

General Studies Program
The Colorado College
Fall 2006 - Block 1

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Block 2: Jim Matson, Asian Studies

General Studies 101

FREEDOM & AUTHORITY

Program History

Freedom and Authority, the longest standing interdisciplinary course at Colorado College, began as a program designed to help students develop an intellectual framework for understanding what it means to be an individual *and* a member of larger groups – social, cultural, and political – in contemporary liberal societies. The earliest versions of Freedom and Authority were inspired by the problems of the 1950s:

- the ease with which people could be manipulated in an age of large-scale organization and mass media;
- the difficulty of finding meaning and direction in cultures both growing in affluence and diversity and losing touch with traditions; and
- the relative insignificance and passivity of modern individuals in the face of powerful state authorities.

In opposition to the brutal totalitarianisms of Soviet communism and European fascism, as well as to the “softer” totalitarianism of McCarthyite politics and market manipulation in the United States, Freedom and Authority courses sought to help students gain historical and philosophical perspective on the challenges and opportunities of contemporary life. At the same time, these courses encouraged students to engage the world on their own terms, rather than on terms imposed upon them.

Course Description

Today, the specters of communism and fascism have receded; however, contemporary late- or post-modern life in what are now globalizing market orders continues to make being an autonomous individual and an active and responsible citizen deeply problematic. This course seeks to provide students with critical historical, social, and cultural tools that may help them to understand and engage with such challenges.

The course will use texts of various genres to investigate problems of and conflicts between freedom and authority in a number of contexts, including personal, social, political, religious, and scientific-technical ones. These problems and conflicts will be examined thematically, with a significant emphasis on the history of the modern Western world and its predecessor cultures. The course consequently will fulfill the “Critical Perspectives: West in Time” requirement; however, it will neither approach Western traditions uncritically nor ignore non-Western ones entirely.

Block 1 will begin with a brief consideration of differing perspectives on freedom and authority and then turn to a study of ancient Greek beliefs and practices, with a focus on how the Athenian attempt to balance freedom and authority by means of democratic action may offer a useful critical perspective on modern society and government. The course then will examine the question of whether modern peoples, lacking the traditions of earlier eras, can in fact develop moral perspectives that could frame or inspire meaningful and autonomous lives. Here the focus will be on the cultural and spiritual ideals that help to shape individuals and give their lives some direction and meaning. Next, the course will turn to the modern social and economic structures that both promote a sense of individuality and limit actual autonomy.

Block 2, taught by Jim Matson (Asian Studies), will focus on other themes relating to freedom and authority, particularly in the contemporary United States.

Course Goals

The primary aim of the course will be to help students understand some key cultural, social, and political dilemmas of the present, in part by tracing this era's development from the past, and in part by examining closely competing evaluations of these problems. At the same time, the course will seek to identify intellectual and moral resources that make continuing criticism of thoughtless conformism possible and necessary. In addition, the course will introduce students to a variety of influential texts and arguments that, one hopes, students may find interesting on their own terms – whether as works of literature, treatises in philosophy, or studies in the social sciences.

The course will also seek to develop students' abilities to read, interpret, and respond to such complex texts. Refining and developing interpretations of the texts we read will be emphasized through a number of very short writing assignments, combined with discussion and presentations in class. Two 4-5 page papers and an oral midterm during Block 1 will aim to give students chances to develop and defend their own judgments about the problems the course will investigate. A longer research paper in Block 2 will encourage students to explore their judgements in more depth.

Course Requirements

Reading. This course will have a heavy yet quite rewarding reading list. Students will be expected to keep up with the reading throughout the block. Plan to spend a fair amount of time reading *before* attending class and, at times, re-reading after class. In general, texts are to be brought to our meetings so that they may be referred to in our discussions.

Course Meetings and Discussion. Most course meetings will consist largely of discussion. Individual students may be assigned to lead discussions or to take part in debates on particular topics periodically. Students should expect to attend class meetings consistently and punctually, and to discuss the subjects and texts under investigation in a civil manner. Performance in discussions will strongly influence the participation grade.

