand it? Or is something more involved that accounts for human weakness? Do human beings behave the same way today and for the same reasons?

Saturday, September 22

Writing assignment due at **noon**.

Week 6

Readings: *Genesis*. Translation and Commentary by Robert Alter.

Monday, September 24 TA Sessions

Read Genesis 1-12 in Alter's translation <u>in one sitting</u>. (You will need about two hours in a quiet, uninterrupted place for this task.)

<u>Paragraph assignment</u>: Turn to Genesis 11:1-10, one of several stories in Genesis about the founding of a city: Babel. Based on your reading of *Genesis* as a whole, why do you think the text questions the good of a geographically settled, linguistically unified community dedicated to a common urban project?

<u>Discussion questions</u>: Do you think that the story of Babel is primarily about a particular city at a particular place during a particular time, or is the story primarily about problems that arise in all cities and civilizations? What problems might these be? What is their primary cause?

Tuesday, September 25 Seminars

Reread Genesis 1-3 in Alter's translation.
Read Alter, "Genesis as a Book," xxxix-xlvii in *Genesis*.

<u>10:30-11:25 am</u>
In what ways did Alter's translation affect your understanding of these passages? In Genesis 1, what does it mean or imply that humankind is created "in [God's] image, according to [God's] likeness?" Look carefully at the first account of the Creation (Genesis 1:1-2:3) and at the second creation account (Genesis 2:4-2:25). What sort of a creator is presented in the two accounts? How do these two stories complement and complicate each other? Turn to the story of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2-3. How does Genesis 2 envision the identity of and relationship between man and woman? Why is it "not good that the man should be alone" (2:16)? What are the implications of thinking of human beings as "mud things" animated by the breath of God? Again (as with the discussion questions about Babel on Monday), is this a story primarily about a particular man and a particular woman or about men and women, i.e human sexuality and gender relationships generally? How do you know?

<u>11:35 am -12:20 pm</u>
Why does the Lord God forbid eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? What characterizes the serpent's speech? Why does the woman eat the fruit? What is the significance of 3:7, their reaction to having eaten the fruit? Why does their awareness of their nakedness elicit shame? Is shame a purely negative experience? What, exactly, is the result of the man and the woman's eating of the fruit, and how does this mesh with the consequences that God predicts in the command not to eat? Does the Lord God's punishment justly follow from their transgression? In 3:16, is the relationship between men and women after their disobedience simply *described* by God or *prescribed* by God? Does the scene of punishment offer any sign of hope? Why do we call this story a "fall?" Is that language in the text itself? In the end, what does this story tell us about being human? What does it tell us about the nature, the causes, and the development of the human failing and foibles that we saw dramatized in *Genesis* 12-50?

Wednesday, September 26

Reread Genesis 4-11 in Alter's translation.

How do we *see* the consequences of the humans' actions in the garden played out in the rest of Genesis 4-11—in the stories of Abel and Cain, Noah, and Tower of Babel? What are the basic problems in each of these stories? In what ways are they different and in what ways are they similar? How is God characterized in each? What is the plot trajectory of this section?

Thursday, September 27 MuH Refectory Plenary

Review all of *Genesis* in Alter's translation.

10:30-11:25 am Lecture by Dr. Fred Niedner, Department of Theology

11:35 am -12:20 pm Seminar Discussion

How do the stories in the first eleven chapters differ from the stories in the last thirty-nine? Does the call of Abraham at the beginning of Chapter 12 represent a fundamental shift in the narrative or not? What kind of shift? Does the call of Abraham represent a new beginning in the same way that the creation of human beings is a new beginning and the saving of Noah, his family, and the animals is a new beginning? Why or why not? How does God's relationship to Abraham and his descendants differ from God's relationship to the first humans? What is the significance of the difference or differences?

Opening of the 2018 Haiku Contest

Saturday, September 29

Writing assignment due at **noon**.

HOMECOMING WEEKEND

The Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark is one of four gospels, narrative accounts of the life of Jesus, contained in the New Testament. The Old and New Testaments together make up a collection of writings—the Holy Bible—regarded by most Christians as sacred writings through which God speaks or is revealed. The four Gospels represent neither the beginning nor the end of gospel composition by the earliest Christians, and as with many New Testament books, their authorship is anonymous despite being attributed to important early church leaders. Most early believers were, to varying degrees, unable to read or write, so stories about Jesus deemed important were committed to memory and passed on by word of mouth. Given the nature of oral traditions, it has long been assumed that these stories grew in length and detail over time and became combined with other stories. More recently however, the supposed fluidity of oral transmission has been challenged. The first *written* gospel may well have been Mark, dating to around 70 CE, which was perhaps, in part, a response to the Roman invasion of the Jewish homeland and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Matthew and Luke represent the next generation of gospel production, both dating to around 80–90 CE, with John perhaps appearing a decade or so later. There may be other gospels as old as the four canonical gospels, such as the Gospel of Thomas, but the matter is disputed among scholars. Dozens of other gospels under the names of various disciples or apostles, most surviving only in fragments, reached written form after John, in the second and third centuries CE. Chronologically, Paul's epistles predate the written gospels.

The formation of the New Testament took place over several centuries, and came to a conclusion only at the Council of Carthage in 397 CE. Earlier evidence for the acceptance of the fourfold Gospel tradition is found, however, in the writings of Irenaeus, around 180 CE. At the time the widespread use of a writing in worship lent it authority, so that by the second century, many early Christian books were cited as Scripture and given the same authority as the Old Testament. By the third century, most of the books that make up the New Testament, including all four gospels, enjoyed high regard among Christian communities throughout the Mediterranean world. The Easter Letter of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, composed in 367 CE, included a list of accepted books that matches the New Testament as it is today. A contemporary, Eusebius, classified most of our New Testament as canonical, labeling only James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 John, and 3 John as disputed. When Christianity gained legal recognition in the Roman Empire and was chosen as the sole state religion in the course of the fourth century, determining the official documents of the tradition became a political necessity. Convened under the watchful eyes of the emperors, church councils finalized the selection process that had begun centuries earlier, and what modern historians think of as historical discrepancies between the gospels did not seem to trouble them.

The literary relationship between the four Gospels has been worked out in detail over the last century, and few scholars would take issue with the current consensus. Not only is Mark regarded as the earliest of the four, it is also thought to be the primary source for Matthew and Luke. They reproduce 99 percent of Mark between them, although both take a good deal of liberty in ordering or slightly altering the material. Parallel material about Jesus reported by Matthew and Luke that does not come from Mark is thought to come from a second source, hypothetically referred to as "Q" after the German word for source, *Quelle*. Taken together, these three gospels are known as the "Synoptic" gospels.

