GNED 1202 – *Texts and Ideas*

Section 003 — Fall Session 2015

Course outline

This course serves as a cluster two, foundation level General Education requirement.

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Class time:	TR 11:00-12:20	**Instructor:**	Randy Connolly
Location:	Q-306	**E-mail:**	rconnolly@mtroyal.ca
Office:	B175-L	**Office Hours:**	Whenever my door is open (most of the time)
Telephone:	440-6061	**Web Site:**	http://www.randyconnolly.com

Calendar Description

This course explores how specific ideas shape attitudes, belief systems, and values through the perspectives of various disciplines. Through the critical reading of key texts, students will learn about the nature, origins, and relevance of one or more ideas such as "leadership," "mind", "the self," "modernity," or "the good life."

This is a multi-section course, taught differently by each of its instructors, who focus on different ideas and use different texts, assessments, and pedagogical methods to achieve the course objectives. Such variety serves as the best means to enhance learning outcomes of a diverse student population and to allow for innovations in teaching.

Topic Description for This Section: Culture in Great Cities

Cities are a vital part of the modern economy, with over half the population of the earth now living in urban centers. Cities have been *the* essential mover of culture progress throughout history. This course will focus on two paradigmatic cities of cultural invention: Athens of the 5th century BCE and Florence of the 13-16th century CE. We will also more briefly touch on two other cities: Uruk, the first city in human history, and classical Rome. For each city we will examine not only its key texts and cultural artefacts, but also the unique features of those cities and the relationship between those features and its cultural output.

Required Textbooks
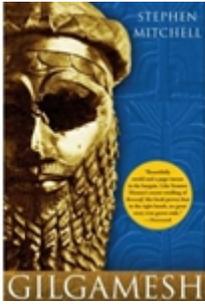
Gilgamesh, trans. Stephen Mitchell *(Atria Books)*
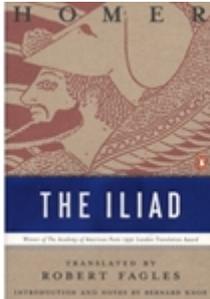
Iliad, Homer
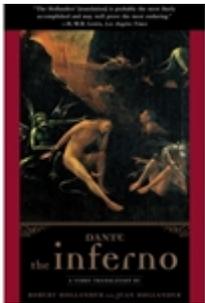
Inferno, Dante
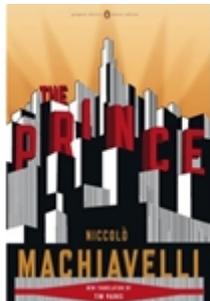
Prince, Machiavelli
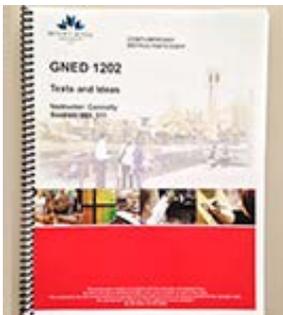
Coursepack (Herodotus, Sophocles, Thucydides, Boccaccio, Vasari, Hall)

Course Requirements and Mark Allocation

The final grade for this course will be determined as follows:

Quizzes (4 @ 2% each)	8%
Midterm October 29, 2015)	15%
Paper 1 (primary source evaluation – about 6-8 pages)	13%
Paper 2 (thematic research – about 8-12 pages)	15%
Journal (7 entries – 2% each)	14%
Class Participation	5%
Final Exam	30%

Grading

Percentage grades will be converted to letter grades as follows:

95-100	A+		67-69	C+
85-95	A		63-66	C
80-84	A-		60-62	C-
77-79	B+		55-59	D+
73-76	B		50-54	D
70-72	B-		<50	F

The University's complete grading system is described in the Calendar.

Lectures

This course is designed such that in order to do well on all assignments and the exams, good class attendance is highly recommended.

Quizzes

Quizzes will take place in the first 10 minutes of specific classes. You will be given a few days' notice in class and via Blackboard announcement for of all quizzes. If you show up late or miss a quiz day, then you will receive a zero. Certain accommodations can be made, however, for emergencies.

Writing Assignments

There are two written essay assignment as well as an (almost) weekly journal. The written assignments will provide practice in writing more substantively about texts and allow practice with academic formatting. The journal will provide frequent practice in thinking and writing about our readings.

