

**Communication and Culture CMCL 501 Lec 01**  
**Modernity**  
**Winter 2013**  
**MW 14:00-15:20**

**Instructor:** Dr. Marcia Epstein  
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**Location:**  
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**Course Description**

A critical and inter-disciplinary examination, via classic texts, of the meaning of Modernity in western and non-western contexts. Focus will be on major ideas, principles, and their implications within the time frame of the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as reflections on the values implied by modernity.

**Additional Information**

See end of syllabus for outline of readings and assignment guide.

Attendance in class is advisable, since discussion of readings in class will provide significant content. If you need to be absent, ask a classmate to provide you with notes: sharing is encouraged.

**Objectives of the Course**

- (1) Provide an overview of a cultural configuration in which we, to some extent, all live;
- (2) Learn how to interpret classic texts in an inter-cultural context;
- (3) Understand Modernity from a critical perspective and come up with cultural strategies that may help to heal some of the dysfunctions associated with Modernity;
- (4) Explore Modernity from a variety of perspectives

(5) Develop writing and presentation skills

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

No restriction on the use of laptops in class if they are used to take notes or find information relevant to the class, and if there is *no disturbance of other students or the instructor*. Phones must be turned off during class time unless you are a health care or law enforcement professional with appropriate ID.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

The following texts are all required and have been 'bundled' together to reduce costs:

D. Gochberg, Surjit Dulai, Anibal Gonzalez, Edward Graham, Kenneth W. Harrow, and P. Melendez, eds., *World Literature and Thought, Vol. III, The Modern World to 1900* (Fort Worth: Harcourt, 2001).

E. Knoebel, ed., *Classics of Western Thought, Vol. III, The Modern World* (n.p.: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning, 1988).

L.S. Cunningham and John J. Reich, *Culture and Values, Vol. II, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. With Readings* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010).

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

Essay, Due in class Feb. 4 ----- 30%  
Group Project,  
    Due in class March 13 (papers);  
    Presentation dates in March TBA -----30%  
Final Exam, 2 hours  
    Registrar Scheduled -----30%  
Participation (class discussion,  
commentaries, Blackboard, etc. -----10%

### **Assignment Guide**

**(A) Essay** Due Date: Feb. 4, 2013 (in class)

Length: 4-6 pages double-spaced

Goal: *Evaluation and Response*

Method:

(i) find an advertisement, TV show, piece of music, or some cultural artifact that reflects the ideal way of life associated with modern or pre-modern culture (if the latter, contrast it with modernity)

(ii) justify your choice;

(iii) compare the foregoing ideal with a modernist ideal appearing in one or two of the texts you have read so far;

(iv) conclude by considering whether that ideal way of life is 'meaningful' or worthwhile from your personal perspective, and what might improve it.

### **(B) Group project or paper**

Due Date: March 11, 2013 unless submitted as part of a group presentation project and then due on day of project presentation. A group will normally consist of 2-3 members.

Length: (if paper) 7-9 pages double-spaced; (if presentation) 20 min.

Goal: *Critique of Modernity*

Method:

Developing your own definition of modernity on the basis of what you have read in the course and experienced in your life, write an essay --or script, illustrate and prepare a presentation -- with the following elements:

(i) your definition of modernity;

(ii) what you base your definition on;

(iii) which of the course texts best represents that definition;

(iv) what is right and what is wrong with modernity (in a group situation you may disagree and present a debate or skit)

**Note:** While there is no upper limit on the number of course texts you can use, you should include at least three. Proper footnoting is expected.

If the project is done as part of a group, then any format may be utilized for presentation: skit, debate, video or short film, slide show, etc. There must be a detailed record to hand in, including documentation of all sources used.

### **Participation**

Since this course is based in part on *discussion* of assigned readings, students must be present in class, and familiar with the assigned readings, as often as possible. For those who prefer not to speak up in the group, an option is provided for written discussion on Blackboard. The participation grade is based on these factors and on taking responsibility for raising questions and opinions in discussions.

**Note:** All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

### **Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes**

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

### **Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

### **Grading System**

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

	Grading Scale	Meaning (for written assignments):
A+	96-100	Professional quality work
A	90-95.99	Outstanding and well expressed

A -	85-89.99	Excellent; needs more attention to detail
B+	80-84.99	Very good; well expressed
B	75-79.99	Good: basic expectations are met
B-	70-74.99	Good: needs more attention
C+	65-69.99	Shows promise; improvements needed
C	60-64.99	Adequate: covers the basics only
C-	55-59.99	Barely adequate
D+	53-54.99	Shows gaps in comprehension
D	50-52.99	Grim: see me immediately
F	0-49	Failing

***NB: Hard work does not merit an A unless it produces outstanding results.***

(Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.)

### **Plagiarism**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

### **Academic Misconduct**

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

### **Students' Union**

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

### **Student Ombudsman**

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

### **Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points**

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

### **"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

### **Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site: <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/ethics/cfreb>

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

*(A complete schedule will be posted on Blackboard in the week before classes start.)*

Abbreviations: CWT,III = *Classics of Western Thought*, Vol. III  
WLT,III = *World Literature and Thought*, Vol. III  
C&V,II = *Culture and Values*, Vol. II

**January 9 : Introduction : What Modernity means and why it matters**

### **(A) Basic Humanity: Life, Love, Death**

Jan. 14: Oral Traditions – The Americas: WLT,III, 499-512

– Africa and Afro-America: WLT,III, 513-534; C&V,II, 517-524; WLT,III,  
561-568

Jan. 16: European and American Romantic Poetry: C&V,II, 423-426; 451-452;705-707;  
CWT,III, 260-270; WLT,III, 617-620