According to early tradition, the author of the first gospel was John Mark, who is mentioned in Acts as a companion of Paul (Acts 12:12; 15:37). From the text of Mark itself, we can assume that the author did not speak or think primarily in Greek, since Mark's Greek is rather brusque; perhaps the author's primary language was Aramaic, since Aramaic terms are translated for its audience. Because of these Aramaic translations, we can assume the audience was comprised of gentile Christians, perhaps in Rome. Because of Mark's stress on suffering and conflict, scholars have often assumed that the gospel was intended to comfort Christians who were themselves undergoing persecution, perhaps under the Emperor Nero in the late 60s CE. Besides an emphasis on suffering as the cost of discipleship, the other primary theme in Mark is the announcement of Jesus as the "Messiah" and "Son of God." Also notable are Mark's emphasis on the actions rather than on the teachings of Jesus (Jesus is always going "immediately" from one activity to the next), its "secrecy motif" (Jesus tells people not to reveal his activities or teachings), its use of the term "son of man" to refer to Jesus, and its emphasis upon the "Kingdom of God." Perhaps due to its early formation, the Gospel of Mark is the least theologically sophisticated of the four Gospels. Moreover, Mark ends abruptly in the earliest manuscripts at 16:8. Later Christians added alternative endings which appear in the NRSV as the "shorter" and "longer" endings.

Palestine at the Time of Jesus

Week 7

Reading: The Gospel of Mark, Harper Collins Study Bible (NRSV)

Monday, October 1 TA Sessions

Read the Gospel of Mark <u>in one sitting</u> (setting aside roughly two hours in a place where you will be undisturbed).

<u>Paragraph assignment</u>: Having read the whole gospel, reread chapter 1. Find one important theme in this "introduction" to the Gospel that will get picked up later in future chapters, and analyze how the text of chapter one signals its importance for the rest of the story. [There are four Gospels in the Bible and each tells the events of the life of Jesus with different styles and emphases. For this paragraph, look for patterns of language, or events or interactions, to start thinking about how this author is telling this story.]

<u>Discussion questions</u>: What is Jesus like in this Gospel? Why do you think Jesus is baptized in Mark? Look briefly at the accounts of Jesus' baptism in Matthew (3:13-17), Luke (3:21-22), and John (1:29-34). Do you notice significant differences? Given that Mark's is the oldest account, what developments on this story do we see in the other gospels?

Tuesday, October 2 Seminars

Reread Mark 1-10

<u>10:30-11:25 am</u>
What surprised you about Mark's account of Jesus' life? What is Jesus' message in the first half of the gospel (Mark 1-8:11), and how does it relate to his deeds? Why is Jesus so secretive (what New Testament scholars label Mark's "secrecy motif")? Looking carefully at Mark 7:1-23 (especially 7:14); what aspect of Jesus' message does this story emphasize? How do various groups respond to Jesus in chapters 1- 7? What accounts for their different attitudes/ views of Jesus? Which actions of Jesus bring about conflict and with whom? How is conflict significant to Mark's overall narrative, and how does it help us understand Jesus and his message?

<u>11:35 am -12:20 pm</u>
Looking carefully at Mark 8:13-21 (Jesus and the disciples in a boat). What does this story tell us about the relationship between Jesus and his disciples? What seems to be the author's attitude towards the disciples (compare this passage to Mark 9:2-29 and Mark 9:30-37)? How do you interpret 8:14? Where else have you seen references to eyes/seeing and ears/hearing? What does this passage say about Christian discipleship? In what way is Chapter 8 a turning point in Mark's narrative? Read the story of the healing of the blind man (Mark 8:22-26) carefully. Why do you think the blind man must be healed twice? How might this passage typify (or allegorize) Jesus' relationship with his disciples? Read Mark 8:27-9:1 carefully. What new themes are introduced here (compare also to Mark 9:30-32 and Mark 10:32-35)? Why do you think Jesus' first discussion of his crucifixion comes immediately after Peter's profession in the text?

Wednesday, October 3 Seminars

Reread Mark 11-16

How much time elapses in these six chapters? How do the disciples respond to Jesus' discussion of his death? Keeping in mind the text's historical context, what would the original readers draw from Jesus' words here about the cost and meaning of Christian discipleship? What roles do the women play while Jesus is in Jerusalem? How do the disciples (including Peter) react to Jesus' arrest and crucifixion? Why does the Gospel of Mark appear to end (originally) at 16:8, with no resurrection appearances? How does ending Mark at 16:8 draw together various themes in the text; how does ending it there affect your overall interpretation of Mark? Where would you identify the narrative climax in Mark?

Thursday, October 4 Plenary

Review Mark, chapters 14-16

10:30-11:25 Lecture by Dr. Julien Smith, Christ College
"Mark's New Exodus"

11:35-12:20 Seminar Discussion

Saturday, October 6

Writing assignment due at **noon**.

Saint Augustine (354 CE-430)

Augustine was born in 354 CE in Thagaste, North Africa. It is not necessary here to recount the significant events of his life, since Augustine both describes and plumbs the depths of his past experiences in the pages of the *Confessions*. Written during the late 390s CE, when he was in his mid-forties and a relatively new bishop of Hippo, the *Confessions* presents Augustine's recollection and interpretation of the lifelong search for wisdom that was set off by his reading of Cicero as a teen and that ultimately led to his conversion in a Milanese garden in 386 CE. In antiquity, the philosopher (literally, 'lover of wisdom') was someone who devoted himself daily and wholly to achieving harmony with the truth in his conduct as well as his thought. All the philosophical schools of antiquity—Platonists, Stoics, Epicureans, Skeptics—claimed to provide in their communities the form of life and teaching most conducive to achieving such harmony. One of the most common metaphors in this period for wisdom is therapeutic: What medicine does for the body, philosophy does for the soul. Conversely, what illness and bad habits do to the body, sin and error do to the soul. So when Augustine, following other church fathers, claims that Christianity is the highest and truest philosophy, in part he means to claim that Christian faith and life provide the best remedy or medicine for healing the soul. Augustine's account of his life (especially Books 1-10) demonstrates vividly that his 'philosophical' quest centers upon a search for just such healing, and Books 11-13 are Augustine's attempt to lead his readers on this same journey in the present.

