

HONS 1101 - Colloquium on the Ancient World Fall 2025

Course Description:

In this course we examine the ancient civilizations of the Middle East, East Asia, Greece, Rome, and North Africa through reading and discussion of their literature, history, philosophy, science, religion, and political and social thought. As is the case with all four of the Honors colloquia, this course is structured by two overarching questions. The first question asks how various understandings of what it means to be human lead to particular understandings of political and social life (or vice versa). Another way of framing this question is to ask, “What is the best way to live?” The second question is concerned with what constitutes knowledge – what can we know, how do we know it, and what difference does it make? This question is inseparable from the further question of the nature of ultimate reality, and the relationship of this reality to human affairs.

In dealing with these broad questions, we will also be working to develop habits of mind. We know already that you are intellectually curious, and we want you to follow your questions. We hope that the Honors colloquia expand your horizons by exposing you to ways of looking at the world that may be quite different from those to which you are accustomed. Part of the excitement of this effort is discovering how the world looks to others, and how that view of the world can directly challenge our own assumptions. Our work is a work in common; we are reading on our own, but also conversing together about what we have read. This is, in fact, what the term “colloquium” means. We need to listen carefully to each other, realizing that each of us has contributions to make to this common project we call our class. We expect that the discussions we have in class are just the beginning of further conversations you have with each other outside of class as well.

HONS 1101 Faculty – Fall 2025

Dr. Kathleen Kidder
E-mail: kathleen.kidder@shu.edu

Rev. John J. Ranieri
E-mail: john.ranieri@shu.edu

Dr. Michael Maloney
E-mail: michael.maloney@shu.edu

Rev. Nicholas Sertich
E-mail: nicholas.sertich@shu.edu

Rev. Dr. Douglas Milewski
E-mail: douglas.milewski@shu.edu

Dr. Todd Stockdale
E-mail: todd.stockdale@shu.edu

Course Objectives:

On completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. discuss the principal ideas embodied in the texts we have studied;
2. relate these ideas to their historical contexts, and compare them with each other;
3. carefully analyze and write clearly about the meaning of a text;
4. compare texts and draw conclusions on the basis of close reading and critical analysis.

Proficiencies: This course satisfies the requirements for both the Critical Thinking and the Reading/Writing proficiencies, which are required as part of the University Core Curriculum. In addition to the content, subject matter, and themes of the course, it is also crucial to develop those skills and practices that help us read carefully, understand precisely, and articulate our insights clearly. Not only are these skills cross-disciplinary; they are an essential component in our development as intelligent persons.

To satisfy the requirements for the Reading/Writing proficiency a course must include a significant amount of writing along with an expectation that there will be several hours of academic reading per week. Readings for the course are taken entirely from primary sources. This is based on the conviction that it is good to read and analyze the authors' own words, rather than beginning with what others have written about them. A goal of the course is to increase your ability and confidence in being able to read and analyze primary texts. See below under "Course Requirements" for more details.

It is one thing to run your eyes over the words on a page; it is quite another to read attentively and critically. The Critical Thinking proficiency is geared toward developing your abilities to understand and think through the course readings. This means, among other things, learning to read texts carefully, being able to follow the author's train of thought, becoming attentive to nuance within a text, and being able to articulate your insights clearly and precisely, both in your writing and in class discussion. Critical thinking also means raising questions about what an author has to say. Is the author's point convincing? Why or why not? How does a particular author's point of view compare with that of another author dealing with the same issue? Who do you think is right? Not only is critical thinking an essential component in reading texts; it is also necessary to apply to your own writing, so that what you write comes across as clear, well-organized, and coherent. Course assignments, exams, and class discussions are all opportunities to develop your critical reasoning.

Required Texts:

Course readings will be taken from the following texts and the course packet. You must have hard copies of all the required texts.

Sources of Chinese Tradition, Volume 1

Author: Debary

Edition: 2nd

Publisher: Columbia University Press (Now Perseus)

ISBN-13: 9780231109390 (*This text is also used in the second colloquium*)

Norton Anthology of World Literature

Author: Puchner

Edition: 4th

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company, Incorporated

ISBN-13: 978-0393265903

NOTE: *The 3 volume set is required as it will be used in other Honors colloquia.*

Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy (2nd Edition)

Author: Reeve

Publisher: Hackett Publishing Company, Incorporated

ISBN-13: 9781624663529

Readings in World Christian History, Volume 1

Author: Coakley

Publisher: Orbis Books

ISBN-13: 9781570755200 (*This text is also used in the second colloquium*)

HONS1101 has a number of readings from the Bible. Any version of the Bible is acceptable for use in class, but for those students who don't have a copy, we suggest the version listed below. But feel free to purchase a less expensive version if you prefer.