Writing. In Block 1, students will write six two-page reaction papers and two somewhat longer essays (4-5 pages each). The longer essays are to be typed (i.e., word-processed), double-spaced, and annotated in accordance with accepted norms of scholarship (that is, with citations and notes). The reaction papers will follow a somewhat more informal style, explained in detail at the end of this syllabus. Unexcused late papers will be downgraded one step per hour tardy.

Examinations. At the end of Block 1, students will be given oral examinations in small groups, based on questions that they will be given ahead of time. Unannounced quizzes may be given on the readings from time to time if it appears some students are not keeping up with the readings.

Required Texts

BLOCK ONE

- Paul Woodruff, *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea* (Oxford, 2005)
University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, Volume 1: The Greek Polis, ed. Arthur W. H. Adkins and Peter White (Chicago, 1986)
 Anicius Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* (Hackett Publishing, 2001)
 J.W. von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, trans. Michael Hulse (Penguin, 1989)
 Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Doubleday, 1958, 1994)
 Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings* (Hackett, 1987)
 Isabelle de Charrière, *Letters of Mistress Henley Published by Her Friend* (MLA, 1993)
 Diana T. Hacker, *A Pocket Manual of Style* (Bedford, 2003)

Additional Reserve Readings (articles and selections, as noted on the calendar section of the syllabus)

BLOCK ONE

- George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant" (1936), reprinted in *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays* (Harcourt Brace, 1950). Now available at:
 <<http://whitewolf.newcastle.edu.au/words/authors/O/OrwellGeorge/essay/shootingelephant.html>>
- Allan Bloom, "Our Virtues," in *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (Simon & Schuster, 1989)
- Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," in Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Beacon Press, 1965)
- Sophocles, *Antigone* (c. 440 BC), trans. Ian Jospheston (2003, rev. 2005), now available at:
 <<http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/sophocles/antigone.htm>>
- Thucydides, "Pericles' Funeral Oration," in *The Peloponnesian War*, now available at the World Civilizations Home Page, Washington State University (Richard Hooker, 1996, Updated 6-6-1999):
 <<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/GREECE/PERICLES.HTM>>
- Euripides, *Medea*, in *Ten Plays* (Bantam, 1972)
- Edward Friedman, "The Painful Gradualness of Democratization: Proceduralism as a Necessarily Discontinuous Revolution," in *Democracy and Its Limits: Lessons from Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East* (Notre Dame, 1999)
- Amitai Etzioni, "The Elements of a Moral Society," "The Fall and Rise of America," "Sharing Core Values," and "The Moral Voice," in *The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society* (Basic Books, 1996)
- Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism," from *The Fabric of Existentialism: Philosophical and Literary Sources*, ed. Richard Gill and Ernest Sherman (Prentice-Hall, 1973)
- Iris Marion Young, "City Life and Difference," in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, 1990)
- Aristotle, "Book I," *The Politics*, trans. T.A. Sinclair (Penguin, 1962)
- John Locke, "Of Property" and "Of Political or Civil Society," in *Second Treatise of Government* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1952)
- Benjamin Constant, "Liberty of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns: Speech Given at the Athéné Royale in Paris," in *Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1988)
- Charles Taylor, selections from *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Harvard, 1991)

Other supplemental readings may also be assigned as the blocks unfold. All additional and supplemental readings will be available as electronic reserve readings and, where possible, as regular reserve readings. The website for this course E-Reserve readings may be accessed directly by going to:

<http://coloradocollege.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=243>

Honor Code

Students will be expected to abide by the Honor Code. Among other things, the Honor Code specifies that you will be responsible for producing all of your own work and that you will always cite the works or ideas of others used in your work. However, discussing your ideas and your writing with others is *not* a violation of the Honor Code. In fact, it is a good idea to compare your ideas and writings with those of others and to ask others for criticisms of your work. And using other people's ideas can also be a good idea – *if* their ideas are good *and* you credit the authors for developing the ideas.

