

**Humanities 124**  
**Spring Semester 2009**  
**Instructor: Dr. Peg Downes,**  
**Professor, Dept. of Literature & Language**  
**Office: Karpen Hall 203**

**Class Meetings:**        **Mondays, 11:25-12:35, Lipinsky Auditorium—please sit on the right-hand side as you face the stage, in rows B,C,D,E.**  
**Tues. & Thurs., 11-12:10 Karpen Hall 006**

**Required Texts** (These specific titles and editions are available at the UNCA Bookstore):

***\*\*If you have a different translation of any of these, talk with me: it may well be usable.***

Fiero, ed., The Humanistic Tradition, 5th edition, Vol 1

Hook, Moseley, Peters, eds., The Asheville Reader, Vol 1

Miller, ed., The Bhagavad-Gita

Weller, ed., Plato, The Trial and Death of Socrates

Kovacs, ed., The Epic of Gilgamesh

Fagels, ed., The Iliad

Clay, The Trojan Women

Virgil, The Aeneid (Mandelbaum translation)

**First Discussion: What constitutes a “civilization”?**

We’ll consider lots of possibilities, including these two: “Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortaliz tangunt”—as Aeneas says, “There are tears for things, and death touches the mind.” And—the connection, at root (etymons), between *to know* and *to narrate*.

**Office Hrs.:** *Usually, I can see you immediately—I give my students top priority.* Regular office hours: **M 4-5, T 1-2:30, W 9-11.** I’m happy to meet with you at other times--just contact me: 251-6577 (office), 253-6026 (home), downes@unca.edu.

**Important Note:** Our discussions and tests will focus on the *primary-source materials*: i.e., on writings and artifacts produced by men and women who lived and worked during the eras we’ll be studying. Although there are some primary-source materials in our Fiero textbook—including illustrations of art & architecture—much of Fiero’s book is not primary-source material.

**However:** you need to read the assigned sections of Fiero, as well as what’s assigned from the other books, in order to better understand the primary sources—their historical context, for example. Knowing something about a work’s context and audience is essential to understanding it. Reading primary sources can be more difficult—but also more exciting than reading someone else’s “digestion” of those.

**\*\*You will be tested (exams, and pop quizzes) on the material from these readings, even if this material is not discussed in class.** Should you have questions about the readings, be sure to raise them—in class, or outside of class. **Take good notes in class, and at the lectures. Exams will include materials from the large-group lectures, as well as from class discussions.**

**PURPOSE OF THIS CLASS:**

HUM 124 looks at several ancient civilizations for purposes of comparison and contrast with our own—and simply to enjoy experiencing good thoughts that are excellently presented. Since this is a “humanities” course (this is the traditional academic designation for studies that aren’t “natural science” or “social science”) we’ll focus on “humanities areas”: literature,

philosophy, history, religion, and the arts. (“Humanities” doesn’t mean “the general study of human beings.”)

This course examines many ideas, values, and world-views of people (just like us) who lived in ancient times. There’s plenty of variety (thanks to differing conditions and traditions) and plenty of overlap—because humans at all times and in all places are more alike than it first may appear. We’ll look at how people were thinking and living and believing during several millennia.

We’ll discuss “Western” materials to help us discover how--for good or for ill—some of those ideas are at the root of the way we may still tend to think about ourselves--about our “human rights,” for example, or about nature, community, or religion. Whether we’re discussing familiar or unfamiliar ideas, these will provide us with a chance to explore the “whys” of our assumptions, and to consider alternate models and world-views, toward improving our society and our world.

This course should encourage you to *rethink* the ways you think: either to confirm these, or to challenge and to improve these. Your participation in discussions is expected—reflections, questions, ideas, interpretations.

### **Course Objectives:**

- Improve your reading, thinking, writing, and discussing;
- Recognize and evaluate differing values and world-views, both past and present;
- Increase your understanding of people from different times, cultures, and backgrounds;
- Become acquainted with different ethical values and make your own reasoned judgments about ethical problems and issues.

### **Course Policies:**

**If anything is unclear**, please don’t hesitate to ask me about it.

**Participation** is essential. Although I will lecture, much class time will be devoted to discussion; therefore, the success of this course (for you and for your classmates) depends on your preparation and willingness to share your ideas. Question, comment, make connections, and *encourage your classmates* to contribute. Be prepared for each class meeting. Expect regular, unannounced quizzes. Along with quizzes, other assignments—such as preparation of discussion questions sent to you on e-mail (\*you are required to have, and to check, your UNCA account)—are required and will contribute to your overall class participation grade.

Students sometimes are shy about the value of their ideas: I’ll encourage you to overcome this, since it’s pretty awful to become an adult who can’t, or won’t, say what he or she thinks. Realize, though, that your ideas are part of a quest: keep an open mind; understand that your ideas will change as you consider alternatives and have new experiences.

