

History's Riddle: First Year Seminar

Fall 2003

Tu. Th. 740-855 p.m., 421 Lehman Hall, Barnard College

Instructor: Prof. Sanjay Reddy

Office: 8a Lehman Hall, Barnard College

Office Hours: M 330-5 p.m., unless announced on the class website (accessible via Courseworks).

Email: sr793@columbia.edu (preferred medium).

Please use the subject heading "First Year Seminar" to ensure a reply.

Telephone: 854-3790

Course Description:

Does history have a direction? Does progress exist? Can the past be compared with the present, and if so how? Is the present world unambiguously superior to the past world? Have human beings become freer over time? What is the relationship between comparisons over time and comparisons over space? Does the possibility of comparison depend on how "other" the past is to the present? What relevance do these questions have for how an individual lives her own life? The seminar will raise these questions.

No special topical knowledge is assumed.

Each student should bring an index card stating her name, email address, any aspects of her personal background she thinks appropriate, a description of her aspirations for the class, and a photograph (stapled to the card) to the instructor by the beginning of the second week of class (Tuesday Sept. 9th).

Course Requirements:

The work requirements for the course are four short papers (5-8 double-spaced pages at a maximum) with the requirement to rewrite and resubmit two of these papers after receiving the comments of the instructor and before the last meeting of the course. A class presentation concerning the readings, on a date assigned by the instructor will also be required of each student.

Reading:

The readings for the course will be available at Labyrinth Books (on 112th St. between Amsterdam and Broadway) or will be handed out by the instructor. The instructor

reserves the right to modify the readings. The readings will be limited to 165 pages per week in which readings are assigned, and 2000 pages over the entire term. The readings that are not handed out in class will be on reserve in the Barnard library.

Course Readings:

(1) Sept. 2nd

Introduction

(2) Sept. 4th

Development as Freedom, by Amartya Sen, read carefully chs 1-3, and skim entire book.

(3) Sept. 9th

History as the Story of Liberty, Benedetto Croce, Part I, chs. 10-12; Part III, ch.1; Part IV, chs.1,2,7,10; Part V, chs. 5,6.

(4) Sept. 16th

“On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life”, Friedrich Nietzsche, to be distributed.

(5) Sept. 18th and Sept. 23rd

The End of History and the Last Man, Francis Fukuyama, selection to be announced.

(6) Sept. 25th and Sept. 30th

Reflections on the Revolution in France, by Edmund Burke, selection to be announced.

Paper One Due Date: Sept. 25th

(7) Oct.2nd

Candide, Voltaire

(8) Oct. 7th

“The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm: A Critique of the Adaptationist Programme”, by Stephen J. Gould and Richard C. Lewontin,
<http://www.aaas.org/spp/dser/evolution/history/spandrel.shtml>

(9) Oct. 9th and Oct. 14th

The Great Transformation, Karl Polanyi, selection to be announced.

(10) Oct. 16th

Seeing Like a State, by James Scott, selection to be announced.

(11) Oct. 21st

“Theses on the Philosophy of History”, Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*.

Paper Two Due Date: Oct. 21st

(12) Oct. 23rd and Oct. 28th

Madness and Civilization, by Michel Foucault, Chs I-III (Oct. 23rd) and VII-IX and Conclusion (Oct. 28th).

(13) Oct. 30th

The Second Sex, Simone de Beauvoir, Part I, Part II, Part VII and Conclusion.

(14) Nov. 6th

The Making of Great Men: Male Domination and Power Among the New Guinea Baruya, Maurice Godelier, selection to be distributed.

(15) Nov. 11th

Sex and Destiny, Germaine Greer, selection to be distributed.

(16) Nov. 13th

After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Alasdair MacIntyre, chs. 1-6.

Paper Three Due Date: Nov. 13th

(17) Nov. 18th

“Towards a Third World Utopia”, by Ashis Nandy, to be distributed.

(18) Nov. 20th

Hind Swaraj, by M.K. Gandhi, entirety other than the appendices.

(19) Nov. 25th

What the Buddha Taught, by Walpola Rahula, chapters I-VI.

(20) Dec. 2nd

Provincializing Europe, by Dipesh Chakrabarty, selection to be announced.

(21) Dec. 4th

Conclusion

Paper Four Due Date: Dec. 4th