The Oxford Study Bible, New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha (5th Edition)

Oxford University Press

ISBN-13: 978-0190276089

Course Requirements

1. Participation: Class participation counts for 20% of your final grade. This course is meant to be a genuine colloquium: an ongoing conversation about the readings and the questions that arise from them. Your preparation for each conversation will include your reading the assigned text(s) before the class. Obviously, active participation is important in this type of class, and each person's input is valuable. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings, even if that means just asking relevant questions about material you did not understand. Come to class prepared to be active and engaged. The participation grade depends on both the quality and the quantity of your participation.

Obviously the most basic form of class participation is regular attendance. Attendance is mandatory.

Those who miss either half of class (before or after the break) will be considered absent for the entire class. In cases of an extended absence (due to serious illness or emergency) you must notify the Office of Student Affairs so that the office can notify your professors. As a rule, please contact the Office of Student Affairs if you expect to be out for more than 3 consecutive classes. If you are a student athlete, please speak to your professor about how many classes you may miss. The Athletic Department will reach out to your professor. The same goes for any other official university sponsored activity (e.g. debate team, model UN, etc) – the faculty moderator needs to contact your professors to let them know about the proposed activity or absence. Permission to consider an absence as excused is given at the discretion of your professors. If you stop attending class, it does not mean you have withdrawn from the course. In order to withdraw you have to fill out a course adjustment/withdrawal form (obtainable from the dean's office or the Honors office). Non-attendance is not withdrawal. Being late 3 times is the equivalent of one absence. This includes returning to class late after the break. Chronic lateness is disrespectful and disruptive of the learning process. While a break is given during class, the timing of the break is at the discretion of your professors. Please take care of personal matters before class (e.g., bathroom, meals, etc.); apart from an emergency there is no good reason to get up and leave the classroom while class is going on. Regardless of the reason (with the exception of those absences for which your professors have received notification from Student Affairs), more than 4 absences will result in a failing grade for class participation; more than 7 absences will result in a failing grade for the course.

Since this is a text-based class, having the required texts with you in class is essential – it is not optional. Bring the necessary hard copies of the texts with you to class; failure to do so will negatively affect your grade, since it indicates a lack of preparedness. Doing work for other classes during this class is unacceptable. Electronic devices (laptops, etc.) may not be used in class except for purposes of quiz taking or other in-class exercises designated by your teachers. Please silence your cell phones before class, put them out of sight and do not check for text messages. Texting is appropriate during your private time, but it is disrespectful toward your classmates and teachers when done in class. You are responsible on a daily basis to keep up to date with what is happening in our class.

Criteria for evaluating class participation	Grade Range
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participates actively and voluntarily every class by contributing to classroom discussion • demonstrates familiarity with readings • insightful • answers questions knowledgeably • asks questions relevant to readings and displaying intellectual curiosity • responds to others' comments with respect and interest • takes responsibility for the success of the class on a daily basis • always has hard copies of the relevant texts present 	A (if all of these criteria are met most of the time)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participates voluntarily and actively most days and at least every week • shows some familiarity with readings • always has hard copies of the relevant texts present 	B (if all these criteria are met most of the time)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participates occasionally and/or usually only when called upon • shows some familiarity with reading, but little specific knowledge • does not always have relevant texts with them 	C (if one or more of these criteria are present)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in general, responds only when called upon • does not ask or answer questions • does not always seem prepared • does not always have relevant texts with them • comes late to class • checks cell phone, does work for other classes • shows lack of respect to classmates or teacher 	D-F (if one or more of these criteria are present)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has more than the equivalent of 4 absences 	F

A note on email etiquette: When contacting your professors, be sure to address them properly (e.g. Dear Professor..., Hello Dr. ..., Hi Father...) and add your name to the end of the message.

2. Quizzes (25%) There will be a quiz given every class. In order to make up a missed quiz you must receive permission from your professor. Missing a quiz due to an absence from class does not automatically entitle you to make up the missed quiz. **No more than three quizzes may be made up during the course of the semester** (possible exceptions will be considered in cases of extended absence for which your professors have received notification from the Office of Student Affairs). Quizzes must be made up within a week of the date of the missed quiz.

3. To develop your ability to write critically and persuasively, as well as to understand the readings, you are required to write 4 short papers. The first 2 papers will be 1-2 pages long; the last two will be 2-3 pages long (12-pt. TNR font, double-spaced, default margins). These are not research papers – you will be asked to do a close reading and careful analysis of specific passages by responding to a statement that refers to the passages. More specific instructions about the papers will be sent to you once the semester begins. The cumulative grade for all of these papers will count for 25% of your final grade in the course. Due dates for the papers are listed on the course schedule.