Technology in lectures

Unless you are expecting a baby, communicating with a dying loved one, or some other emergency, please keep your phone off your desk and out of sight. In return, I promise to give you a short technology break half way through the class. Similarly, I would encourage you to use paper notes rather than a laptop; if you do use a laptop, please do not run videos, go to Facebook, check email, etc., except during your technology break.

Texting and/or non-academic laptop usage during lectures is strongly correlated with lower GPAs. There is ample research evidence for this conclusion. You might think you are different or that your occasional texting will do no harm, but this is not true. Also, there are many times in adult life (dating, family events, and business meetings come to mind) when you just need to learn how to function without technological distractions, so you might as well start practicing now.

I would encourage you to read any of the following recent articles for evidence of the deleterious effects of technological distractions on academic performance:

Carrier, L. M., Rosen, L. D., Cheever, N. A., & Lim, A. F. (2015). Causes, effects, and practicalities of everyday multitasking. *Developmental Review*, 35, 64-78.

Gaudreau, P., Miranda, D., & Gareau, A. (2014). Canadian university students in wireless classrooms: What do they do on their laptops and does it really matter?. *Computers & Education*, 70, 245-255.

David, P., Kim, J. H., Brickman, J. S., Ran, W., & Curtis, C. M. (2014). Mobile phone distraction while studying. *New Media & Society*, 1461444814531692.

Dietz, S., & Henrich, C. (2014). Texting as a distraction to learning in college students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 36, 163-167.

Gupta, N., & Irwin, J. D. (2014). In-class distractions: The role of Facebook and the primary learning task. *Computers in Human Behavior*.

Gingerich, A. C., & Lineweaver, T. T. (2014). OMG! Texting in class= u fail :(empirical evidence that text messaging during class disrupts comprehension. *Teaching of psychology*, 41(1), 44-51.

Junco, R. (2012). Too much face and not enough books: The relationship between multiple indices of Facebook use and academic performance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(1), 187-198.

Junco, R., & Cotten, S. R. (2012). No A 4 U: The relationship between multitasking and academic performance. *Computers & Education*, 59(2), 505-514.

Jacobsen, W. C., & Forste, R. (2011). The wired generation: Academic and social outcomes of electronic media use among university students. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14(5), 275-280.

Fried, C. B. (2008). In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning. *Computers & Education*, 50(3), 906-914.

Submission and Return of Written Assignments

Assignments must be submitted to the instructor by the due date. In extraordinary circumstances students may request permission for a late submission. In such cases, students must speak to the instructor prior to the due date. Problems with printers, computers, transportation, the demands of paid employment, workload in other courses, romantic problems, etc. are not grounds for special consideration.

Late Submission Penalties

The penalty for late assignments is 5% per day.

Final Examination

Note: the Registrar's Office schedules the final exam. Students must be available to write the examination on its scheduled date. Rescheduling examinations on account of holidays or paid employment is impossible.

Academic Accommodation

It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability or who requires academic accommodation, and have not registered with Accessibility Services, please call that office at 403 440-6868. You must be registered with Accessibility Services to access academic accommodation.

Academic Honesty

Students are advised that plagiarism is a serious offence and are urged to refer to section "Academic Status—Integrity of Student Work" in the University Calendar. Ignorance of the requirements of the *Code of Student Conduct* will not excuse plagiarism. If you have any doubts about what constitutes academic dishonesty or you need help with the citation of sources, please contact the instructor.

The Course Website

All students will need to access the course BlackBoard website. This site contains useful information about this course, including this document. Detailed information about the assignments and how to complete them will be on the website.

University Wide Learning Aims

The Academic Plan of 2012 articulates the "aims of an undergraduate education at Mount Royal University." Key elements of these aims are fostered as the goals of Cluster Two (below) are honoured. The liberal education core of General Education, and our Values, Beliefs, and Identity cluster specifically, entail special attention to four of these aims: critical reading, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, and ethical reasoning.

Critical reading and critical and creative thinking will be fostered by way of critical engagement with texts (broadly construed). Such engagement will often require the retrieval of ideas from historically remote sources. Students will hone their skills for picking out relevant ideas, identifying critical moves in argument, and reconstructing and assessing arguments for their validity. Students will learn to differentiate forms of criticism and evidence as they wrestle with conceptual claims on one end of the spectrum and empirical claims on the other end. A crucial basic habit fostered should be that of questioning things in general.