Augustine seems to have at least four audiences in mind for his *Confessions*. The first, and most important, audience is God; notice how Book 1 opens in direct address. Secondly, Augustine imagines that some of his readers will be fellow believers who will join Augustine on his spiritual journey by thanking God when they read of God's redeeming work in the bishop and praying for the bishop when they read of his past errors and his continuing sin. Thirdly, Augustine clearly is also aware of his critics: those who think he's too promiscuous to be a bishop, those who think he's too much of a Platonist (or, worse, too much a Manichee), those who think his mother was a drunk, etc. Finally, the bishop's many allusions to Vergil, Cicero, Terence, Plato, and other classical authors suggest that he also anticipated an audience of cultured unbelievers to whom he might recommend the faith. Thus the *Confessions* operates on several levels simultaneously: as prayer (to God), as a devotional guide (for believers), as a defense (against his critics), and as an apologetic (to curious unbelievers).

A first reading of Augustine's *Confessions* can often be a bewildering experience, so here are a few tips on what to look for while you read:

- Look for verbs of turning (e.g. turning towards, turning away, returning).
- Look for verbs of scattering, dispersing, or spilling and their opposites, gathering, uniting, and filling.
- Look for verbs of ascending and descending.
- Watch for explicit and implicit references to this biblical verse: "For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world" (1 Jn 2.16).

Week 8

Reading: Saint Augustine, *Confessions*

Monday, October 8 TA Sessions

Read Book 1

Paragraph Assignment: In the first paragraph of his *Confessions*, Augustine writes that "our heart is restless until it rests in you" (1.1.1). What does he mean? What sorts of restlessness does he relate in the opening books of the *Confessions*?

Discussion questions: Book 1 starts off with a profusion of paradoxes. Why? What are some of the more interesting ones? What did Augustine find wanting in his early education? How is his experience like or unlike your own?

Tuesday, October 9 Seminars and Plenary

Beginning of second seven seeks; Professors switch sections. Students stay in same classrooms.

Read Books 2-4

10:30-11:25 am
Why all the attention to sin and evil? What evidence does Augustine offer for "the sin of my infancy" (1.7.11), and how does he know what he knows about this part of his life? What is Augustine's final assessment of his teachers and schooling, and why do you think he spends so much time discussing the discipline he endured? How can human friendship be both "a nest of love and gentleness" (2.5.10) and "a dangerous enemy" (2.9.17)? Why did Augustine steal the pears, and why does this event receive so much attention? What does Augustine mean when he says "the theft itself was a nothing" and "association with a gang is also a nothing" (2.8.16)?

12:35-12:20 pm Lecture by Dr. Matthew Puffer, Christ College
"Contextualizing Augustine's *Confessions*"

Recall your experience reading Greek tragedy: does Augustine's critique of love for theatre ring true with your own reactions? Why was Cicero's *Hortensius* so influential to Augustine's development (3.4.7-8)? What attraction did the Manichees hold for Augustine (3.5.9-3.7.11)? What three things does the mature Augustien find lacking in Manicheaen theology (3.7.12-3.8.18)? What do we learn from Monica's dream (3.11.19-3.12.21)? Why does Augustine spend so much time disputing astrology, and how does he argue against it? What, in retrospect, is wrong with Augustine's first book, *On the Beautiful and the Fitting*? What does his independent study of Aristotle fail to provide?
What does the whole episode of the middle-aged Augustine's view of the young Augustine's grief over the loss of his unnamed friend imply about the nature of both friendship and love?

Wednesday, October 10 Seminars

Read Book 5

What, for Augustine, is the relation between knowledge and happiness? Can you reasonably expect that your studies in Christ College will make you a happier person? What effect did Manichee teachings have upon Augustine's sense of personal responsibility? Why does Augustine abandon Manichaeism upon hearing Faustus? What takes its place? Compare Faustus and Ambrose: Why are they juxtaposed so closely in Book 5? What important discovery does Augustine make at the feet of St. Ambrose? By the end of Book 5, he is closer to becoming a Christian but still has reservations: What draws him to the Church, and what does he resist?

Have a great FALL BREAK! (October 11 & 12)

Week 9

Reading: Saint Augustine, *Confessions*

Monday, October 15 TA Sessions

Read Book 6

Paragraph Assignment: Choose one of the figures below and examine how this figure contributes to progress or regress in Augustine's struggles that his narrative also addresses in previous books.

Discussion Questions: Book 6 develops several important relationships in Augustine's narrative: Monica, Ambrose, Alypius, and Nebridius. How would you characterize these relationships? What stands out about the friendships of Augustine, Alypius, and Nebridius? How is their "project" (6.14.24) like and unlike Aristotelian friendship or, for that matter, the project of Christ College?

Tuesday, October 16 Seminars

Read Books 7-8

10:30-11:25 am
In what sense is evil non-existent? How does this square with Augustine's observation that some things are "thought evil because of a conflict of interest" (7.13.19)? What do the Platonists teach, and how exactly do they fall short of the truth? Beginning in 7.10.16, Augustine narrates a contemplative journey: What are the stages and what is its ultimate goal? Is it finally successful?

11:35am -12:20 pm
Book 8 relates a number of conversion stories. How does each help prepare Augustine for his experience in the Milanese garden at the end of the book? Does Augustine's analysis of the will (esp. 8.5.10-12 and 8.8.19-8.9.26) ring true to your own experience? How does Augustine's discussion of habit compare with that of Aristotle? In what sense is his experience a "conversion"?

Wednesday, October 17 Seminars

Read Book 9

What, if anything, is different about Augustine after his experience in the Milanese garden? Why was it important for him to leave his position as a teacher? How does the decision to become a Christian and his baptism affect how he thinks about his work and how he uses his talents? What does his relationship with his mother Monica suggest about how Augustine thinks about God? Does Augustine still seem restless or restful? What makes his new life challenging and/or good?

Thursday, October 18 MuH Refectory Plenary & Seminar

Read Book 10

10:30-11:25 am Lecture by Dr. Edward Upton, Christ College

11:35am -12:20 pm Seminar Discussion

Book 10 marks a major turning point in the *Confessions*. Up to now, Augustine has been confessing his past; now he undertakes confession of who he is in the present (10.4.6). As he engages in relentless introspection, what kinds of 'things' does he find within himself? Is God present in Augustine's memory? If so, how? Why has God taught Augustine that he should take food as he would medicine? For Augustine, what is the origin of vanity and how might Aristotle respond?

Writing assignment due **Saturday, October 20 at noon**.