4. There will be a midterm exam worth 10% of your course grade.

5. The final examination will be an oral examination that will count for 20% of your final grade.

Integrity Statement: We expect that any work you submit is yours, and not that of another. Given the nature of the written work you will be doing, it is unlikely that this issue will arise very often. Nonetheless, violation of this standard will render you liable to serious consequences. Use your own words!

Grading:

- Class participation 20%
- quizzes: 25%
- papers: 25%
- mid-term exam 10%
- Final exam: 20%

Grading scale

93-100 A	90-92 A-	86-89 B +	83-85 B	80-82 B-
76-79 C +	73-75 C	70-72 C-	66-69 D +	63-65 D
60-62 D-	0-59 F			

Disability Services Statement: Students at Seton Hall University who have a physical, medical, learning or psychiatric disability, either temporary or permanent, may be eligible for reasonable accommodations at the University as per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In order to receive such accommodations, students must identify themselves at the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS), provide appropriate documentation and collaborate with the development of an accommodation plan. The DSS phone number is 973-313-6003. For further information, please go to <http://studentaffairs.shu.edu/health/DisabilitySupportServices.html>.

Course Schedule

DATE	
Tues., Aug. 26	Origins – Cosmologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enuma Elish</i>, Tablet IV, <i>Course Packet</i> (henceforth CP) 1-3 • <i>Enuma Elish</i> (excerpt), Norton Anthology of World Literatures, Vol. A (henceforth “Norton”) 29-32 • Genesis, chapter 1, <i>The Bible</i> • Hesiod, <i>Theogony</i> and <i>Works and Days</i>, Norton 34-42 • Hymns from the <i>Rig Veda</i>, CP 4-5
Thurs. Aug. 28	Pre-history and patriarchs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis, chapters 2-4, 6-9, 12, 15-18, 21-22, 37, 39-45 <i>Bible</i>
Tues., Sept. 2	Exodus, Covenant, Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus, chapters 1-15; 19-24 32:1-34:10 <i>Bible</i> • Deuteronomy, chapter 4 <i>Bible</i> • <i>Semna Stele</i>, Norton 879-881
Thurs., Sept. 4	Buddhism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Deer Park Sermon</i>, CP 6-7 • <i>Fire Sermon</i>, CP 8 • Parable of the Arrow, CP 9-11 • The Doctrine of No-Self, CP 12-16 • <i>The Jataka</i>, Norton 1294-97, 1300-1303
Tues., Sept 9	Homer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Iliad</i>, Norton 232-55, 272-89, 296-307, 318-24 Paper 1 due
Thurs., Sept. 11	Israel: Monarchy and prophecy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Samuel, chapters 1-3, 8-10, 12, 16-18 <i>Bible</i> • 2 Samuel, chapters 7, 11-12 <i>Bible</i> • Amos <i>Bible</i> • Isaiah, chapters 1-2, 6, 9-11 <i>Bible</i>
Tues., Sept. 16	Confucius <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analects</i>, <i>Sources of Chinese Tradition</i>, Vol. I (hereafter SCT) 41-63
Thurs., Sept. 18	Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chhândogya Upanishad</i> CP 17-19 • <i>Bhagavad Gita</i>, Norton 1276-94

DATE	
Tues., Sept. 23	Confucianism and Legalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mencius</i>, SCT 114-129 • <i>Xunzi</i>, SCT 165-183 • <i>Han Feizi</i>, SCT 199-203
Thurs., Sept. 25	Daoism and Mohism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mozhi</i>, SCT 69-76, sections 16, 26, 27, 39 • <i>Daodejing</i>, SCT 77-94, sections 1-4, 9-11, 13, 18, 19, 22, 29, 37, 38, 42, 43, 48, 56, 57, 65, 67, 70, 80, 81 • <i>Zhuangzi</i>, SCT, 95-96, 101-107, 109-111
Tues., Sept. 30	What is real? Philosophy before Socrates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thales, <i>Introductory Readings in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy</i> 2nd edition (hereafter AGRP) 1-2, numbers 1-5, • Xenophanes, AGRP 8-9, numbers 1-11 • Heraclitus, AGRP 9-13, numbers 1, 2, 10, 12, 18, 19, 21, 26, 27, 33, 34, 44, 45, 49, 50, 58, 59, 66 • Parmenides, AGRP 14-17, numbers 1, 3, 6-8
Thurs. Oct. 2	The Babylonian Exile and Biblical Wisdom Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Kings, chapters 24-25, <i>Bible</i> • Jeremiah, chapters 1, 19, 20, 31:31-34 <i>Bible</i> • Isaiah, chapters 40-45, 49-50, 52:13-53:12, <i>Bible</i> • Ecclesiastes, <i>Bible</i> • Psalms 22, 23, 137, <i>Bible</i> Paper 2 due
Tues., Oct. 7	The Meaning of History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herodotus, <i>Histories</i>, Norton 881-87 • Thucydides, <i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i>, CP 20-28 • Sima Tan and Sima Qian, SCT 278-82, 370-72 Midterm exam
Thurs., Oct. 9	Greek Tragedy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euripides, <i>Medea</i>, Norton 786-822
Tues, Oct. 14	Fall Break
Thurs., Oct. 16	Second Temple Judaism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezra, chapter 1, <i>Bible</i> • Nehemiah, chapters 1, 2, 8, 13, <i>Bible</i> • Ruth, <i>Bible</i> • 1 Maccabees, chapters 1-2, <i>Bible</i> • 2 Maccabees, chapters 6-7, <i>Bible</i> • Daniel, chapters 7, 12 <i>Bible</i>