Disability Accommodations

If you believe you are eligible for learning accommodations as the result of a qualified disability, please contact me privately. If you believe you may have a disability that affects learning, and you have not self-identified to the College's Disabilities Services Office, please do so immediately. You will find their office in the Colket Student Learning Center at Tutt Library. You may also contact the College's learning consultant, Dr. Bill Dove, at the Learning Center or directly at extension 6168. I will make appropriate learning accommodations in accordance with the Disabilities Service Office's instructions.

Grading and Attendance Policies

Grades for the first block will be assigned on an 100-point scale and weighted in the following manner:

1. First paper draft	Mon., 12 Sept.	2%
2. First paper (4-5 pages)	Thurs., 15 Sept.	20%
3. Second Paper (4-5 pages)	Thurs., 22 Sept.	30%
4. Group Oral Midterm Examination	Tues-Wed., 27-28 Sept.	16%
5. Six reaction papers (2 pages each)	Various dates	12%
7. Participation		<u>20%</u>
TOTAL:		100%

The reaction papers will be graded minimally: plus, check, minus, zero. For more detail on this requirement, see the last page of this syllabus.

Regular, timely attendance and active participation in discussion are essential parts of the course – worth 20% of your final grade. Unexcused absences and regular tardiness will be noted and will affect grades negatively. Students who miss three or more classes for any reason may be required to withdraw from the course. If you have a good reason to be absent or late, notify me as soon as possible. Be sure to write a note (so that I remember!), as well as to speak to me.

The schedule of assignments appears above and below. You will be expected to meet all of these deadlines. Exceptions will be made only in extreme and unavoidable circumstances. If you expect to submit a paper late, contact me immediately. Either see me in my office, or give me a note or an e-mail message explaining your circumstances. If religious observances or other serious obligations conflict with the course schedule, let me know as soon as possible, and we can work out an alternate schedule for you.

Plan to attend class for the whole period, focusing on coursework throughout. “Attending for the whole period” means, among other things, that you will not leave class to visit the rest room, get a drink of water, chat with friends, and the like. We will take a break about after about an hour and 15 minutes. That is when you may leave class (except in an emergency, of course). If you have a good reason for arriving late or leaving early, please notify me in advance. ***As a courtesy to all, please turn off pagers and telephones while in class, and if you bring a notebook computer to class, please do not surf the web while we are in session.***

Office Hours/Communication

I will hold office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30-3 p.m. I am also generally in my office (130 Armstrong) in the afternoon. The easiest way to meet with me would be to make an appointment after class, or contact me via e-mail (dmccennerney@coloradocollege.edu). I can also be reached at my office phone (extension 6564).

Student FYE Mentor

Zale Clay will serve as FYE Student Mentor for this class. He will be available to meet individually and in groups to assist with any questions or problems students might have. He can be contacted at:

Zale Clay <z_clay@ColoradoCollege.edu>
Cell phone: 703-615-6966

Note that this entire syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Note: All assignments are to be completed *before* class.

Class will meet from 9:20 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., with a 15-minute break, unless otherwise noted

* Indicates electronic reserve reading.

PRELIMINARY ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

- Tuesday, 29 August New Student Orientation Meetings
- Capstone Address Event (Armstrong Theatre, 1-2:30 PM) with John Seigenthaler, Jr.
 - Small Group Discussions of the address and Toni Morrison, "Can Values Be Taught in the University?" by (2:30-4 PM)
 - Meetings with Faculty Advisors (4-6 p.m.)
- ORWELL READING FOR 4 SEPT. DISTRIBUTED.**

BLOCK 1: 4-27 SEPTEMBER

I. Some Problems of Freedom and Authority

- Monday, 4 September Convocation and Introductions
Morning: Convocation (9-10:20 AM, Shove Chapel).
 Class Meeting (10:30-12:15):
- a. Introductions and Review of Syllabus;
 - b. *Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant," pp. 1-7.
Afternoon: All-Campus Picnic (12:30-2 PM, Worner Quad).
- Tuesday, 5 September Conservative & Radical Perspectives on Contemporary Values
- a. *Bloom, "Our Virtues," pp. 25-43.
 - b. *Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," pp. 81-117.
FIRST PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS
Afternoon: Library tour with Jessy Randall, Curator and Archivist, followed by introduction to the Writing Center, with Tracy Santa, Director (1:15-2:30 PM). Meet in the Tutt Library lobby at 1:15.

