

College Seminar 23101
Fall 2006

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Office Hours:
M, W 4:15-5:00
F 3:00-4:00 and
by appointment

Decline and Fall: The Fate of Civilizations?

College Seminar

The College Seminar is a unique one-semester course experience shared by all sophomores majoring in the College of Arts and Letters. The course offers students an introduction to the diversity and distinctive focus of Arts and Letters at the University of Notre Dame. Specific sections of the College Seminar vary in their topics and texts, but all feature an interdisciplinary approach, commitment to engaging important questions, employment of major works, and emphasis on the development of oral skills.

Attendance and Participation

Given the oral-intensive nature of the course, and given that the majority of the grade you will receive will reflect your ability to communicate your thoughts clearly and effectively, it is **imperative** that you attend every class meeting. While an excellent attendance record will be rewarded, any unexcused absences (without documentation from your coach, your band director, your doctor, etc.) will affect your grade negatively. This attendance policy includes days before and after holidays and vacations. You should inform me in advance of unavoidable absences. Although missing class is never recommended, departmental policy allows 3 absences without penalty (Keep them for emergencies only!) For every unexcused absence after the third your final grade will be lowered one step (e.g. A to A-, B+ to B, B- to C+).

Homework and Assignments

In order for the class discussions to be fruitful and well-grounded, we will be reading a substantial amount throughout the course of the semester. It is therefore **extremely important** that you come to class prepared: i.e. that you have read the **entire** assignment for class that day, if possible made notes or the like, and thought about the text before class. And given the pace of the semester, it is likewise **crucial** that you keep up with the reading; falling behind will only add to the reading burden and make it difficult, if not possible, to catch up.

In addition, there will be an **Oral Presentation** once a week by each participant of the class on the topic of that week or day. The precise

nature of the topic of the presentation is to be determined in advance in consultation with me. The presentation can be given extemporaneously or from a written text (former preferred), but should be no longer than 15-20 minutes in length. The presentation will be followed by a short discussion of it by the class.

There will also be a short paper and a written final exam.

Honor Code

Throughout all course activities, including written assignments, quizzes, and exams, the Honor Code is in effect: all of this work has to be your own and not anyone else's. To familiarize yourself with the Honor Code, please read the pertinent chapter in *Du Lac* (beginning on p. a-33): particularly section IV, entitled "Student Responsibilities under the Academic Code of Honor," points A through D; or visit http://www.nd.edu/~hnr/code/IV-Student_Resp.htm. If secondary sources are used for any assignments, these sources should be listed in a bibliography at the assignment's end, and any quoted material should be placed in quotation marks and clearly attributed in a footnote. Plagiarism (i.e., any written work presented as entirely your own and original to the particular assignment that is *not*, in fact, entirely your own and/or original to the particular assignment) is a serious matter. If you have questions about this policy and how it applies to your work for our course, and if you are in doubt about the legitimacy of your activities with respect to this course, please don't hesitate to ask me—before any problems can arise.

Requirements and Evaluation:

Attendance, Class Participation	45 %
Oral Presentation	25 %
One Short Essay	10 %
Final Exam	20 %

Contacting and Meeting with Professor Norton:

During office hours, I will be in my office in Decio 301, ready to discuss course issues or anything else. If you can't make my office hours, contact me after class or by e-mail; we can then either solve the issue right there or set up a time to meet. E-mail (Norton.15@nd.edu) is a good way to get in touch with me to ask specific questions.

Week One

Wednesday

Aug. 23

Introduction

Assignment: Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chs. I-VII (pp. 3-124).

Week Two**Monday****Aug. 28**

Edward Gibbon and History

Assignment: Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall*, Chs. XV and XVI (pp. 237-314).**Wednesday****Aug. 30**

Rome and Early Christianity

Presentation

Assignment: Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall*, Chs. XVII-XX (pp. 317-400).**Week Three****Monday****Sept. 4**

The Establishment of the Eastern Empire

Presentation

Assignment: Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall*, Chs. XXXIV-XXXVI and XXXIX) (pp. 604-642 and 691-98).**Wednesday****Sept. 6**

The Collapse of the West

Assignment: Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall* Chs. XLIV, XLVII, (pp. 762-787, 815-851).**Week Four****Monday****Sept. 11**

Legal and Ecclesiastical Turmoil

Presentation

Assignment: Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall*, Chs. L (pp. 855-943)**Wednesday****Sept. 13**

The Rise of Islam

Assignment: Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall*, Chs. LI, LIII, LXVIII-LXXI (pp. 944-960, 982-1002, 1197-1252).**Week Five****Monday****Sept. 18**

Lessons from Rome

Presentation

Assignment: Richard Wagner, *Twilight of the Gods*
Listen to Recording and read libretto.**Wednesday****Sept. 20**

Wagner: Myth and Culture

Presentation

Assignment: Wagner, *Twilight* (continued).**Week Six**

Monday
Sept. 25

Wagner
Presentation

Assignment: Friedrich Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morality*, Preface and First Essay, pp. 3-37.

Wednesday
Sept. 27

Nietzsche and the Modern World

Assignment: Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Second Essay, pp. 38-71.

Week Seven

Monday
Oct. 2

Nietzsche, Morality and History
Presentation

Assignment: Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Third Essay, pp. 72-128.

Wednesday
Oct. 4

Nietzsche and "ego-mania"

Assignment: Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, Book I, pp. 1-44.

Week Eight

Monday
Oct. 9

Nordau and the Fin-de-siècle Syndrome
Presentation

Assignment: Nordau, "The Wagner Cult," pp. 171-213.

Wednesday
Oct. 11

Mysticism: Nordau and Wagner
Presentation

Assignment: Nordau, *Degeneration*, "Friedrich Nietzsche," 415-472.

Midterm Break

Week Nine

Monday
Oct. 23

Ego-mania: Nordau and Nietzsche
Presentation

Assignment: Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Chs. I and III, pp. 3-40 and 70-86.

Wednesday
Oct. 25

Spengler and the Twentieth Century

Assignment: Spengler, *Decline*, Chs. V-VII, pp. 97-158.

Week Ten**Monday****Oct. 30**Spengler on Art, History, Culture
PresentationAssignment: Spengler, *Decline*, Ch. X, 188-225.**Wednesday****Nov. 1**

Spengler on Nature, Science and Religion.

Assignment: Spengler, *Decline*, Chs. XIV, XV 268-353.**Week Eleven****Monday****Nov. 6**Spengler on West vs. East
PresentationAssignment: Spengler, *Decline*, Chs. XVIII-XIX, pp. 360-397.**Wednesday****Nov. 8**

Spengler on Politics and the State.

Assignment: Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, pp. 1-135.**Week Twelve****Monday****Nov. 13**Thomas Mann and the German Tradition
PresentationAssignment: Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, pp. 136-208.**Wednesday****Nov. 15**Mann and Music
PresentationAssignment: Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, pp. 209-340.**Week Thirteen****Monday****Nov. 20**Mann and Nietzsche
PresentationAssignment: Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, pp. 341-416.**Wednesday****Nov. 23**

Nazism: Germany's Fate?

Assignment: Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, 417-end.**Week Fourteen****Monday****Nov. 27**The End
PresentationAssignment: Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*,
Preface and Chs. 1-3, pp. 1-78.**Wednesday****Nov. 29**

Huntington's Clash

Assignment: Huntington, *Clash*, Chs. 4, 5, and 8, pp. 81-121, 183-206.

Week Fifteen

Monday

Dec. 4

The Rise of the Rest

Presentation

Assignment: Huntington, *Clash*, Chs. 9 and 12

Wednesday

Dec. 6

Concluding Discussion