Confucians

Confucius (551-479 BCE) is known in China as Kong Fuzi, or "Master Philosopher Kong," a title that was latinized to "Confucius" by sixteenth-century Europeans. He lived at the beginning of a watershed period in China, toward the end of the Zhou (pronounced "Joe") Dynasty, in what is known as the Spring and Autumn Period (771-481 BCE). The Zhou conquered the Shang Dynasty in 1111 BCE, acquiring from the Shang their writing system and their religious practices. The power of the Zhou resided in its strong centralized kingdom that demanded military and ritual obedience from the numerous feudal states clustered around it. The Spring and Autumn Period began when the Zhou was invaded by Inner Asian peoples, forcing the capital east to the small city of Loyang. From this time on, the sovereignty of the central political authority gradually decreased, and independence of and competition among the various feudal states of the Zhou increased. During Confucius' lifetime, the Zhou kings still commanded ritual fealty from surrounding principalities; however, they had ceased to dominate them militarily. Competition among these states to excel in economic development, military prowess, and diplomacy helped to loosen the bonds of the old Zhou society. As the hereditary aristocracy began to lose its automatic right to power, a new class of scholar/officials emerged as powerful advisors to the lords of the competing principalities.

Confucius did not approve of these changes. He saw the increasing instability of his society as dangerous, and argued that in order to achieve true social harmony, it was necessary to re-establish the rites and ceremonies performed by the venerable rulers and subjects of the early Zhou, thus reaffirming the central authority of the government. These rites, he believed, revealed the correct structure of human relationships and society, and through full participation in them people became truly human. Confucius claimed that he "transmitted" the ancient traditions "without making up anything of my own" (*Analects* VII: 1,2,3). Yet, Confucius made three important innovations: he invented the role of private teacher, established the content and aims of education, and redefined the student as "one who is eager to learn" (VII: 8), rather than as one with the proper class background.

Confucius was a member of the emerging scholar/official class, but unlike some of his contemporaries, and despite his intense desire to serve in government, he never achieved high political position. He held a minor position at the court of his native state of Lu (see map) for several years, then traveled through some of the neighboring states, eventually returning to Lu five years before his death a disappointed man. Despite his apparent lack of success, however, Confucius was perhaps the single most influential thinker in Chinese history, and Asian culture generally. He trained many of the ablest politicians of his day; furthermore, his teachings inspired generations of disciples whose collective work, now known as Confucianism, formed the foundation of Chinese thought for over 2,000 years. It continues to be influential in the modern era, despite the vast changes that have overcome China in the last two centuries. To our knowledge, Confucius did not write anything. The second and third generations of his disciples collected brief anecdotes and fragments of his conversations into the *Analects*, and his two most famous followers, Mencius and Xunzi, developed and expanded his ideas in their own writings.

By the time Mencius lived (372-289 BCE), the Zhou Dynasty had entered a new political era known as the Warring States Period (403-221 BCE). All appearance of subservience by the feudal states to the central government had been abandoned, and the rulers of these states fought openly for control of the entire kingdom. The Warring States Period was violent and unstable, but it produced a thriving political discourse influential for the next two thousand years. The philosophers of the "Hundred Schools" were principally interested in the practical problem of how to create and maintain a strong and unified state. They peddled their theories at the courts of the vying states, attempting to gain a hearing for their points of view, and eventually a foothold in the government. Of the many theories propounded during this time, the principal ones were: 1) *Confucianism*, as advocated by Mencius and Xunzi (ca. 310-230 BCE); 2) *Mohism*, which eschewed ritual and hierarchy in favor of economic communalism; and 3) an early form of *Legalism* which severed the connection between personal morality and political power, and thus, has been compared with the political philosophy of Machiavelli.

Mencius responded to the problem of how to create a strong, unified state by drawing on and amplifying the Confucian legacy, particularly through the development of a theory of human nature. Whereas Confucius did not discuss the fundamental basis of human nature, perhaps because such a question had not been posed by his time, Mencius argued that the human heart innately possesses the seeds of virtue which, if properly cultivated through education, lead to full "human-heartedness." What distinguishes us from animals, he claimed, was this inborn propensity to do good. This propensity, however, must be nurtured diligently and sincerely before it can be brought to fruition. Mencius was deeply disturbed by the warfare, violence, and treachery surrounding him, and sought to educate kings in the Kingly Way, which he drew from the example of the ancients (e.g., King Wen, Yao, and Shun). He saw a distinction between those contemporary rulers who still attempted to be true

Kings and those military overlords who practiced government by force. He spoke out strongly against government by force, arguing that the task of the king is to nourish the people, first by looking after their material welfare, and then by guiding them to virtue by means of education and example. If the king fails his responsibility, he is not a true king and the people are relieved of the obligation to honor him.

Xunzi was born about 310 BCE, when Mencius was already a famous teacher and scholar, and began his career as an advisor to rulers of the small state of Qi (see map). When the ruler he served was assassinated, Xunzi lost his official position and lived out his days as a private citizen, teacher, and scholar, working in relative obscurity. While Xunzi operated clearly within the framework of the basic philosophical and ethical assumptions of Confucius, his experiences and observation of the chaotic political world of his time may have contributed to his emphasis on the vast gap between what human actions in the world *should* be and what they really *are*. His harsh judgment was that human nature was evil, and naturally inclined to chaos and disorder. Yet Xunzi believed that it was possible to positively transform our unpromising human material through the rigorous application of education and moral training. While Xunzi remained more skeptical than Mencius about the positive effects of teaching and example on the great mass of people, and somewhat more willing to turn to other methods of government besides pure virtue when necessary, he ultimately believed that no government or society could survive if it did not cultivate proper values in its people. In this sense, despite his deep differences with Mencius, he was very much also a true follower of Confucius. While Mencius is more widely known in the West, Xunzi's remarkable success as a teacher and his pivotal role in the transmission of the Confucian canon led to his far-reaching influence on the Chinese world. Two of his most famous students were Han Fei (ca. 280-233 BCE), the most brilliant thinker of the Legalist school, and Li Si (ca. 280-208 BCE), who served as the first prime minister of the Qin dynasty (221-206 BCE), which was the first unified empire in Chinese history. Xunzi's other students (or their students) such as Fuqiu Bo, Zhang Cang, and Mao Heng were distinguished teachers in the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), which saw the elevation of Confucianism as a state ideology and the canonization of the Confucian Five Classics (*Documents*, *Odes*, *Changes*, *Rites*, *Spring and Autumn Annals*).

Confucian texts were central to the studies of almost every educated person in China for centuries and were very influential in most of East Asia. After many years of suppression under Mao Zedong, the Confucian tradition seems poised to become again a major source of guidance for the Chinese people as they address the challenges of the twenty-first century.

China Warring States, 245 to 235 BCE

Modern China

Chinese Pronunciation Guide

Two different systems for romanizing Chinese characters are commonly used in English: the older Wade-Giles system and the newer Pinyin system. This chart provides pronunciation guidelines for Pinyin pronunciation chart.

