

“I have reverence for all who ask questions and seek honest answers.”

...*The Walking Drum*

## **Cultural Perspectives UCCP 101.29**

Samford University, Fall Semester 2008  
TR 11:00am-12:50am Room: DBH 217

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### **Contact Information**

Professor: Dr. Barry Robinson  
Office Hrs: MWF 9:00am-10:00am, TR 2:00pm-3:00pm, or by appt.  
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### **Course Description and Objectives**

*The first in a two-semester sequence, UCCP 101 examines the Western intellectual tradition within a global context. Through interdisciplinary study, students will increase their awareness of the cultural, historical, literary, philosophical, and religious influences upon the development of civilization.*

Cultural Perspectives is an interdisciplinary course designed to develop critical thinking skills in the context of important texts in the development of the Western intellectual tradition. Emphasis is placed on the evaluation of different viewpoints, effective reasoning and communication, and engagement with the larger academic community. Students will consider how different disciplines advance understanding of different cultures, and learn to approach the world through multiple perspectives. Section 29 will focus our consideration of the subject matter around the following three themes: universals, values, and identity.

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### **Required Readings**

- Rosemary Fisk and John Mayfield, eds. *Cultural Perspectives: A Sourcebook, Vol. I*, (Thomson Learning, 2001).
- Robert Fagles, trans., *The Three Theban Plays*. (New York: Penguin, 1982).
- Saint Augustine, *Confessions*. (Oxford UP, 1991).
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*. (Bantam, 1981).
- Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. (Cambridge UP, 1995).
- Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears*. (Beacon Press, 1992).
- Selected additional readings provided in class or through WebCT

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## ***Assignments and Grading***

20%	Class Participation and Discussion Leading
15%	In-Class Activities, Quizzes, and Projects
15%	WebCT "Thoughts"
15%	Essay
15%	Midterm
20%	Final Exam

### **I. Class Participation and Discussion Leading (20%)**

Success in this course depends upon faithfully attending class, completing the assigned readings, and participating productively in discussion of the issues we'll be considering. [See attendance policy below]. A portion of this grade will also be determined by your leadership of class discussions (scheduled in advance).

- Participation in discussions (18% of total grade)
- Discussion leading (7% of total grade)

### **II. In-Class Activities, Quizzes, and Projects (15%)**

Periodically, students will participate in activities and short assignments designed to enhance our practical understanding of the ideas discussed in class. Impromptu quizzes may also be used to assess student engagement with the course readings.

### **III. WebCT Thoughts (15%)**

Questions and Insights:

Twice a week, students will post questions and/or insights arising from the course readings. After completing the assigned reading for a given class period, each student will post two of these "thoughts" in the appropriate discussion thread BEFORE class begins.

Responses:

Between the close of class on Thursday and 11:59pm Saturday evening, students must respond to at least two of their classmates' questions or insights from that week. These responses should be one paragraph in length, and should reflect a deep consideration of the themes that have emerged from that week's readings and discussion.

### **IV. Research Paper (15%)**

Students will write a six page essay during the semester. Topics for the paper should be specific and focused, and must be posted on WebCT by Thursday, Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>. Detailed guidelines will be available in class. The final paper must be submitted through WebCT as an attachment no later than the beginning of class on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **V. Midterm Exam (15%)**

Students will write a midterm exam on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, covering the first portion of the course. The format will include both short answer identification questions and essay responses.

### **VI. Final Exam (20%)**

Students will write a final exam on December 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am. The format will include both short answer identification questions and essay responses.

### **\*Extra Credit Opportunity:**

Students will have the opportunity to earn extra credit by participating in select events throughout the semester. Events and details will be announced in class.

October 9<sup>th</sup>:

- ✚ 3:15pm "The Future of Islam: Reform in the Twenty-First Century" Brock Forum, Dwight Beeson Hall
- ✚ 7:00pm "Is Terrorism Ever Permitted in Islam?" Concert Hall, Leslie Wright Center

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**Grading Scale**

A	93.0 - 100%
A-	90.0 - 92.9%
B+	87.0 - 89.9%
B	83.0 - 86.9%
B-	80.0 - 82.9%
C+	77.0 - 79.9%
C	70.0 - 72.9%
C-	73.0 - 76.9%
D+	67.0 - 69.9%
D	63.0 - 66.9%
D-	60.0 - 62.9%
F	00.0 - 59.9%

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**Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to attend every class session. Any absences will affect your participation grade. Additionally, more than 4 total absences will result in a grade of FA. Exceptions will only be made in the event of a serious illness or emergency in which the student provides documentation from the Dean's office requesting an exception to the policy. Unless prior arrangements are made with the professor, it will be the student's responsibility to determine what was missed during their absence and to arrange for any necessary remediation.