**Plagiarism:** You must acknowledge any use of someone else’s **words or ideas** by using quotation marks and/or the appropriate documentation (endnote, footnote). **If you plagiarize, you will receive a zero on that assignment, and will be reported to the Dean** (per university policy). For further information: See “UNCA Policy on Plagiarism” in your *Student Handbook*. I’m hard on plagiarists.

**Absences:** Effect of absences on final grade: *Each absence after 3 absences--from class or from Monday’s lectures--can lower your final grade by one letter.* **N.B.** (“nota bene,” or “note well”): **It’s your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet** passed around at each Monday lecture, so be sure to sit with our class. If you don’t sign the sheet, you will be marked absent. **N.B.:** If you come to the lecture late, or leave early, you will be marked absent, unless you have cleared this with me ahead of time.

**If you are absent, you are nonetheless responsible for knowing what went on in class**—a changed assignment, for example. **Get contact information** for a couple of classmates so they can fill you in before the next class, and **don’t hesitate to contact me** for more information or clarification.

Students must have the required **textbooks** and **bring them to class**.

**Take notes**, and review these a.s.a.p after class, and after the Monday lectures: This WILL raise your grades (studies show). You don't need to write down full sentences; write down important words—and then go back, soon after a class, and fill in the ideas while your recall can still be triggered by those important words. I'm happy to help you fill in the gaps.

**No make-up exams** unless arranged in advance. **Quizzes cannot be made up.**

**Due-dates are firm**: so be wise, and complete assignments ahead of time. (Printers don't always work when you want them to: so work ahead.) A **late assignment** will be down-graded one letter for each day (not class meeting) it is late: papers received after the required time on the due-date will lose one letter-grade for that, and another letter-grade for each day (not class meeting) late. **Late papers will be graded, but returned otherwise unmarked.**

No **grade of Incomplete** unless the student is in good standing and has suffered some catastrophe at the end of the course that makes it impossible to complete a particular assignment (per university policy).

If you have a **learning disability**, this needs to be recognized by the Office of Student Services before an instructor can make any accommodations.

## ***TWO PAPERS:***

**Format** for both papers: **MLA Style** (Ask, if you're not familiar with this.)

**Audience** for both papers: good HUM 124 students

**Grades on Papers**: If your paper has more than a very few editing errors and is not revised to flow smoothly, it cannot receive more than a C: your ideas ARE what's written there. If the paper's sloppy, then so are the ideas.

a **C** is the grade given to an "OK" paper; a **B**, for a very good paper; and an **A**, for an outstanding paper. (**See *The A Paper*, attached.**)

--In class, we'll discuss these (and maybe other) aspects of writing a strong, convincing paper:  
*need for a title*

*use of MLA format*

*what's written is your thinking ("you can't dance badly, and claim the dance is good.")*

*audience*

*the use of "I," contractions, etc.*

*editing and revising: the difference (both essential)*

*writing efficiently*

*a paragraph as a unit of thought*

*transitions*

*research papers: conversing with the experts*

*plagiarism*

--I'll be happy to talk with you about how to produce a great paper; and be sure to use UNCA's **Writing Center**, in the library.

- 1. Epiphanic Paper**: 2 pages. Topic: Something specific and insightful about Mesopotamian literature (*Gilgamesh*, or something else: I'd suggest you concentrate on one piece, but you might want to do some comparisons between pieces). Your thesis (the specific thing you're proving to us, or revealing to us) needs to be tight, specific, interesting. I would be very happy to brainstorm with you about your ideas, and we'll talk about some possibilities in class. **Due Fri., Jan. 30, by 4 PM.**

**2. Service-Learning Term Paper:** 7-8 pages.

Research for your term paper will help you toward contemporary, “real-world” insights concerning the topic of your choice from the list at the end of these instructions for this paper (\*or talk with me about an alternative topic). Your paper will analyze what you learn about that particular topic, from:

- (1) reading primary works written in ancient times;
- (2) seeing how the topic comes to life (or doesn't) in today's world; and
- (3) considering what scholars have to say about the topic—ancient, or contemporary, or at or about any time period in between.

•You are asked to perform 12 hours of volunteer service for a non-profit agency of your choice. UNCA's Key Center for Service-Learning (Highsmith Union) can help you to find a site that you'll enjoy. I'll be happy to help, too, to find a volunteer-site that fits your schedule and your interests. If you already know where you want to do your service/fieldwork, talk with me about this.

•You'll need to refer with insight and intelligence to at least 7 primary-source works that have been assigned from our texts for this class.