Initial Sounds			
Initials are always consonants and most of them are fairly similar to their English equivalents.			
Pinyin Initial	**English Equivalent**	**Examples**	**Approximate Pronunciation**
b, d, f, g, k, l, m, n, p, s, t, w, y, ch, sh	About the same as English	gou bing nei	goh bing nay
c	"ts" like in "cats"	ca, cang	tsah, tsahng
j	like the "j" in "jar", but the blade of the tongue replaces the tip against the mouth roof and the tongue tip is placed against the back of the lower teeth.	ji, jun	jee, jwin
q	like "ch" in "cheese", but the blade of the tongue replaces the tip against the mouth roof and the tongue tip is placed against the back of the lower teeth.	qi, qiao	chee, chee-yow
r	No English equivalent. Like a "j" and "r" together, as in "pleasure".	ren, run	jrun, jrwun
x	"sh" as in "she", but the blade of the tongue replaces the tip against the mouth roof and the tongue tip is placed against the back of the lower teeth.	xin, xing	sheen, shing
z	like the "dz" sound in "lids"	zou, zao	dzoh, dzow
zh	similar to the "g" in "merger"	zhou, zhao	joh, jow

Week 10

Readings: *The Essential Analects,* trans. Edward Slingerland

Monday, October 22 TA Sessions

NOTE: The Analects consists of short excerpts of Confucius' oral teachings gathered into Books in a less systematic way than we encountered with Aristotle. Your job, as we begin this section, is to read the short sayings carefully and deduce what we can learn about human nature, what it means to be a better or worse human being (ethics), and how this may or may not impact the rule of a state. Rest assured, the moral philosophy and social structure which has guided East Asia for centuries is based on these books, so see what you can glean.

Read *Confucius,* Books 1-3 [at least 2 times]

Paragraph assignment: Pick one Book of *The Analects* and analyze what Confucius has to say about how to be good.

Discussion questions: Were there any passages that seemed particularly vague? Particularly clear? What is important to Confucius according to these books? What role do learning, ritual, and leadership play for Confucius? How would you characterize his teaching style?

Tuesday, October 23 Seminars

Read *Confucius,* Books 1-3 [1 more time] and Books 4-7 [at least 2 times]

10:30 am -12:20 am
What does Confucius have to say about the nature and acquisition of virtue? What is the role of ritual for Confucius? What is filial piety and why is that important? What do you think of the suggestion that people who are deeply respectful of parents and family members are likely to act as a stabilizing influence in society? What do we learn here about Confucius himself? His disciples?

Wednesday, October 24

Read *Confucius,* 9-13 [at least 2 times] Seminars

What is the relationship of the past and present here? What do Confucius's statements about Heaven suggest about his idea of the relation between Heaven and humankind? What advice does Confucius offer to rulers and kings? What does Confucian ethics look like? Do you see any similarities/differences from Aristotle?

Thursday, October 25 Plenary

10:30-11:25 Lecture by Dr. Jennifer Prough, Christ College
"The Life of Ritual: How to be a Good Confucian"

At the break, students and faculty will adjourn to the Common Room for the lighting of the hearth fire and the announcement of the winners of the haiku contest.

11:35-12:20 Students will attend an **advising session** with Dean Stewart. Location TBA.

Saturday, October 27

Writing assignment due by noon

Week 11

Readings: *Xunzi: Basic Writings*, trans. Burton Watson, & *Mencius* excerpts (pdf)

Monday, October 29 TA Sessions

Read *Xunzi*, "Man's Nature is Evil" and "Improving oneself"
Reread, Mencius 2A6 and 6A4

NOTE: Tracking ideas in Mencius can be difficult because of the parable style; you will want to take notes of key ideas as you read.

Paragraph assignment: How does Mencius' assumptions about human nature differ from Xunzi's and how might those differences be related to their respective views on moral effort and education?

Discussion questions: What does Xunzi have to say about what it means to be human and how we can be virtuous? Can you see links with Confucius? Is there anything new or different here? What is the precise character of Xunzi's claim that human nature is evil and how might Mencius respond? How are Mencius' and Xunzi's ideas about learning different from and similar to those of Confucius? Whose classroom would you rather be in? What qualities of Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi do you think might have made them good teachers? According to each of these thinkers, how can we learn to be good?

Tuesday, October 30 Seminars

First Read *Mencius*, Books 2A5-9 and 6A1-8, 11, 16, 19; then read 1A, 3A2 & 5; 4A1-5, 9, 17, 27

10:30-11:25 am
What does Mencius have to say about what it means to be human and how we can be virtuous? Can you see links with Confucius? Is there anything new or different here? What kind of argument or evidence does Mencius use to make his points? Are the examples of "the child about to fall into a well" and "there is something every person simply wouldn't do" good evidence for the goodness of human nature? Why or why not?

11:35 am -12:20 pm
How does Mencius' view of humaneness play out in his political advice to rulers? What should the relationship between the ruler and the people be like, according to Mencius? What is the role of the past for Mencius? What is the role of rituals like a funeral? Of filial piety? Read 4A17 closely, what does it tell us about ritual propriety in Mencius' view?

Wednesday, October 31 Seminars

Read *Xunzi*, "A Discussion of Rites"

How did rituals evolve according to Xunzi? Is this persuasive to you? Why is Xunzi so moved by the public drinking ceremony? What moves him to say upon participating in it that he "understand[s] how gentle and easy the way of the true king can be" (123)? Can you think of a ritual that has similarly moved you? How would you feel about undergoing such an extended and involved funeral ritual as Xunzi describes in this section? Is it too much? On what basis would you make such an assessment? What might Xunzi say in response? Would such rituals serve as a good means for Aristotelian "habituation"?

Thursday, November 1 Seminars

Read Xunzi, "The Regulations of a King"

10:30-11:25 am

How would you characterize Xunzi as a political consultant? Does his advice square with his understanding of human nature? Many cite Xunzi as the father of legalism; is this plausible given his particular description of our various social duties? Historically, Mencius did not have the same popular influence on Confucian thought and practice as did Xunzi; what about his approach might explain why? What about Confucius' views? What is the overall worldview of the Confucians? Where are the 3 similar and different?

11:35 am -12:20 pm Writing Workshop

Saturday, November 3

Writing assignment due by noon

Week 12

Monday, November 5 TA Sessions

TBD

Tuesday, November 6 MuH Refectory

Review Xunzi, "A Discussion of Music."

10:30-12:20
What does Xunzi argue about music? Does he define "good" or "bad" music? How similar or different is this from our current conversation about music that is harmful to children, or ratings systems for music?