**Academic Integrity:**

The Samford Honor Code governs all work done in this course, written or otherwise. In all cases students are expected to present original work, or to properly acknowledge the source of information gathered from other sources. Please refer to your copy of the Student Handbook for a more complete discussion of the importance of academic integrity. If in doubt about a particular issue, consult the professor.

**Disabilities:**

Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their request by contacting Disability Support Services, located in Counseling Services on the lower level of Pittman Hall (telephone number: 726-4078 or 726-2105). Instructor will grant reasonable accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services.

\* The professor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at his discretion at any time during the semester.

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## **Class Schedule**

### **Introduction to Cultural Perspectives**

- 8/26 Introduction  
8/28 Plato, "Apology" and "Allegory of the Cave" (Sourcebook Chapters 1-2)  
[First WebCT Post Due]

### **Classical Origins of Western Culture**

- 9/2 Siddhartha Gautama, "Meditation: The Path to Enlightenment" (Sourcebook Chapter 4)  
9/4 SCAVENGER HUNT  
  
9/9 Sophocles, *Antigone* in: *The Three Theban Plays*, (NY: Penguin, 1982) pp. 13-53.  
9/11 Sophocles' *The Three Theban Plays*, pp. 59-128.  
  
9/16 Aristotle, "Nichomachean Ethics" (Sourcebook Chapter 3)  
9/18 Vergil, "Aeneid" – Rome (pages TBA)

### **The Context of Early Christianity**

- 9/23 Vergil, "Aeneid" – Rome (pages TBA)  
9/25 Rise of Christianity: Wilken *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (pp. depend on group)  
- In-class reading: The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity (sourcebook)  
  
9/30 St. Augustine, Confessions. Oxford UP, 1991. (pages TBA)  
10/2 St. Augustine, (pages TBA)  
✚ Play (The Rover): Thursday, October 2, 7:30

### **Christianity, Islam, and Medieval Culture**

- 10/7 "Dictatus Papae," "On the Misery of the Human Condition," and "Summation of the Catholic Faith" (Sourcebook Chapters 11, 12, and 14)  
10/9 The 'Imrans (sourcebook)  
Lectures by John L. Esposito of Georgetown University:  
✚ 3:15pm "The Future of Islam: Reform in the Twenty-First Century" Brock Forum, Dwight Beeson Hall  
✚ 7:00pm "Is Terrorism Ever Permitted in Islam?" Concert Hall, Leslie Wright Center  
  
10/14 Excerpt from the *Song of Roland* (Available on WebCT)  
10/16 Marie de France *Lais* and "The Book of Margery Kempe" (sourcebook)  
Review for Midterm  
  
10/21 NO CLASS - Fall Break  
10/23 MIDTERM EXAM

### **The Renaissance**

- 10/28 Ibn Rushd (Averroes) *The Philosophy and Theology of Averroes* (Available on WebCT)  
10/30 Machiavelli, *The Prince*. Bantam, 1981. (pages TBA)  
  
11/4 Machiavelli, *The Prince*. (pages TBA)  
11/6 Expulsion of the Jews from Spain, 1492 (Reading available on WebCT)

### **Exploration and Encounter**

11/11 Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears*. Beacon Press, 1992.

11/13 NO CLASS MTG – Conduct Research for Paper

11/18 Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears*. Beacon Press, 1992.

11/20 Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. Cambridge UP, 1995.

11/25 Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. Cambridge UP, 1995.

11/27 NO CLASS - Thanksgiving

12/2 Montaigne “On Cannibals” (sourcebook,) Las Casas-Sepúlveda debate

12/4 Final Thoughts - Review for Final [Research Paper Due]

Final Exam: Thursday December 11, 2008 10:30am, DBH 217

### **Fall Semester 2008 - Important Dates**

- August 25 Classes begin
- August 26 University Convocation
- August 29 Last day to add or drop a course(s) without FINANCIAL penalty
- September 1 Labor Day Holiday; no classes meet
- October 10 Last day to withdraw from a course without ACADEMIC penalty
- October 20-21 Fall Break; no classes meet
- Oct 22-Nov 21 Registration for Jan Term and Spring Semester
- November 13 Last day to withdraw from ALL courses w/ no ACADEMIC penalty
- November 26-28 Thanksgiving Holidays; no classes meet
- December 5 Classes end
- December 8 -11 Final Examinations
- December 13 Commencement