You'll need to incorporate ideas from 3 full-length scholarly articles, or book-chapters—ideas related to your topic and experiences, ideas that you can “converse” with. Find scholars' ideas that you can respond to: by no means do you need to respond to all or even most of the ideas in any of your 3 sources. See what these experts have to say; think: what do YOU think, about what they say? How do they help you to think, to understand? Comment on that: YOU'RE the main voice for this paper—they're just invited in to say something that you can respond to. Don't let their authority overwhelm your thoughts and observations. Instead, let their ideas sharpen your thoughts and observations. I'm interested in YOUR ideas, as you respond] to THEIR ideas: the focus is on YOU, THINKING.

•Near the end of the semester, you are required to do a short (approx. 5-min.) presentation of your findings, using PowerPoint or something else to bolster your oral presentation (i.e., you need to have more than just your “talking head.”)

**Doing this project will help you to make the black-and-white ancient world come to life: you'll see it in multiple dimensions, rather than in simplified generalities and “rules.”**

**I look forward to learning with you as your project progresses: COME TALK!**

***Steps (“Pre-Parts”) toward the final service-learning term paper will be due as we go along through the semester; these count toward the final paper's grade:***

A. up to 10 points on the term paper grade: Due **Thurs., Feb. 19**—hand in with Exam I. *What, Where, and Why:* What topic have you chosen? What kind of volunteer work have you signed up to do? Where? Who is the supervisor, and what's his/her contact information? Why have you chosen this particular work? (\*I'll be happy to talk with you about this ahead of time—don't wait until close to Feb. 19, though, or you'll lose points by not being ready on time.)

B. Half-way Point Report—10 points on the term paper grade: Due **Monday, March 30,** immediately after the large-group lecture: give it to me on your way out. This report needs to include: (1) an annotated bibliography of your 3 scholarly sources—this means full (MLA Style) bibliographic information, plus a ½ pg. paragraph on each scholarly source: what points does he/she make that help you to think about your topic? (2) a ½-pg. “progress paragraph”, telling me how things are going, what progress you're making; (3) the likely thesis (i.e., what specifically are you arguing for, or pointing out, about your chosen topic?) and its major supporting points; (4) a statement from you that, yes, you have completed at least half (six) of the required hrs. of volunteering.

Final Service-Learning Term Paper is due by Monday, April 20, 4 PM.

***SERVICE-LEARNING TERM PAPER TOPICS—if you have another idea, let's talk:***

clothing and ideas about the physical self  
the hero  
the importance of ritual  
the meaning of death  
what is worth fighting for?  
what is worth dying for?  
friendship  
foreigners  
woman's roles  
the physical self  
the highest value(s)  
concepts of the Self  
concepts of the Other/Community  
concepts of Nature  
concepts of God/god/spirituality  
what is worth study?  
what is the source of power?  
the right to authority  
violence  
the built environment  
pride  
deadly sins  
primary virtues  
one particular civilization: its ancient roots' effects in that civ. today

**Exams:** Dates are on syllabus. Essays and Identifications. You'll have some choice and some information ahead of time about what will be asked.

**Quizzes:** unannounced, frequent, not difficult, if you've read the assignment carefully, and have taken notes at the lectures. You may use notes but not books during these quizzes, which will be on materials (large-group Monday lectures included) assigned for that day. **Grades on quizzes will be incorporated into exam grades**—this will be explained in class.

**Final Grade:**

***\*ALL assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Effect of absences on final grade: as explained above.*** (A = 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 65-69; F: 64 and below)

10%	Short paper on Mesopotamian lit.
20%	Service-Learning Term Paper
20% <u>each</u>	Exams I and II
20%	Final Exam (check on-line for date and time)
10%	Participation in discussions

**\*EXTRA CREDIT on exams for attending approved Cultural Events:** Any UNCA-sponsored event is acceptable. Other cultural events may be, but you must get my permission ahead of time. For each event attended, hand in a one-page typed report (12-pt. font, dbl. spaced, 1" margins) reflecting on *what you learned*—I don't want a summary of the event. Each report can earn you up to 2 points on an exam: maximum of 5 reports/exam. 2 points for excellent ("A") paper, 1 point for "B" or "C" paper, no points for papers less than "C" quality. Report(s) must be handed in with the exam they'll be helping.