II. Balancing Freedom and Authority – Ancient Greek Perspectives

- Wednesday, 6 September Conflicts of Tradition & the Promise of Athenian Democracy
- a. *Sophocles, *Antigone*, pp. 1-62.
 - b. Woodruff, *First Democracy*, pp. 3-80.
- Thursday, 7 September Free Thinking and the Demands of Democratic Order
- a. *Thucydides, "Pericles' Funeral Oration," in *Peloponnesian War*, pp. 1-6; and Woodruff, *First Democracy*, pp. 81-144.
 - b. Plato, *The Apology*, in *Chicago Readings*, pp. 183-205.

- Friday, 8 September Obligations: Promoted or Destroyed by Freedom?
 a. Old Oligarch, *Athenian Constitution*, in *Chicago Readings*, pp. 48-56; and Aristophanes, *The Wasps*, in *Chicago Readings*, pp. 58-157.
 b. Plato, *Crito*, in *Chicago Readings*, pp. 206-16.
- Monday, 11 September Freedom, Authority, and Others: A Possible Marriage?
 Class Meets 10AM-2:45 PM
 in Manitou Springs
 a. *Euripides, *Medea*, pp. 31-63; Woodruff, *First Democracy*, pp. 171-262.
 b. *Friedman, "The Painful Gradualness of Democratization," pp. 321-339.
 Afternoon: Paper Workshop/Small Group Discussions (1-2:30 PM)
FIRST PAPER DRAFTS DUE – BRING 5 COPIES

III. Cultural and Spiritual Authority: Can We Develop Meaningful Values to Balance Life?

- Tuesday, 12 September The Classical Hope: Critical Spirit or Conformist Belief?
 a. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Books I-II, pp. 1-48.
 b. Boethius, Books III-IV, pp. 49-125.
AFTERNOON PAPER DRAFT MEETINGS
- Wednesday, 13 September Growing Up and Discovering the (Troublesome) Modern Self
 a. Goethe, *Sorrows of Young Werther*, Part I, pp. 23-72.
 b. Goethe, *Werther*, Part II, pp. 73-134.
AFTERNOON PAPER DRAFT MEETINGS
- Thursday, 14 September Reading and Writing Day
 a. No class meeting. Finish papers.
 b. Start reading Etzioni.
REVISED FIRST PAPERS DUE AT NOON
- Friday, 15 September A Communitarian America: Fantasy or Common Sense?
 a. *Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule*, pp. 3-5, 58-84.
 b. *Etzioni, *New Golden Rule*, pp. 85-159.
SECOND PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED
- Monday, 18 September The Crisis of Colonization
 a. Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Part 1, pp. 3-125.
 b. Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Parts 2-3, pp. 129-209.
- Tuesday, 19 September Can Conflict Be Our Meaning?
 a. *Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism," pp. 519-533.
 b. *Young, "City Life and Difference," pp. 226-260.
- Wednesday, 20 September Writing Day
 No class meeting.
SECOND PAPER DUE AT 3:00 PM

IV. Modern Society: Basis for Freedom or Its Loss?

- Thursday, 21 September How to Be Autonomous: Classical and Early Modern Contrasts
 a. *Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book I, pp. 53-97.
 b. *Locke, *Second Treatise*, chaps. 5&7, pp. 16-30, 44-54.
- Friday, 22 September The Critique of Modern Society
 a. Rousseau, *Origins of Inequality*, in *Basic Political Writings*, pp. 25-81.
 b. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, pp. 141-87, 192-200, 203-7.
BLOCK 1 MIDTERM QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED
- Monday, 25 September The Promises of Modern Man and Women?
 a. *Constant, "Liberty of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns," pp. 309-328
 b. Charrière, *Letters of Mistress Henley*, pp. 3-42.
- Tuesday, 26 September Meaning in Modern Society
 a. *Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, pp. 13-69.
 b. *Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, pp. 74-80, 109-21.
- Wednesday, 27 September Group Oral Midterm Examinations
 One-hour group oral examinations.

