

Humanities 401: Introduction to the Humanities ▼

Spring, 2001: Professors Murphy, Peebles, & Richman Spring, 2001 Title: "Love thy neighbor? No thanks!"

Entry text: William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Class meets: TR 2:10-3:30 (lecture), HS 127
R 3:40-4:30 (discussion)

Discussion rooms: Section 01 (Richman): HS 42
Section 02 (Murphy): MURK 205
Section 03 (Peebles): HS 18

This semester, Humanities 401 will be exploring the theme of "the other," specifically, how and why human beings exclude, fear, or mistreat those understood to be somehow different. What is the nature of racism? Where does sexism come from? Why did Socrates' peers decide to put him to death when he questioned their beliefs? And what does all of this have to do with the definition of "the human"? The main prerequisite for this course is, as always, a willingness to ask yourself difficult questions, to respond frankly, and to reflect on the meanings of your responses. The texts we have chosen can be very challenging, and will often require you to go back to them a second and third time before you have a good understanding: expect to do this, and budget plenty of out-of-class study time. You will need to spend a significant amount of time on this course: keep in mind that the reading list is full of seminal and ground-breaking works. After reading and viewing them, and thinking about them critically, you will be a better-educated person.

Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, directed by Professor David Richman, is on stage this April here at UNH. All HUMA 401 students are expected to see the show. April 25-29 at the Johnson Theater in the Paul Creative Arts Center.

April 25, 26, 27 at 7:00 p.m.

April 28 at 8:00 p.m.

April 29 at 2:00 p.m.

Course Requirements

-Coming to class prepared, having done the assigned reading (or viewing) and made extensive notes (including especially your questions), and having carefully reviewed lecture notes. This course involves a heavy reading load, and students should budget their

out-of-class work time accordingly. Students are expected and required to devote a minimum of six to eight hours per week to class preparation. Preparing for this class involves reading and rereading the assigned work carefully, underlining important passages, making notes in the margins, and making notes in your notebook. Your own notes should range from copying significant sections of text and definitions of new vocabulary words, to writing down specific questions you have, to formulating critical responses and interpretations. You are required to look up in a good desk dictionary (such as The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language or Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary or New World Dictionary of the American Language) every vocabulary word with which you are unfamiliar. And you are required to bring formulated questions to each discussion meeting. Your class preparation grade will be based upon your contribution of salient questions and interpretations.

-Attendance does not count toward class preparation, and is, of course, required. (What does count toward class preparation is your alert, thoughtful, active presence.) The penalty scheme for attendance takes into account the occasional emergency or illness. Accordingly, students are allowed three absences with no penalty. There is no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences.

-Participation in discussion. As emphasized under "class preparation," participation in discussion is a crucial part of this course, and consists in doing the reading assignments thoroughly and bringing well thought out questions to the discussion section. Missing a lecture session would make it impossible for students to participate well in discussion, as would failing to do the reading assignment attentively. A student's class preparation grade is based on her/his contributing well thought out questions consistently in section.

-Papers and Exams. There will be two exams during the semester. The mid-term will be a short-answer, in-class exam that will test your knowledge of the works we have covered and the lectures up to that point. The second will be the final exam, which will be take-home, essay format, and is due on Friday, May 11 by 5:00 p.m. in the Humanities Program office, Murkland Hall, bottom floor, room 2. The first paper will be a short (3-4 page), closely directed assignment. The second paper will be a five- to seven-page essay. Check with your section leader for details. Your final grade will be an average of your class preparation and participation, first and second exams, and first and second papers, minus any penalty for missed classes (see "attendance" above).

-Office Hours. Each professor will announce her/his office hours in section. If you have any questions, feel free to call the Humanities Program office at 862-3638.

Required Texts (All books, except the reader, are available at the Durham Book Exchange, on Main Street.)

Course Reader (available at the Copy Center, in the MUB)

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Malcolm X & Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates: Euthyphro/Apology/Crito/Phaedo*

Elie Weisel, *Night, Dawn, The Accident*

Primo Levi, The Drowned and the Saved
Thomas More, Utopia
Tony Kushner, Angels in America
Toni Morrison, Beloved
Christopher Marlowe, The Jew of Malta
Walter Mosley, Devil in a Blue Dress

Reading Timetable (An asterisk [*] marks readings to be found in the course reader.)

Note: All readings should be completed by the day on which they are listed.

M = Murphy
P = Peebles
R = Richman

Day Date Reading Lecturer

R Jan. 18 Introduction to the course (no section meetings) M, R, P

T Jan. 23 Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice R

R Jan. 25 Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice M, R

T Jan. 30 Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice M, R

R Feb. 1 Kimberly Peirce, Boys Don't Cry (1999) M

Students must view Boys Don't Cry out of class. The film will be available at the Media Center in the library. Viewing schedule details will be announced in class. Students can also refer to the official Boys Don't Cry website:

http://www.foxsearchlight.com/production/boysdontcry_synopsis.html

T Feb. 6 Malcolm X, The Autobiography of Malcolm X P

R Feb. 8 Malcolm X, The Autobiography of Malcolm X P

T Feb. 13 Plato, Apology P

R Feb. 15 Plato, Apology P

T Feb. 20 Elie Weisel, Night, Dawn, The Accident R

R Feb. 22 Elie Weisel, Night, Dawn, The Accident R

T Feb. 27 Primo Levi, The Drowned and the Saved R

R Mar. 1 Thomas More, Utopia ; First paper due. M

T Mar. 6 Recapitulation and Review M, P, R

R Mar. 8 Mid-term examination

T Mar. 13 SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

R Mar. 15 SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

T Mar. 20 Freud, "The Theme of the Three Caskets" * M
R Mar. 22 W.H. Auden, "Brothers and Others" * M

T Mar. 27 Tony Kushner, Angels in America R
R Mar. 29 Tony Kushner, Angels in America R

T Apr. 3 Tony Kushner, Angels in America R
R Apr. 5 Morrison, Beloved P

T Apr. 10 Morrison, Beloved P
R Apr. 12 Morrison, Beloved P

T Apr. 17 Marlowe, The Jew of Malta M
R Apr. 19 Marlowe, The Jew of Malta M

T Apr. 24 Walter Mosley, Devil in a Blue Dress P
R Apr. 26 Walter Mosley, Devil in a Blue Dress P

T May 1 Toni Morrison, Introduction to Racing Justice * P
R May 3 Richard Rodriguez, "An American Writer" * P

T May 8 Recapitulation and Review. Final paper due. M, P, R
Take-home final examination handed out.

FINAL EXAMS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN 5 p.m. ON FRIDAY, MAY 11th IN
THE HUMANITIES PROGRAM OFFICE (Murkland Hall, bottom floor, room 2).