Know Thyself

This course will investigate the questions at the heart of a truly liberal education, the questions of human nature and human purpose. By means of careful study of four authors who encapsulated their own searches for self-knowledge in great literary works—Michel de Montaigne, Blaise Pascal, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Alexis de Tocqueville—we will investigate several alternative answers to the questions of who we are and why we’re here. Is to know ourselves to learn to be “at home” with ourselves and in the world, as Montaigne suggests? Or is to know ourselves to know that, as free and self-conscious beings mysteriously intruded into a world of mechanistic cause and effect, we cannot be at home here, as Pascal argues? Is to know ourselves to discover and be true to our natural sentiments, beneath the artifices of society and reason, as Rousseau indicates? Or is human nature inherently rational, social, and political, as Tocqueville maintains? What do our answers to these questions mean about how we should live?

NOTA BENE: This is an “unplugged course.” The use of all electronic devices—cell phones, laptops, etc.—is prohibited in the classroom at all times.

TEXTS FOR IMMEDIATE PURCHASE


CLASS SCHEDULE

Wednesday, August 26: Introduction

Friday, August 28: No Class (Storey Conference Travel)

Monday, August 31: Montaigne, Essays, “To the Reader,” Book I chapter 20 (p. 2, 67-82). Short Essay I due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by class time.

Friday, September 4: Strunk and White, Rule 3; Montaigne, *Essays*, Book II chapter 17 (p. 581-595 only).

**Monday, September 7: Class Cancelled (Labor Day)**

Wednesday, September 9: Writing Workshop #1; Strunk and White, Rules 4 and 5.

Friday, September 11: Strunk and White, Rules 6 and 7; Montaigne, *Essays*, Book II Chapter 17 continued (p. 595-610).

Monday, September 14: Strunk and White, Rules 8 and 9; Montaigne, *Essays*, Book III chapters 2, 4 (p. 740-753; 764-774)


Friday, September 25: Montaigne, *Essays*, Book III chapter 13 end (p. 1027-1045 only); **Short Essay II due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 4:30 PM.**


Friday, October 2: Writing Workshop #2; Strunk and White, Rule 16.


Wednesday, October 7: Strunk and White, Rules 18-19; Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 55-72

Friday, October 9: Strunk and White, rule 20; Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 91-108.

**Monday, October 12: No Class (Fall Break)**

Wednesday, October 14: Stunk and White, Rules 21-22; Pascal, p. 140-155, 170-172.

Monday, October 19: Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 216-228, 265-268. **Short Essay III due by 4:30 PM by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu.**


**Thursday, October 22:** Tocqueville Program Lecture by Professors Cornel West and Robert P. George (Princeton University), “Christianity and Politics.” 5:00 PM, Watkins Room, Attendance Required.


Wednesday, October 28: Writing Workshop #3.


Monday, November 2: *Second Discourse*, Part II, paragraphs 34-58; Epistle Dedicatory (p. 103-117, 41-50).

Wednesday, November 4: Rousseau, selection from *Emile* (Handout); *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (handout).

**Thursday, November 5:** Short Essay IV due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 4:30 PM.

Friday, November 6: Class meets with Laura Baker in Library 043. Complete library research tutorials 1 and 2 before this meeting.

Monday, November 9: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, I.1, Introduction (p. 3-32).

Wednesday, November 11: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, I.1.2 (p. 45-73).

Friday, November 13: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, I.1.3, 5 beginning; (p. 74-90, 98-114 only).

Monday, November 16: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, I.2.7 selections, I.10 beginning (p. 402-407, 410-423, 515-521 only). **Brief Term Paper Proposals due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu and laura.baker@furman.edu by 4:30 PM.**

Wednesday, November 18: Class meets with Laura Baker in Library 043.


Monday, November 23: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, II.1.10-11, 15-17 (p. 775-795, 815-842). **Preliminary Bibliography due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 4:30 PM.**
Wednesday, November 25 and Friday, November 27: No Class (Thanksgiving Holidays)

Monday, November 30: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, II.2.1-2, 8-13, 15 (p. 872-884, 918-947; 954-963).

Wednesday, December 2: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, II.3.1, 8, 11-12 (p. 987-995, 1031-1040, 1052-1068).

Friday, December 4: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, II.2.18-20, II.4.6 (p. 969-985; 1245-1285). Short Essay V due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu.

Monday, December 7: Conclusion.

Tuesday, December 8: Term Paper Notes and Outlines due by email benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 4:30 PM.

Monday, December 14: Final Papers due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 4:30 PM.
ASSIGNMENTS, PARTICIPATION, AND GRADING

Breakdown of Course Grades:

Participation and Quizzes: 20%

Short Essays: \(5 \times 10\% = 50\%\)

Final Paper: 30%

Total: 100%

Participation and Quizzes:

This element of your grade will be composed of four elements: attendance, active participation in class, several quizzes given over the course of the term, and meetings with me.

- Attendance at every class meeting is expected. After 3 absences of any kind—there is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences in FYW-1138—every further absence results in the loss of one partial letter grade (B becomes B-, B- becomes C+, and so on).
- You are expected to be present not only physically but mentally: perfect attendance without active class participation amounts to a C for this portion of your grade; the addition of regular participation earns a B; frequent, helpful, intelligent participation earns an A. Completing the information fluency tutorials on the library website is a part of this element of your grade.
- Quizzes may be used to assess students’ mastery of both (1) the principles of writing we will study in Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style* and on handouts, and (2) our readings from Montaigne, Pascal, Rousseau, and Tocqueville. Prepare for each class by reading attentively and making sure you master Strunk and White’s rules, which you will be expected to be able not only to repeat but to apply.
- You must schedule at least two individual meetings with me during the semester; once before September 25th (the due date of your 2nd short paper), and once to consult about your research paper at the end of the term. You may meet with me as often as you like.

Short Essays: You will write five short essays over the course of the term. Each essay must fit on a single sheet of paper (you may use both sides), in 12-point font with 1-inch margins; you may decide whether to single- or double-space your essays. Further information about these assignments can be found in section I of the Writing Guidelines.

Research Paper: At the end of the term, you will write a research paper, 10 pages in length, incorporating both primary and secondary literature. You will turn in a proposal, a bibliography, notes, and an outline preparatory to writing your final paper. Further information about this assignment can be found in section V of the Writing Guidelines.
**Academic Integrity:** In your papers, you must cite the texts we read frequently; more precise instructions on how to do so can be found in the Writing Guidelines. If you consult *any* source beyond the assigned reading for an assignment, you must also cite that source. This includes electronic resources. Quotations or paraphrases from any source that are not accompanied by proper citations constitute plagiarism and will be treated as academic integrity violations. If you have questions about plagiarism and proper citation methods, I am happy to discuss them with you, and it is your responsibility to ask. If you have questions about plagiarism and proper citation methods, I am happy to discuss them with you, and it is your responsibility to ask. **PLAGIARISM MAY RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE COURSE.** You may also find it useful to consult Furman’s academic integrity page: (http://www.furman.edu/academics/academics/academic-resources/Pages/Academic-Integrity.aspx).

### GRADE SCALE

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