Two-Page Summary and Reaction Statements

Over the course of the first block, students will write at least six short, informal summary-and-reaction statements. These pieces should be divided into two parts:

- a) stating in summary form what strikes you as the most significant or interesting point (or two points) made in the assigned text or texts ($\frac{1}{2}$ – 1 page); and
- b) explaining your reaction to that aspect of the reading (1 – 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pages).

These statements should be the equivalent of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 word-processed, double-spaced pages – so about 375-525 words long. The format is informal: your statement should list your name, the date, the assignment (the authors, titles, and chapters/pages discussed), and your own title at the top. You should divide the statement into two parts (“Summary” and “Discussion”), one summarizing the reading's most important point or points and the other giving your reaction to the reading. You need neither quote nor cite the text, though you can, if you think it important to do so. The statements should be written in clear, Standard English prose. The style may be informal.

As you write, don't try to summarize *all* the points made in the reading. Focus on one or two points that seem highly significant *to you*. This point or these points ought to have led you to think about something that seems important, significant, or meaningful. This point or these points need not be central to the reading, although in most cases I expect they will be. You may well write about some minor aside that an author makes, if that aside has led you to begin thinking. Just be sure to explain clearly and accurately what the authors say when you claim the authors argue something. Also, explain your reaction, your interest, your thought process. When I say, “explain,” I don't mean saying that something is “interesting” or it has “made you think.” Instead, identify what *in particular* strikes you as interesting, or what *specific problems or ideas* the reading raised for you, and then give the reader some sense of why any of these ideas seem important or significant to you. What has led you to react in the way you have?

This assignment is meant to be focused both on the reading and on your thoughts insofar as they relate to the readings. For the second half of the papers, you may explain why the authors' claims seem to you wrong-headed, or really cogent; why they excite or repel you; why they have made you think of something in a new way, or why they seem to point to a dead end. You may explain why the piece seems really bad or really good to you. This assignment lets you think aloud, as it were. However, the first part of the paper should accurately summarize what the author says.

The assignment also, I hope, will further four other aims. First, it will give you a chance to work on mastering the readings, as well as to demonstrate to me that you have done the reading. If there are parts of the readings that you don't understand, then write about the problems you have in seeing the author's points. I'll try to address those problems, either directly, by commenting on your paper, or indirectly, in class. Second, these assignments are designed to give you some easy practice in writing clearly and coherently. The more you learn to clarify your thoughts on paper, the better off you will be as a writer and student. Third, your comments may provide food for thought for you and your fellow students in class discussion and when you prepare to write essays that are more formal.

These papers will be graded minimally: plus, check, check/minus, minus, zero. I may add no or only a few comments.

- Plus: a) the paper clearly and coherently develops an idea; b) it also accurately and fully summarizes what the readings say; and c) it convincingly and clearly shows why this point or line of thought is significant to you.
- Check: the paper is a serious effort that contains a reasonably accurate summary and a serious reaction.
- Minus: the paper is just thrown together, it lacks careful thought, or it is wildly inaccurate about the reading.

Pluses will earn extra credit (2.5%), with checks gaining full credit (2%), check/minus (1.5%) and minuses (1%) partial credit. I give pluses very rarely. A check is the equivalent of an “A+” already for 2% of your final grade.

There are 23 authors assigned in this block. You must write reaction papers on six of them, but you may write on additional authors – in which case only the six best grades will be counted for the final grade. No late papers will be accepted. Finally, all papers will be e-mailed not only to me, but also to the entire class, for use in our discussions.

Note: Reaction papers must come from across the term. There must be at least **two** from each of the three lists following:

1. Bloom, Marcuse, Sophocles, Woodruff, Thucydides, Plato, the Old Oligarch, Euripides, Friedman.
2. Boethius, Goethe, Etzioni, Achebe, Sartre, Young.
3. Aristotle, Locke, Constant, Charrière, Taylor.