Wednesday, November 7 Seminars

TBD

Thursday, November 8 NO CLASS Freshman Production

Freshman Production	**10:30-12:20 a.m**.	**Dress Rehearsal**

Freshman Production	**6:30 p.m.** **Photo Call After**	**Opening Night!**

Friday, November 9 NO CLASS Freshman Production

Freshman Production
Friday: 6:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.
Saturday: 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.
Break a Leg!

Zhuangzi

Philosophical Daoism (as contrasted with religious Daoism) represents a tradition of thought and practice dramatically different from Confucianism. *Dao* (literally "Way") in Confucian thought, refers to the methods, principles, and doctrines that, followed by the ancient kings, lead to the ideal order of society, and have to be observed by the gentleman in order to cultivate the right way of human life. However, for Daoist thinkers such as Laozi and Zhuangzi, the *Dao* was thought of as the all-pervading principle and underlying source of the universe.

Not much is known about Zhuangzi (Master Zhuang). We know he was from a place called Meng and he lived somewhere between 370-301 B.C. In a literary work that combines imaginative fable and sarcastic wit, the *Zhuangzi* exposes the vapidity of traditional human thought and practice and celebrates the transcendent experience of "free and easy wandering." Though the stories are often fantastic, the book is meant to offer a realistic lesson in the uselessness of working out moral and political solutions in the warring states period. Whereas Confucius was profoundly committed to civic order, Zhuangzi suggests civilization merely cripples the human spirit. He scoffed at the project of creating a harmonious society and lampooned those who undertook it. Instead, Zhuangzi argued that the problems of the world began when we separate ourselves from the natural *Dao* by becoming "civilized." The key to human flourishing, he believed, was to relinquish the "cramped and narrow" values of human society in order to embrace the expansive, all-encompassing power of the *Dao*. However, though he believes the *Dao* encompasses both the way the world is and the way for people to live in it, he is skeptical of our ability to learn much about it through words or analysis. Despite the sharp divergence presented here between Confucianism and Daoism, it is important to know that in the next two millennia both traditions became a regular source of guidance and inspiration for the ethical, spiritual, and aesthetic lives of the Chinese people. Depending on different circumstances (in terms of life stages, areas of activity, and specific situations of an action or event, etc.), one might move between and draw on both Confucian and Daoist teachings. In such ease and openness may lie much of the richness and creativity of the pre-twentieth century Chinese intellectual tradition, with its hallmark of so-called "Three Teachings in One" (Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism).

Week 13

Reading: *Zhuangzi, Basic Writings*. Trans. Burton Watson.

Monday, November 12 TA Sessions

NOTE: Zhuangzi was not a Confucian and seems opposed to many aspects of Confucianism. Nevertheless, the work that has been gathered under his name has some formal similarities with the texts you have studied in the previous two weeks. Like the *Mencius*, the *Zhuangzi* is primarily a collection of dialogues and stories, many of which are quite difficult to interpret. Zhuangzi seems to expect readers to grasp the truth behind them almost intuitively. "The best way to approach Zhuangzi," as Burton Watson suggests in the introduction, "is not attempt to subject his thought to rational and systematic analysis, but to read and reread his words until one has ceased to think of what he is saying and instead has developed an intuitive sense of the mind moving behind the words, and of the world in which it moves." This can be difficult, but as Watson suggests, rereading and discussing these texts will often produce a rich harvest of ideas and insights. Don't worry too much if you don't grasp the meaning of every detail.

Read *Zhuangzi, Autumn Floods* [at least 2 times]

Paragraph assignment: Reread the story on page 110 that begins "Once, when Zhuangzi was fishing" one more time. Then, in a paragraph, describe in your own words what you think the story is trying to say, and what you think it might express about the Daoist vision of "the good life."

Discussion questions: How does Zhuangzi appear as a character in the text that bears his name? What sort of person does he seem to be? How would you compare and contrast him to a Confucian sage? Water appears in several forms in many of the passages in this chapter: what do the different forms of water seem to represent? There are many stories about animals in the Zhuangzi. What can these animals tell us about how to be human?

Tuesday, November 13 Seminars

Read *Zhuangzi*, "Free and Easy Wandering" (23-30); "Discussion on Making All Things Equal" (31-44); "The Secret of Caring for Life" (45-48).

10:30 am – 12:20 pm
What qualities characterize the "little" man symbolized by the cicada, mushroom, dove, or quail (see also the Lord of the River [p. 97] and the frog [pp. 108-09]) and what's wrong with them? How does Zhuangzi reach the conclusion that "those who discriminate fail to see"? Does his argument about the impossibility of fixing a standard of beauty convince you? Of our hundred joints, six organs, and nine openings, do you or should you feel closer to one or another of them? What do you think Zhuangzi means by "caring for life"? What does the example of Cook Ding tell us about a Daoist approach to life?

Wednesday, November 14 Seminars

"In the World of Men" (49-62); "The Sign of Virtue Complete" (63-72)

What does he mean by the use of being useless? What is life like in the world of men, according to Zhuangzi? Who has virtue in these chapters? Based on your reading of Zhuangzi, what does it mean to have "crippled virtue"? How would you evaluate Ju Boyu's advice to Yen Ho, along with his analogies of the praying mantis, the tiger trainer, and horse lover? How should we understand the claim that when the world has the Way, the sage succeeds, when the world is without the Way, the sage survives, and that at present, we do well to simply escape penalty? What do you make of all the crippled deformity? In what way is Zhuangzi like the Confucians? In what way is he different? Does this philosophy provide compelling ethical responses to a chaotic and violent world? How so?

Thursday, November 15 MuH Refectory Seminars

10:30-11:25 pm **"Supreme Happiness" (113-20); "Mastering Life" (121-32); review.**
What seems to be the goal of a Daoist sage? How would you evaluate Zhuangzi's attitude toward his wife's death? What would Confucius say? How should we understand the claim that mastering life has "nothing to do with wisdom, skill, determination, or courage"? Consider the examples of the drunken man falling from a cart, the boatman, the archer, the waterfall diver, and the woodworker. What do these tell us about living rightly? How do the examples of Shan Bao and Zhang Yi qualify certain conclusions we might draw?

11:35-12:20 Writing Workshop

6:30-7:30 pm: CC response to the Freshman Production, Mueller Hall Refectory

Friday, November 16

Writing assignment due at **5 p.m. on Friday.**
Happy Thanksgiving!

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*

> "Machiavelli died nearly 500 years ago, but his name lives on as a byword for cunning, duplicity, and the exercise of bad faith in political affairs" (Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction* [Oxford University Press, 1981], 1).

