

PHIL 177 Philosophy and Literature

Syllabus
Spring 2019
MW 6:00-7:20 pm
Solis Hall
Room 110

Andy Lamey
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Office: HSS 7017
M: 3:30-4:30 pm W 2:30-3:30 pm

Content

This class brings philosophical analysis to bear on literary texts. We will read three excellent novels with an eye to the philosophical questions they raise, particularly as they concern moral and political questions. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a classic of modern literature that has had an enormous impact on modern culture. We will trace and discuss its preoccupation with moral skepticism and moral prejudice. Brian Moore's *Black Robe* vividly narrates the early contact of European missionaries with native North Americans. To what degree does the book's depiction of Indigenous people support or undermine Hobbes's notion of the state of nature? Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is a major work of dystopian fiction set in an alternative reality in which religious fundamentalists have taken over the United States and proclaimed it the Republic of Gilead. We will investigate how the book's authoritarian regime employs and exploits philosophies as diverse as Platonism and Marxism to exert control over its subjects. We will also make time to address other questions as they arise in the course of our discussions. Students can do well with no philosophical background.

Assessment

A 1,500-word essay due 5:00 pm Tuesday April 23 (25%)

A 2,000-word essay due 5:00 pm Tuesday May 21 (25%)

A 2,000-word essay due during exam week (35%) Class Participation (15%)

The key to doing well in this class is staying current with the weekly readings.

Readings and Schedule

There are three assigned texts, all available at the bookstore and on reserve at the library:

- 1) *Heart of Darkness*, by Joseph Conrad. New York: Penguin, 1999 [1902].
- 2) *Black Robe*, by Brian Moore. Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2006 [1985].
- 3) *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood. New York, Anchor, 1998 [1986].

The above are the editions the instructor will be using, but you do not need to use the same edition: any edition of each book will be fine.

In addition we will read several philosophical chapters and articles, which will be available on TritonEd.

Week One: Introduction to Phil 177 and *Heart of Darkness*

Monday: Intro to Phil 177 and *Heart of Darkness*

Wed: *Heart of Darkness*, Part One.

Week Two: *Heart of Darkness*

Mon: *Heart of Darkness*, Parts Two and Three

Wed: Arneson, Richard. "Marlow's Skepticism in *Heart of Darkness*." *Ethics* 94/3 (1984): 420-440.

Week Three: *Heart of Darkness* and *Black Robe*

Mon: Brudney, Daniel. "Marlow's Morality." *Philosophy and Literature* 27/2 (2003): 318-340.

Wed: *Black Robe*, Chapters One to Four.

Week Four: *Black Robe*

Mon: *Black Robe*, Chapters Five to Eight.

Wed: *Black Robe*, Chapters Nine to 12.

Week Five: The State of Nature

Mon: Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1968), selections.

Wed: Taylor, Charles. "Atomism," in *Philosophical Papers Volume II: Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 187-210.

Week Six: *The Handmaid's Tale*

Mon: *The Handmaid's Tale*, Chapters One to Nine.

Wed: *The Handmaid's Tale*, Chapters 10 to 18, and Goldberg, Michelle. "Not the Fun Kind of Feminist." *The New York Times*, February 22, 2019.

Week Seven: *The Handmaid's Tale*

Mon: *The Handmaid's Tale*, Chapters 19 to 25.

Wed: Provencal, Vernon. "Byzantine in the Extreme: Plato's *Republic* in *The Handmaid's Tale*." *Classical and Modern Literature* 19/1 (1998), 53-76.

Week Eight: *The Handmaid's Tale*

Mon: *The Handmaid's Tale*, Chapters 26 to 32.

Wed: Plato, "Book V," *The Republic* (1991). Allan Bloom, trans. Second Edition. New York: Basic Books, 127-62.

Week Nine: *The Handmaid's Tale*

Mon: No class (Memorial Day).

The Handmaid's Tale, Chapters 33 to 40.

Week Ten: *The Handmaid's Tale*

Mon: Wed: *The Handmaid's Tale*, Chapters 41 to 46 and Historical Afterward.

Wed: Shklar, Judith. "The Liberalism of Fear," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, Nancy Rosenblum ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989, 21-38.

General Information

Office Hours

I keep both normal and electronic office hours. Drop by in person or contact me via Skype (ID: andy_lamey) or Facetime. I am also available immediately after class or by appointment. I am always happy to discuss any aspect of this course with you.

Email Policy

I am happy to reply to emails sent from UCSD email addresses. I do not reply to emails from non-UCSD addresses. Please note that there are two subjects I do not discuss by email, even if they are sent from a UCSD account. These are:

- a) Requests for information about the exam that arrive in the 24-hour period immediately preceding the exam.
- b) Requests to adjust your final class grade. If you have an issue with your grade please make an appointment to discuss it during my office hour next quarter.

Submission

All essays will be submitted electronically. Hard copies are not required.

One-time Discretionary Essay Extension

I am happy to grant each student one essay extension of up to 48 hours without requiring a medical certificate or other documentation. In order to grant such an extension I need to receive your request before noon on the day

the essay in question is due. Email is fine, but please note that UCSD's email servers sometimes go down, and students are advised not to leave their requests to the last minute. Requests received after noon on the due date will require documentation, as will requests for extensions longer than 48 hours. Please note that if you receive an extension your paper may be returned a few days after those that were completed on time.

Note that each student is entitled to only one discretionary essay extension. So if you receive one for your first essay, any extension for the second essay will require documentation.

Late Work

For all assignments handed in after the due date and without an extension, a five percent penalty applies for the first day of the missed deadline. After that, a subsequent penalty of two percent per day will be applied for the next thirteen calendar days after the due date (including Saturdays and Sundays). No assignment can be accepted after more than fourteen calendar days except in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with your professor. Assignments that are handed in late without an extension will be graded and returned after those that were completed on time and will not receive comments.

Note that there is no option to complete assignments for bonus marks.

Accommodation for Disability

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. Contact the OSD for further information: 858.534.4382 (phone), osd@ucsd.edu (email), disabilities.ucsd.edu (web)

Academic Integrity

Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. More information about UCSD's policy on academic integrity is available at <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/appendices/2>

Technology in the Classroom

Please note that until further notice, laptops and tablets are not permitted in lecture. Your TA will let you know what the policy is in discussion group.

Waitlist

Students will be admitted to this class according to their place on the waitlist.

Exams

If this class has an exam all students except those registered with the OSD are required to take it on the scheduled day and time.