

**St Jerome's University**  
**HUMSC 301: Great Dialogues: The Sacred and the Profane**  
**Prof John Greenwood - Office Hours: SJU 2112 T/Th 11:30am-12:30pm**  
**Winter 2019**  
**Course Outline**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Text &amp; Lecture &amp; Discussion</b>	
<b>Definitions</b>		
I	Jan 8 Jan 10	Introduction: Eliade, <i>The Sacred and the Profane</i> Pieper: 'The Sacred and its Negation'
<b>Sacred Texts</b>		
II	Jan 15 Jan 17	Old Testament: Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Jonah New Testament: 1 Corinthians
III	Jan 22 Jan 24	Qur'an: The Opening, The Cow Upanishads
<b>Modern Culture and Morality</b>		
IV	Jan 29 Jan 31	T.S. Eliot: <i>The Wasteland</i>
V	Feb 5 Feb 7	Nietzsche: 'Prologue' from <i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i> Camus: 'The Myth of Sisyphus'
<b>The Human Condition</b>		
VI	Feb 12 Feb 14	<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i>
VII	Feb 19 Feb 21	-READING WEEK - Feb 18-22
VIII	Feb 26 Feb 28	Thoreau, <i>Walden</i> -ESSAY #1 DUE -
IX	Mar 5 Mar 7	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>
<b>Space</b>		
X	Mar 12 Mar 14	Settings & Rituals I: Acropolis Settings & Rituals II: Chartres
XI	Mar 19 Mar 21	Heidegger, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' Taylor, excerpt from <i>A Secular Age</i>
<b>Time</b>		
XII	Mar 26  Mar 28	Sacredness of Country Life: Jonson, 'Inviting a Friend to Supper', 'To Penshurst' Sacredness of Nature: Wordsworth, 'Tintern Abbey'
XIII	Apr 2 Apr 4  Apr 10-27	Pieper, <i>Leisure: The Basis of Culture</i> Exam Review - ESSAY #2 DUE - Final Exam Period

## Course Texts

Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Orlando: Harcourt, 1987. ISBN-10: 0-15-679201-X; ISBN-13: 978-0-15-679201-1

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, Yale, 2006. ISBN-10: 0300110081; ISBN-13: 978-0300110081

Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, trans. Gerald Malsbury, South Bend: St Augustine's Press, 1998. ISBN: 1-890318-35-3

*The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans. N.K. Sandars, Toronto: Penguin, 1972. ISBN: 0-14-044100-X

Plato, *Phaedo*, 2nd ed., trans. G.M.A. Grube, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980. ISBN-10: 0-915144-18-2; ISBN-13: 978-0-915144-18-1

Greenwood, John, *Reading the Humanities: How I Lost My Modernity*, Rock's Mills: 2017. ISBN 9781772440324

Courseware: selected readings

## Outline

The dichotomy between the sacred and the profane is one of the oldest in human history. The sacred is experienced as possessing a special holy value, set apart from the ordinary, revered, imbued with meaning, and typically associated with the religious and the divine. The profane is the antithesis of the sacred, a reality invested in the ordinary and the everyday, deprived of transcendent or religious substance, a state of being 'outside the temple' that does not acknowledge or participate in the rituals of a supernatural order. Traditional civilizations are marked by their recognition and embrace of the sacred dimension of human life, while our modern civilization is increasingly secular and thus rooted in a profane reality.

HUMSC 301 will explore the breadth of the dialogue between what is considered sacred and what is considered profane as these two states of being have revealed themselves over time, but particularly as they are understood in our present age. Our framework is thematic rather than an historical narrative, situating these concepts in different domains of human experience. The main themes to be investigated are sacred texts, modern culture and morality, the human condition, space and time. Our selected readings in these themes are designed to enliven our debate by deliberately highlighting distinctions between the traditional and the contemporary.

Questions to be raised include the following: What is the essence of the sacred and the profane? What are the different ways in which these ideas are experienced and understood? How have these two realities shaped our modern culture?

The focus of this course will be on the dialogue between the sacred and the profane, that is, how they interact with, respond to, and depend upon each other. This interpretive framework thus underlies the ongoing, dynamic interplay of these two realities rather than endorsing one over the other. The dialogical method, a key feature of the Human Sciences program, is also actively applied to the lectures to bring the multifaceted perspectives of the students, authors and instructor into view. Ready student participation is thus highly valued.