The life of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) epitomized many of the primary characteristics of the thriving Florentine humanism of the Italian Renaissance: a devotion to the study of history, a rediscovery of classical literatures and languages, and a commitment to the republican tradition of self-governing cities. His father Bernardo was a lawyer and scholar whose colleagues included important figures in Florence's intellectual and political circles. Bernardo provided the best education possible for his son, who excelled in his studies. When one of his teachers became first chancellor of Florence in 1498, after the fall of a regime inspired by the charismatic and controversial monk Savonarola, Machiavelli found himself (at the young age of 29, with no prior governmental experience) nominated and approved as second chancellor by the city's great council. His duties involved overseeing the administration of Florence's territories, as well as serving on a committee responsible for foreign and diplomatic relations. For the next fourteen years, Machiavelli served the Florentine republic, and during that time he was sent on diplomatic missions, wrote official reports outlining his views on military and political affairs, helped organize a Florentine militia, and suggested courses of action to the government in dealing with allies and adversaries.

Machiavelli's personal and political fortunes took a sharp downward turn in 1512, when the Florentine republic surrendered to Spain, which had formed the Holy League with Pope Julius II. The Soderini regime then in power was ejected in favor of the Medici family, and the republic was dissolved. In November of 1512 Machiavelli was dismissed from his post in the Chancery, and early the next year he was imprisoned and tortured after being accused (erroneously, it turned out) of participating in a conspiracy against the Medici. Upon his release and retirement to his farm outside Florence early in 1513, Machiavelli set to work on *The Prince*, which he hoped would win him favor and perhaps a position with his former jailers, the Medici. In this regard, Machiavelli was sorely disappointed, as there is no evidence that Lorenzo Medici, to whom he dedicated *The Prince*, ever even read the book. The Medici did, years later, commission Machiavelli to write a history of Florence, which he completed in 1525, just two years before his death.

In addition to his *Prince*, Machiavelli wrote several important and noteworthy works, including a lengthy defense of republican liberty in the form of an extended commentary on the history of Rome (*Discourses on Livy*), a treatise on military affairs and statecraft (*The Art of War*), the above-mentioned *History of Florence*, and a ribald play (*Mandragola*). But it is for his *Prince* that Machiavelli is best known. The straightforward way he advises rulers to place "practical" considerations above strict morality in an elegant political treatise has led to the antiquated and simplistic assessment that Machiavelli is a "teacher of evil." Shakespeare describes him as the "murderous machiavel" in *Henry VI*, Machiavel is a character in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, and the British philosopher Bertrand Russell dismissed *The Prince* as a "handbook for gangsters." Machiavelli's notoriety is enhanced by the rumor that *The Prince* has indeed served as a seminal guide for the traditional *mafia* and that it sat on the night-tables of both Hitler and Stalin. "Machiavellian" is defined as being marked by cunning, duplicity or bad faith.

Machiavelli is a deceptively difficult writer to read. Machiavelli wrote political works in a time of what is to us incredible political instability. Initial appearances of the meaning of a passage or a work often mask intentionally hidden purposes in *The Prince*. This has led to a naively dismissive interpretation of the text as a work of "evil." The careful reader will pay attention to whether Machiavelli's examples always confirm or support his ostensible point. Machiavelli *seems* to contradict himself at turns in *The Prince*, or at least to undermine his own points on occasion. Machiavelli roughly marks a generally recognized historico-philosophical break between the "ancients" (such as Plato and Aristotle) and the "moderns."

Week 14

Reading: Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Monday, November 26 TA Sessions

Read Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Dedicatory Letter, chs. I-IV

Paragraph question: In what way is Machiavelli's *The Prince* similar to or different from other texts we have read this semester? Please pick one text to compare/contrast to Machiavelli in your paragraph.

Discussion questions: Is it not absurd for Machiavelli to suggest in ch. III that one who would "acquire" or conquer another state should go and live there? Would this have meant that George Bush should have gone and lived in Iraq, or Barack Obama should go to live in Afghanistan? Doesn't this mean that a Prince (or a President) would then be neglecting domestic affairs?

Tuesday, November 27 Seminars

Read Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. V-XV

10:30-11:25 am
What are the main differences between republics and principalities? Which sorts of principalities are easiest to hold, and why? Which are most difficult, and why? How does Machiavelli suggest a ruler ought to behave in these latter situations? Outline the lessons Machiavelli draws from the conduct of Louis XII of France: why is he such an instructive case study? How did Alexander's situation (IV) differ from that of Louis, and which lessons does Machiavelli draw from this example? What is so difficult about ruling a state that had been accustomed to living under its own laws? What are the advantages and disadvantages of coming to power by one's own arms and abilities? Of acquiring power through good fortune or the favor of others? By wicked means? By the favor of one's fellow-citizens? What do you make of Machiavelli's examples of each of these types?

11:35am -12:20 pm
Who are Machiavelli's examples of individuals who became princes by their own virtue and not by fortune? What do you know about these historical figures, if anything? What does Machiavelli say about armed prophets versus unarmed prophets? Who is Machiavelli's leading example of teaching to a new prince? What is the lesson in the story of Remirro de Orco? What is the difference between cruelty done well and cruelty done badly? What are the two "humors" found in every city? Why do these two humors matter? How do ecclesiastical principalities differ from the other types Machiavelli considers? What is important about the various types of armed forces with which a ruler can defend his territory? What is the point of Machiavelli's retelling of the story of David, and why does it seem strange? Why is the study of war so important to Machiavelli, and how should a ruler study it? Given that he has written that "nothing is more difficult to handle, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage, than to put oneself at the head of introducing new orders" (VI), what does Machiavelli do at the beginning of ch. XV? Why does Machiavelli think that it is not possible to have "all of the above-mentioned qualities that are held good"?

Wednesday, November 28 Seminars

Read Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. XVI-XXII

What is so problematic about generosity in a ruler? What do you make of Machiavelli's conclusions about cruelty, mercy, being loved or feared, keeping promises, and avoiding contempt? What must a ruler abstain from above all? What are the two kinds of combat? How do they relate to the lion and the fox? Can you think of examples of rulers who display the traits of lion and fox (XVIII)? Why is it most necessary for a ruler to appear religious? Which lessons does Machiavelli draw from his consideration of the Roman emperors? Why would a shrewd ruler, as Machiavelli suggests, be wise to encourage opposition? What is the "best fortress one can have," and why?

Thursday, November 29 MuH Refectory Plenary

Read Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ch XXIII-XXVI

10:30 am – 11:30 am Lecture by Dr. David Western, Christ College

11:40 am – 12:20 pm Writing Workshop Seminars

Saturday, December 1

Writing assignment due at **noon**.