Written and oral communication will be fostered by inclusion of a strong written component for evaluation of students in all Cluster Two courses. Students will practice such key composition / articulation skills as:

- stating clearly their purpose and methodological-disciplinary orientation,
- providing explicit summaries of how their conclusion (s) are to be defended,
- debating their own informed views in dialogic fashion with the authors and ideas they encounter,
- rehearsing, in their own words, the arguments they are assessing,
- effectively structuring arguments of their own.

In terms of basic writing skills students will practice, and demonstrate:

- effective grammatical form,
- effective organization of sentences, paragraphs, and essays to achieve unity and coherence,
- effective writing style and organization appropriate to a particular purpose and audience.

In terms of verbal communication, students will receive practice in articulating their thoughts to their peers within the classroom.

Ethical reasoning will emerge as by-product of the above aims. A key habit to be fostered in students is a disposition to question all things, including the values, beliefs, and identities of themselves and others; this questioning entails ethical reasoning. Ethical reasoning also underwrites the skills of articulation and composition emphasized above

General Education Goals

Three characteristics are common to all General Education Cluster Two courses:

1. A text based approach (texts being broadly construed),
2. A presupposition-less approach to textual analysis, and
3. A strong written component for the evaluation of students.

General Education Cluster Two goals:

These courses provide students with the opportunity to critically explore the values, beliefs, and ideas that shape, and are shaped by, human experience. The understandings and senses of meaning expressed by individuals, communities, and societies through their art, music, literature, philosophy, and critical thought will be explored. Students will also have the opportunity to explore the various media through which cultural expression takes place. They will consider the impact of technology upon both the media and the content of cultural expression.

The goals of study within this cluster are:

1. An understanding of the principal ideas and cultural traditions that have informed modern Canadian society;

2. An appreciation of the diverse cultural traditions found across the world;

3. The study of texts, works of art, and bodies of thought that are of historical significance in the development of Western and non-Western cultures;

4. The study of texts, works of art, and bodies of thought that are significant in contemporary perceptions of the character of both Western and non-Western cultures, and that are significant in the interactions of Western and non-Western cultures;

5. An appreciation of influential religious, philosophical, and ethical perspectives;

6. An appreciation of contemporary understandings of the nature and development of personality, personal identify, and social interaction as expressed in psychology, philosophy, art, and other subjects and practices;

7. An understanding of the principal methods of study in the humanities and social sciences including relevant research and information retrieval skills.

We will be encountering a wide range of cultural experiences and time frames in this course as well as reading a wide variety of texts. Thus perhaps the most important of the above goals this course tries to achieve is goal #7, straight forward reading. The capacity to make thoughtful and steady progress through significant texts is an elemental skill, and acclimatizing the student to this skill is a primary goal.

Through a perspective informed by the disciplines of history, philosophy, and art history, the lectures and the readings in this course will also aim to achieve goals #2, #3, #4, and #5.

Tentative Schedule

	Content	Assessment
Sep 10	Intro, Writing Systems	
Sep 15	Mesopotamia	
Sep 17	*Gilgamesh*	
Sep 22	Homeric Context	
Sep 24	Homeric Context	
Sep 29	*Iliad*	**Quiz 1**
Oct 1	**class cancelled**	
Oct 6	Greek Golden Age	
Oct 8	Greek Golden Age	
Oct 13	Greek Golden Age	
Oct 15	Greek Golden Age	**Quiz 2**
Oct 20	Greek Golden Age	
Oct 22	Greek Golden Age	
Oct 27	Rome	**Journal Part 1 Due**
Oct 29	**Midterm**	**Midterm**
Nov 3	Medieval	
Nov 5	Medieval	**First Essay Due**
Nov 10	Medieval	
Nov 12	**Reading Day**	
Nov 17	Renaissance	**Quiz 3**
Nov 19	Renaissance	
Nov 24	Renaissance	
Nov 26	Renaissance	
Dec 1	Renaissance	**Quiz 4**
Dec 3	Renaissance	**Journal Part 2 Due**
Dec 8	Review	**Second Essay Due**