DATE	
Tues., Oct. 21	Plato <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Euthyphro</i>, <i>Apology</i> AGRP 52-70
Thurs., Oct. 23	Plato <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Apology</i>, <i>Crito</i> AGRP 70-85 • <i>Republic</i>, selection from Books 2 and 3, CP 29-32 • <i>Republic</i>, Book 5, AGRP 183-93
Tues., Oct. 28	Plato <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Republic</i>, Book 5-7, AGRP 194-210 Paper 3 due
Thurs., Oct. 30	Aristotle: On knowing and the known <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Posterior Analytics</i>, AGRP 266 Book 1 section 2, first 5 paragraphs; 269-70 Book 2, section 19 • <i>Physics</i>, AGRP 271-72 Book 2 section 1; 274 Book 2 section 3 first 5 paragraphs • <i>De Anima</i>, AGRP 288-89 Book 3 section 4 • <i>Metaphysics</i>, AGRP 291-92 Book 1 section 1
Tues., Nov. 4	Aristotle: What is the best way to live? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> AGRP 310-16 Book 1 sections 1-5, 7, 9; 317-21 Book 2 sections 1, 3, 6; 339-40 Book 10 section 7 • <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> CP 33-36, Book 8 chapters 2-5 • <i>Politics</i> AGRP 345-47 Book I section 2, Book III section 7; 349-51 Book IV section 11
Thurs., Nov. 6	Roman philosophy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lucretius, <i>On the Nature of Things</i>, AGRP 396-97 section 1 lines 1-75; 401-402 section 2 lines 1-60; 407-409 section 3 lines 670-865; 421-22 section 5 lines 1105-1205. • Seneca, AGRP 426-27 “On the Happy Life” IX; 429-32 “Moral Letters to Lucilius,” letters 76, 66, 95; 439-41 “On Providence” sections 4.6-4.11, 5.7-5.9. • Seneca “Epistle 47,” Norton 898-901 • Epictetus, <i>The Handbook</i>, AGRP 444-53 sections 1,2, 5, 6, 8-16, 22, 23, 31, 33, 41, 44, 48, 49, 51, 53
Tues., Nov. 11	Rome: from republic to empire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livy: <i>The History of Rome</i>, CP 37-48 • Augustus, <i>Res Gestae Divi Augusti</i>, CP 49-51 • Vergil, <i>Aeneid</i>, Norton 926-47, 974-88, 1014-25
Thurs., Nov. 13	Han Dynasty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory material, SCT 227-28, 283-84, 367-68 • <i>The Springs and Autumns of Mr Lu</i>, SCT 235-41 • Dong Zhongshu, SCT 292-310 • Ban Zhao, <i>Admonitions for Women</i>, SCT 821-24

DATE	
Tues., Nov. 18	Christianity – The Gospel According to Luke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Gospel According to Luke, Bible</i> Paper 4 due
Thurs., Nov. 20	Christianity – Paul <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>First Letter to the Corinthians, Bible</i> <i>Letter to the Galatians, Bible</i>
Tues., Nov. 25	Christianity – The Johannine Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Gospel According to John, chapters 1-3, 13-17 Bible</i> <i>The First Letter of John, Bible</i>
Thurs. Nov. 27	Thanksgiving
Tues., Dec. 2	Christianity, Judaism, and philosophy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philo, “On Creation,” CP 52-57 Early Christian texts (Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen excerpts), CP 58-59 Justin Martyr, <i>Second Apology</i>, <i>Readings in World Christian History</i>, (hereafter WCH) 39-43, sections 6, 8, 10, 12-15 Plotinus, selections, AGRP 480, 495-502
Thurs., Dec. 4	Christians and the Roman Empire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Letter of Pliny to Trajan</i>, WCH 23-24 <i>The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity</i>, WCH 30-37 <i>The Letter to Diognetus</i>, CP 60 Justin Martyr, on eucharist (from <i>First Apology</i>). CP 61-62 Celsus, <i>On the true logos</i>, CP 63-64