## The A Paper:

### Paper's Purpose:

- Title expresses subject and tone interestingly, succinctly
- Purpose is clear from start to finish
- Ideas are thoughtful, original
- Writer "converses" with sources
- Essay responds directly to assigned topic

### Development:

- Thesis (the main idea; the question to be answered throughout; what is to be proven) is imaginatively, logically, and precisely developed
- Analysis guides development
- Argument can be followed without reader's befuddlement: ideas flow, thought unfolds clearly, neatly

### Organization:

- Well-organized: not mechanical or imposed (e.g., the "five-paragraph theme" model, which usually does not fit college-level topics well)
- Introduction and conclusion: clear, interesting, lead reader to engage thoughtfully with the essay's topic

### Source Materials:

- Writer's voice predominates, "conversing" with authors of sources
- Sources are scholarly, not "popular"
- References to materials are appropriate and significantly related to essay's purpose
- Citations are made in accordance with MLA guidelines
- No sign of plagiarism

### Sentence Structure and Fluency:

- Sentences are varied in length and structure, for rhetoric and interest
- Transitions are consistently clear throughout paper: ideas flow

### Voice/Word Choice:

- Concrete, specific words used correctly
- Diction is distinctive and mature, though not "over-written"
- Words and phrasings are appropriately aimed at specific audience
- No clichés or trite expressions

### Conventions:

- Virtually free from grammatical/mechanical errors

**Humanities 124**  
**Core Syllabus**

(Week 1, begins Wed. Jan. 14)

Readings: Fiero 1-17, 36-45, **Epic of Gilgamesh**, The Asheville Reader (**AR**): “Reading a Primary Text from Antiquity”, “Essay on Translation” (appendices), Hammurabi

(Week 2, begins Jan. 19)

No lecture: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Readings: Continue epic of **Gilgamesh**, other Mesopotamian literature

(Week 3, begins Jan. 26)

Egypt (Dr. Hopes)

Fiero 19-35; **AR**: Sinuhe, Love Poems, Instruction of Amenemope

**DUE**: Friday, Jan. 30, 4 PM: Epiphanic Paper.

(Week 4, begins Feb. 2)

China (Dr. Hardy)

Readings: Fiero 61-65, 158-170; **AR**: Confucius, Laozi, The Book of Songs, Han Feizi

(Week 5, begins Feb. 9)

India (Dr. Ho)

Readings: Fiero 58-61; **Bhagavad Gita**

(Week 6, begins Feb. 16)

Buddhism (Dr. Falls)

Readings: **AR**: Selected Buddhist Texts (all)

Thursday, Feb. 19: **Exam I. DUE**: Hand in with Exam: "Part A" of "Pre-Parts" for Service-Learning Term Paper

(Week 7, begins Feb. 23)

The Iliad and Warfare (Dr. Hardy)

Readings: **Iliad**; Fiero vol. I 67-73, 76-77

(Week 8, begins Mar. 2)

Greek City-States and Greek Tragedy (Dr. Mills)

Fiero 78-93; **The Trojan Women**; **AR**: Lyric Poetry (all); Herodotus (excerpt on 297-321), Thucydides

**Spring Break: No classes, the week of March 9**

(Week 10, begins Mar. 16)

Ancient Philosophy (Dr. Hook)

Readings: Fiero 94-105; Plato’s “Apology of Socrates” from **Trial and Death of Socrates**; **AR**: Pre-Socratic Philosophers, Aristotle

(March 27: Undergraduate Research Symposium Day-No Classes)

(Week 11, begins Mar. 23)

Persia, Zoroastrianism and Alexander the Great (Dr. Hopes)

Readings: Fiero 56-57, 122-128; **AR**: Plutarch, Zarathustra, Epicurus, Cleanthes, Epictetus

Thursday, March 26: **Exam II.**

(Week 12, begins Mar. 30)

Second Temple Judaism (Dr. Kaplan)

Readings: Fiero 46-57; **AR**: Judges, Maccabees, Josephus

**DUE: Monday, March 30, "Part B" of "Pre-Parts" for Service-Learning Term Paper**

(Week 13, begins Apr. 6)

Rome, Republic to Empire (Dr. Hook)

Republic Readings: Fiero 129-143; **AR**: Livy (excerpts on 447-455, 468-481), Polybius;

Empire Readings: **AR**: Augustus, Tacitus; **Aeneid**

(Week 14, begins Apr. 13)

Early Christianity (Dr. Moseley)

Readings: **AR**: Dead Sea Scrolls, Matthew, Acts, 1 Corinthians;

Diary of Perpetua at [www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua-excerpt.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua-excerpt.html)

(Week 15, begins Apr. 20)

Gender and Sexuality in Antiquity (Prof. Driggers)

Readings: **AR**: Gorgias, Musonius Rufus; Sappho, poems 1, 4, and 8, as well as the Shorter Fragments, found at <http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/rayor.shtml>.

**DUE: Monday, Apr. 20, 4 PM: Service-Learning Term Paper**

(Week 16, Apr. 27)

Art of the Classical World (Dr. McClain); Fiero 106-122, 143-157

(Week 17, May 4)

**Reports on Service-Learning Term Papers**: comment on what you learned, including (1) what one scholar contributed to your thinking, and (2) how the ancient compares with the contemporary, in regard to your chosen topic.