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was baptized on April 26, 1564 in the parish church in Stratford, a town on the river Avon in the midlands of England. When he died in 1616, he left a body of work that has led him to be hailed as the greatest writer in English. Of his life, however, we know little. His parents were John Shakespeare and Mary Arden; his father was a figure of some note in local commerce and politics. William Shakespeare was almost certainly educated at the Stratford grammar school until he was about twelve or thirteen, when his family's financial struggles prompted his withdrawal. He likely received a solid foundation in Latin literature and prose composition, giving the lie to the suggestion by his contemporary, Ben Jonson, that he was a less than stellar student, master merely of "small Latin and less Greek." He married Anne Hathaway in 1582, six months before the birth of the first of their three children. Scant and scattered references to his early experiences in London in the 1590s and early 1600s suggest that he began his theatre career as an actor. He may have been recruited by one of the traveling theatrical companies that visited Stratford, or he may have gone to London on his own initiative to make his way on the stage. The traveling companies, typically organized under the patronage of a prominent nobleman, were at this time becoming increasingly professionalized and eventually gravitated more and more to the handful of licensed theatres in London. Public theatre, though, was still a controversial matter in England in this period: London officials looked askance on dramatic productions, considering that they promoted immorality and the Puritans' closure of the theatres was only a few decades away. In Shakespeare's day, though, Queen Elizabeth's fondness for the theatre was able to counterbalance such censoriousness, and while the playhouses were shuttered intermittently during outbreaks of plague, Londoners' appetite for theatre was able to sustain several playhouses. Shakespeare is associated most with the Globe theatre, in which he owned a small stake, though production notes for *Antony and Cleopatra* suggest it was also performed at the Blackfriars theatre. Shakespeare also probably acted in private court productions for the queen as a member of Pembroke's men, a troupe that staged several of his early plays including *Henry VI* and *A Comedy of Errors*.

After an interlude in which he turned to poetry, penning *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* and winning the sponsorship of Lord Southampton, Shakespeare returned to the theatre in 1594. As a member of the Chamberlain's Men, known after the accession of James I in 1603 as the King's Men, Shakespeare enjoyed an unusually stable theatrical career. Almost all his best-known plays were written during his tenure with the company, which lasted until his retirement to Stratford in 1611. Though exact dates for his plays are difficult to establish, it is widely agreed that histories and comedies predominate amongst Shakespeare's early works and that he turned to tragedy and romance later in his career, perhaps at the point when he had earned sufficient popular and commercial success to permit an increasing amount of formal and thematic experimentation.

The Tempest was probably written in 1611, and was performed in front of King James I (the patron of "the King's Men") at Whitehall that year. Critics generally consider *The Tempest* to be Shakespeare's final, independently written play. Indeed, they have often been tempted to see Prospero's Act 5 speech (5.1.33-57) and Epilogue as Shakespeare's own farewell to the theater. *The Tempest* is the final "romance" play that Shakespeare wrote. It concludes a series of such plays that Shakespeare penned later in his life, a series that included *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1607/8), *Cymbeline* (c. 1609-1611), and *The Winter's Tale* (1610/11). Shakespeare's romances rely on fantastical, magical, and mythological elements to achieve miraculous moments of reconciliation and revelation, though they also continue themes from his earlier comedies and tragedies. They share a creative ambiguity with the so-called "problem plays" such as *Measure for Measure* and *Twelfth Night*, plays whose uncertain genres give them a sense of surprise and intrigue. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare uses magic and fantasy along with tragic, comic, and historical elements to explore the issues of kingship, culture, the cultivation of virtue, and the creative power of poetry and the theater. By leaving behind the pure realism of his history plays, Shakespeare gains a lyrical and reflective depth in a new kind of creative genre, one that consistently gestures to that which escapes our gaze, yet lurks just beyond it.

Week 15

Reading: Shakespeare, *The Tempest*.

Monday, December 3 TA Sessions

Reading: Act I

Paragraph Assignment: In light of our discussions of both Aristotle and Machiavelli, was Antonio or Prospero a better ruler of Milan?

Discussion Questions: What kind of ruler was/is Prospero? How did he lose his kingdom? How do you characterize Prospero's relationship at the outset with Miranda? Ariel? Caliban? What do we learn about Caliban from his brief appearance in Act I? What was Caliban's initial relationship with Prospero like, and why did it deteriorate? Is Prospero a slave owner?

Tuesday, December 4 Seminars

Reading: Acts II & III

10:30-11:25 am
Think about geography in *The Tempest*: how is Prospero's island the same/different from Naples and Milan? What are the characteristic activities of these places? How does the terrain differ? How are they governed? Is one place more virtuous than the other? What do you make of Gonzalo's speech (2.1.14ff), describing his ideal of government? Are we meant to side with him, or with the mockery of Sebastian and Antonio? *The Tempest* makes a point of highlighting Caliban's use/misuse of language: why does Shakespeare raise this issue? Are we supposed to pity or criticize Caliban in his encounter with Trinculo and Stephano?

11:35 am - 12:20 pm
Shakespeare sets up counter-plots to that of Ferdinand and Miranda. How do the plots of Alonso/Sebastian/Antonio and Caliban/Trinculo/Stephano compare and contrast thematically to that of Ferdinand/Miranda/Prospero? How does Ferdinand attain virtue? What kind of teacher is Prospero? What kind of ruler does he hope to form? How does Prospero's method of education compare with other theories of moral formation we have encountered this semester?

Christmas Symposium	5:00 pm	Union Ballroom

Wednesday, December 5 Seminars

Reading: Acts IV and V

Act IV contains a pageant or "masque" including Iris, Ceres, and Juno. Why does Prospero show this pageant to Ferdinand and Miranda, and why does Shakespeare include it in his play? Why does Prospero suddenly end it? Is this characteristic of Prospero? How has Prospero changed from earlier in the play? Why does Prospero use references to art and theater consistently to describe his own actions? What is the relationship between his power as an artist and his power as a ruler? Is creating a play analogous to ruling a kingdom? What do you make of Prospero's description of Caliban as "A devil, a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick"?

Thursday, December 6 MuH Refectory Plenary

Reading: Act V

10:30 am – 12:20 am Seminars
Evaluations (15-20 minutes)

How has Prospero changed over the course of the play? What, if anything, has he ultimately accomplished, socially, politically, artistically, morally? Has he been changed by his own creations? Has Caliban changed by the end of the play? Read Prospero's Epilogue carefully: What are the parallels between Ariel and Prospero? Why does he liken applause to prayer? What ultimately is the model of the ruler in *The Tempest*? How is it the same/different from that of Machiavelli?

Writing assignment (revised, peer reviewed essay and drafts with comments) due by midnight, Friday, December 7

December 8: Reading Day

December 10: Final Exams Begin