### **Evaluation**

Four brief in-class written assignments (20 min) allow students to take argumentative positions on issues discussed in class and engage in a written dialogue with the instructor to complement class discussion. These assignments are ungraded - submitting them at the end of class constitutes fulfilment of this requirement. Each is credited toward the final course grade. Students may use anything generated by these exercises - writing, comments, questions, class notes, etc - as a basis or springboard for the longer essay assignments as they wish.

Two term essays 8 pages in length (2000 words) on topics proposed or chosen by the student and due on the dates shown on the course syllabus.

A final exam composed of brief point form identifications as well as short and long essay answer questions will cover *all* required course reading.

Four in-class written assignments: 20%

Essay #1: 25%

Essay#2: 25%

Final Exam: 30%

### **Course Objectives**

1. To explore the diverse meanings of the sacred and the profane
2. To consider alternative perspectives on our present western civilization
3. To apply a dialogical method to our intellectual inquiries
4. To appreciate the human sciences approach to education

## **Policy on Late Submissions**

Essay due dates as shown in the syllabus are for the convenience of both the student, in submitting the work, and the professor, in grading and remarking on it in a useful, progressive and timely fashion. No 'late penalties' apply, but 'on time' submissions earn the privilege of revision and resubmission for a revised grade with the benefit of the professor's remarks and guidance.

## **Policy on Missed In-class Participation Assignments**

Missed written in-class participation assignments may be completed at another class, but at the risk of distraction from other scheduled class activities.

## **UW Policy Regarding Illness and Missed Tests**

The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations ([www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf](http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf)) state that:

A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the 'University of Waterloo verification of Illness' form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from health Services or at

[www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health\\_Services/verification.html](http://www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html)

If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he or she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.

The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the university community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations. Elective travel arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

## Other Information

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Federated and Affiliated Colleges are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** All students registered in courses at St Jerome's University are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g. plagiarism, cheating) or about 'rules' for group work or collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under St Jerome's University Academic Discipline Policy and UW Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline,

<http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his or her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. In such a case, contact the St Jerome's University Grievance Officer.

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding or penalty in a decision made under St Jerome's University Academic Discipline Policy or Grievance Policy if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, contact the St Jerome's University Appeals Officer.

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):**

[http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (UW)** <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

**Note for students with disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

**Turnitin.com:** Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin in this course.

*Note: Students must be given a reasonable option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. See <http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/integrity-waterloo-faculty/turnitin-waterloo> for more information.*

**Great Dialogues I & II & III & IV**  
**HUMSC 101 & 102 & 201 & 301**  
**Course Descriptions**

**Great Dialogues I: Reflection & Action**  
**HUMSC 101**

What is the relationship between thinking and action? Do they pull us in different directions? Can they be integrated? This course investigates how our own dialogue with core texts from antiquity (e.g. Homer, Plato, Christian scriptures) to the present (e.g. Descartes, Arendt) offers ways of understanding the dilemmas and issues raised by these texts and present in our culture and in ourselves.

No Special Consent Required

**Great Dialogues II: Politics & Morality**  
**HUMSC 102**

What is the relationship between politics and morality? Are they opposites? Can they be integrated? This course investigates how our own dialogue with core texts from the Renaissance to the present (e.g. Machiavelli, Shakespeare, Freud, Conrad, Arendt) offers ways of thinking through the dilemmas and issues raised by these texts and present in our culture and in ourselves.

No Special Consent Required

**Great Dialogues III: Reason and Faith**  
**HUMSC 201**

What is the nature of, and relationship between, reason and faith? Does this fundamental distinction lead to other distinctions such as those between explanation and revelation, the rational and the intuitive? What impact do such modes of thought have on notions such as providence, perception and truth? What comparisons and contrasts can be drawn between each mode and prevailing modern perspectives? This course investigates how a dialogue with core texts (e.g. Boethius, Aquinas, Dante, Bacon, Milton, Descartes, Hume, Austen) offers ways of understanding these issues.

Prereq: Level at least 2A.

**Great Dialogues IV: The Sacred and the Profane**  
**HUMSC 301**

What is the nature of and relationship between the sacred and the profane? This course will examine diverse manifestations of the sacred and the profane by emphasizing the nature of their interaction and the impact on our understanding of contemporary human civilization. A dialogical method in exploring these ideas will be encouraged. Areas to be investigated include space, time, ritual, culture, morality, life and death. The readings will be taken from core texts spanning a wide variety of fields and authors (e.g. Eliade, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Pieper, Charles Taylor, Mary Douglas, etc.)

Prereq: Level at least 3A or one of HUMSC 101, HUMSC 102, HUMSC 201