

LS 800: Reflections on Reason and Passion I

Fall 2017 | Dr. Stephen Duguid

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores a variety of texts that express or reflect upon the human passions and upon the relationship between those passions and the realms of action, will, and reason. While there is some chronological coherence in the ordering of the texts, the primary intent is to examine issues and themes that reflect human experiences, feelings and behaviours.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Following an introduction and a review of contextual issues by the instructor, each week one or more students will be asked to present the salient points or issues (as they relate to passion and reason) raised in one of the readings, followed by general discussion and debate. The week after the class, the student responsible for the animation of the discussion will submit (via e-mail to the class) a two/three page summary of the presentation and the class discussion.

In addition there will be two short (5-10 pp) written assignments over the course of the term and students will keep a journal of responses to texts and seminars.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 – Athens and Jerusalem on Beginnings

- Bible, *Genesis*, The Qur'an, *Sura 21*,
- Plato, *The Timaeus*

Week 2 – The Question of Living Well

- Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*
- Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

Week 3 – Selves and Societies

- Sophocles, *Antigone*
- Bertolt Brecht, *Antigone, A Version*
- Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*

Week 4 – The ‘Choosing Animal’

- Euripides, *Medea*
- *The Bhagavad Gita*

Week 5 – The Materialist Option

- Lucretius, *The Nature of Things*

Week 6 – Thoughts on Heaven and Hell

- Thomas More, *Utopia*
- Dante, *The Divine Comedy: Inferno*

Saturday Class

- Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Week 7 – Governing Humans

- Machiavelli, *The Prince*
- *Mencius*

Week 8 – A Gathering Storm

- Rousseau, *Discourse on The Origins of Inequality*

Week 9 – Revolutionary Moments

- Percy Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*
- Anatole France, *The Gods Will have Blood*

Week 10 – Romantic Responses

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*

Week 11 - Modern Tensions

- Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*

Week 12 – Modern Responses

- Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*
- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

Week 13 – A Philosophical Reflection on the Modern

- Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*