

## Origins in Global Cultures: Values and the Universal

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password "culture"

This course will be an interdisciplinary introduction to the humanities. We will read about, compare and discuss "human-centered" creativity from antiquity to the present. As a basis for comparison, the class will focus on the "cultural roots" of four regions of the world, Western Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia.

History, literature, the visual arts, architecture and music will be considered in terms of (1) their "universal appeal" to us in the modern world, and (2) their "reflection of the values" of the culture that created them. Weekly class themes will help guide us through diverse ideas. Our goal will be to "refine" our "thinking on the basic questions that affect all human beings."<sup>1</sup>

Participants are required to write two essays of approximately ten pages in length. The first essay will be due at mid semester and the second near the end of the term. Essay topics will be chosen from course readings and themes.

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All writing assignments must be typed. Please double-space the lines and use one-inch margins on all sides of the page.

Final grades will depend 60% on submitted written work and 40% on class participation.

Please inform me of any medical issues that may influence your attendance and performance in class.

More than four class absences result in automatic failure of the course. Recurring tardiness will be reflected in the final grade.

Plagiarism occurs when one writer copies the words of another writer without attributing the words to the source. Unattributed copying will result in course failure.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Witt, et al. The Humanities. Houghton Mifflin. Boston. 1997. Preface and Introduction.

**Course calendar** (subject to change)

<b>Week</b>	<b>Themes</b>
One	Introduction
	<b>Part One — Early Europe</b>
Two	Absolutism, Sacred and Secular
Three	Medieval Life
	<b>Part Two — Global Cultures</b>
Four	Native America
Five	Africa, the West and East
Six	Tradition in China and Japan
Seven	The Early Middle East
	<b>Part Three — World Evolution</b>
Eight	The Renaissance
<b>Essay Due</b>	
Nine	European Exploration
Ten	<b>Individual In-Class Conferences</b>
Eleven	Science — The Seventeenth Century
Twelve	Reason, Revolution, Romanticism
Thirteen	Social History
<b>Essay Due</b>	
Fourteen	Politics and Art
Fifteen	Ancient / Future

**Class Schedule** (subject to change)

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**Introduction**

*Reading excerpt from* —

“Primitivism” in 20th Century Art. William Rubin, ed. 1984.

**Illustration**

Grebo Mask and Picasso Guitar from “Primitivism”

**Part One — Early Europe**

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**Absolutism, Sacred and Secular**

(circa 1583)

*Reading excerpt from* —

The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller. Carlo Ginzburg. 1980.

The Icon and the Axe. J. Billington. 1970.

Supplemental Reading

Revel, Riot and Rebellion. D. Underdown. 1985.

**Illustration**

“Il sogno dil caravia” from Cheese and the Worms

“Varusschlacht” Teutons Attack

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**Medieval Life**

(circa 1098)

*Reading excerpt from* —

Hildegard of Bingen. A Visionary Life. Sabina Flanagan. 1989.

The Ties that Bind: Peasant Families in Medieval England. B.A. Hanawalt. 1986.

Supplemental Reading

The Domestic Life of a Medieval City: Women, Children, and the Family in Fourteenth-Century Ghent. D. Nicholas. 1985.

**Illustration**

“Extinguished Stars” from Hildegard of Bingen

“The Harvest” by Pieter Bruegel

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**Part Two — Global Cultures**

**Native America**

(circa 1513)

*Reading excerpt from* —

Stolen Continents. The “New World” through Indian Eyes. Ronald Wright. 1992.

The Blood of Kings. Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art. Linda Schele, ed. 1986.

Supplemental Reading

America in 1492. A.M. Josephy, ed. 1992.

**Illustration**

“Dresden Codex” from Stolen Continents

“Shield Jaguar and Lady Xoc” from Blood of Kings

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**Africa, the West and East**

(circa 1400)

*Reading excerpt from* —

African Cities and Towns before the European Conquest. Richard Hull. 1976.

The World of Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization. J. Middleton. 1992.

Supplemental Reading

Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World. J. Thornton. 1992.

**Illustration**

“Nok Terracotta” from Treasures of Ancient Nigeria

“Kilwa Mosque” from Swahili

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**Tradition in China and Japan**

(circa 1405)

*Reading excerpts —*

*for China*

When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405-1433. Louise Levathes. 1994.

The Fourth Rise of China: Cultural Implications. Gungwu Wang. 2004.

*for Japan*

Warlords, Artists, and Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century. G. Elison, ed. 1987.

“The Cross and the Sword.”

“The Culture of Tea.”

Supplemental Reading

Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China. C. Clunas. 1992.

**Illustration**

Zheng He’s treasure boat

“The Creation of Japan”

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**The Early Middle East**

(circa 1099)

*Reading excerpt from —*

The Crusades through Arab Eyes. Amin Maalouf. 1984.

The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century. R.E. Dunn. 1986.

Supplemental Reading

Medieval Persia, 1040-1797. D. Morgan. 1988.

**Illustration**

Map of Arab cities from Crusades

The citadel at Al Housn

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**Part Three — World Evolution**

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**The Renaissance**

(circa 1486)

*Reading excerpt from —*

Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance. Lisa Jardine. 1996.

Immodest Acts: the Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy. J.C. Brown. 1985.

Supplemental Reading

The Image of the Black in Western Art: Africans in the Christian Ordinance of the World. J. Devisse. part II volume 2. 1979.

**Illustration**

“The Annunciation with Saint Emidius” from Worldly Goods

“Nuns” (1329) from The National Gallery

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**European Exploration**

(circa 1492)

*Reading excerpt from* —

Invested with meaning : the Raleigh circle in the New World. Shannon Miller. 1998.

Richard Hakluyt and the English voyages. George Bruner Parks. 1930.

Supplemental Reading

European approaches to North America, 1450-1640. David B. Quinn. 1998.

**Illustration**

Early images of America

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**Science — The Seventeenth Century**

(circa 1610)

*Reading excerpt from* —

Galileo: Decisive Innovator. Michael Sharratt. 1994.

The Mind Has No Sex?: Women in the Origins of Modern Science. L. Schiebinger. 1989.

Supplemental Reading

The Limits of Reform in the Enlightenment: Attitudes Toward the Education of the Lower Classes in Eighteenth-Century France. H. Chisick. 1981.

**Illustration**

“The University of Padua” from Galileo

“Thalia” the Muse

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**Reason, Revolution, Romanticism**

(circa 1782)

*Reading excerpt from* —

The Literary Underground of the Old Regime. Robert Darnton. 1982.

The Black Jacobins. C.L.R. James. 1938, 1980.

Supplemental Reading

The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class and Political Culture. D. Outram. 1989.

**Illustration**

“Errotika Biblion” cover

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**Social History**

(circa 1800)

*Reading excerpt from* —

The World of the Paris Cafe. Sociability among the French Working Class, 1789-1914. W. Scott Haine. 1996.

Patient’s Progress: Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England. D. Porter. 1989.

**Illustration**

“At the Moulin Rouge” from History of Art

“Liquoris” from Culpeper’s Herbal

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**Politics and Art**

(circa 2007)

*Reading excerpt from* —

Noise: The Political Economy of Music. Jacques Attali. 1977, 1996.

“Scan This Book!” Kevin Kelly. The New York Times. May 14th, 2006.

**Illustration**

“Carnival’s Quarrel with Lent” Vienna, National Museum

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**Ancient / Future**

(circa 2007)

*Reading excerpt from* —

“The Politics of God.” Mark Lilla. The New York Times. August 19, 2007

“Letter from Beijing. Enemy of the State.” Jianying Zha. The New Yorker. April 23, 2007.