

HON 171: The Human Event

DR. JOHN LYNCH

Meeting: TTh, 12:00 - 1:15pm, Sage S 141, or
WF 10:45 - 12:00pm, Sage S 242
Office Hours: Sage N 110G, TW 10:30 - 11:30am, or by appointment.
E-mail: john.lynch@asu.edu
Teaching Assistants: TTh: Jacob Quintana
WF: Ana Spraetz

The Human Event is an intensive, interdisciplinary seminar focusing on key social and intellectual currents in the development of humanity in its diversity. Students examine human thought and imagination from various perspectives, including philosophy, history, literature, religion, science, and art. Coursework emphasizes critical thinking, discussion, and argumentative writing. Exploring texts from earliest recorded history to approximately 1600 C.E., HON 171 is the first half of a two-semester sequence that concludes with HON 272

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- ~ To improve your ability to reason critically and communicate clearly.
- ~ To cultivate your ability to engage in intellectual discourse through reading, writing, and discussion.
- ~ To broaden your historical and cultural awareness and understanding.
- ~ To deepen awareness of the diversity of human societies and cultures.
- ~ To instill intellectual breadth and academic discipline in preparation for more advanced study.
- ~ To cultivate multi-disciplinary perspectives
- ~ To develop frameworks for *self-directed* learning and working within a pluralist society

Please read this syllabus carefully. By attending class you attest that you have read and understood this syllabus and all associated documents available online. I, for my part, will not change any of the major policies or deadlines without sufficient due notice.

EXPECTATIONS:

You can expect me to challenge you to think about and understand the material in this course. In return, I expect you to keep up with assignments and to accept responsibility for your learning.

Note that, according to Arizona Board of Regents policy, a three-credit course requires approximately eight hours of out-of-class preparation *each week*. *Should I feel that the class as a whole isn't adequately prepared for class, I reserve the right to initiate a series of unannounced quizzes or in-class written assignments which can only remove points from your participation grade.*

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The following texts are required for purchase and are available at the ASU Bookstore or online vendors. *Only purchase these editions* - it is your duty to ensure you have the correct edition, so double check your purchase. Do not leave purchasing books too late in the semester; if the Bookstore runs out of copies, the onus is on you to obtain the correct edition before class.

- ~ *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (trans N.K. Saunders), Penguin, 978-0-14-044100-0
- ~ *Beowulf* (trans Seamus Heaney), Norton, 978-0-393-32097-8
- ~ *The Tain* (trans Ciaran Carson), Penguin, 978-0-140-45530-4
- ~ Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* (trans. Martin Ferguson Smith), Hackett, 0-87220-587-8
- ~ Euripides, *Bacchae* (trans Paul Woodruff), Hackett, 0-87220-393-1
- ~ Sophocles, *Philoctetes* (trans Peter Meineck), Hackett, 978-1-62466-122-8
- ~ Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* (trans Deborah Roberts), Hackett, 978-1-60384-190-0
- ~ Homer, *The Essential Iliad* (trans Stanley Lombardo), Hackett. 0-87220-542-8
- ~ Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, any edition. (I recommend the Folger Library edition, 978-1439196717)

Other readings will be made available on the BlackBoard site as needed. While these readings will be made available in electronic form, and you may use laptops or tablets (but not phones), it is *highly recommended* that you print the readings out so that you can read and annotate them easily. If I feel that the quality of discussion is being degraded by the use of electronic readers, I reserve the right to ban them from the classroom. *Use of an electronic device for any reason other than accessing readings will result in an immediate and unwarned 10% deduction from your final grade.*

All readings are to be completed for the class in which they are to be discussed. *Failure to bring a text counts as an absence.*

READING TEXTS:

Tim Parks:

[A]lways read with a pen in your hands, not beside you on the table, but actually in your hand, ready, armed. And always make [at least] three or four comments on every page, at least one critical, even aggressive. Put a question mark by everything you find suspect. Underline anything you really appreciate. Feel free to write “splendid,” but also, “I don’t believe a word of it.” And even “bullshit.”

The Human Event is a reading-intensive course and you are expected to come to each class having read assignments carefully. The text is central to the class, and your discussions should always balance close-readings of the text with the wider implications of the ideas contained therein. Many of the literary works we shall study are also philosophical in nature, and thus require close, careful, concentrated reading. Casual skimming will not be helpful to you in discussing these works, inhibit you from developing successful papers, and cause you to do poorly in written assignments; thus your final grade will suffer.

To aid you in your active reading, I ask that you maintain a non-digital notebook (of questions, thoughts, ideas, outlines, and answers to any study questions posted online) while doing the reading. Note that I can ask to see this notebook at any stage during the semester and will adjust your participation score depending on the quality of your preparation. To facilitate this, *bring your notebook to every class* and make sure that the notebook is dedicated solely to this class. *As a minimum, I’m asking you to generate two questions that could aid our discussion and identify at least one passage that you found puzzling, intriguing, and/or central to the work.* You can be asked to lead our discussion at any point in the class period, so it is vital that you prepare. There are guidelines for what constitutes a “good” discussion question on Blackboard.

REQUIRED WORK:

- ~ Participation – 50%
- ~ Argumentative Writing - 50%

Please see the “Guide to the Human Event” folder on Blackboard for more explicit guidelines as to grading standards for both participation and written work. In general, the following holds:

- ~ A-grade work will demonstrate *mastery* of the material and will go far beyond the minimum requirements of a particular assignment; in addition, there will be few or no mistakes.
- ~ B-grade work will *exceed* the requirements of an assignment and demonstrate strong competency with the material.
- ~ C-grade work will *meet* the requirements of an assignment.
- ~ D-grade work will *fail to meet* the requirements of an assignment and/or demonstrate little or no content comprehension.
- ~ E-grade work will *catastrophically fail* to meet the requirements and have little merit as a demonstration of knowledge or ability.

Participation (50%): This class is a seminar; you are thus expected both to have carefully read the assigned reading, formulated ideas, thoughts & questions before class, and to engage in discussion during class-time. As participation is worth 50% of your final grade, it is obvious that failure to participate will result in a grade no better than a 'D' no matter how good your written work may be. *Coming to class and having read the assigned reading does not count as participation; you must contribute to the discussions.* You should aim for a balance between active contribution and active listening – the classroom should not be dominated by single voices.

You will be graded on the following aspects of your performance: *frequency, content, textual use, synthesis, and collegiality*. I will discuss these on the first day of class. The 50% will be apportioned in three chunks - 10%, 20%, and 20% - and there will be an initial ungraded grace period as the class settles into its dynamic.

The “Guide to the Human Event” on Blackboard contains further discussion of how to participate in a seminar class but the following offers a brief overview.

A student exhibits *excellent* participation by arriving on time, thoroughly prepared with comments and questions on the assigned reading which demonstrate that she has analyzed the text and thought about her conclusions. Her text is open and meaningfully

annotated. She is fully engaged and attentive, which includes turning to and examining textual citations made by her colleagues. She cites the text and reads specific passages to support her claims and questions. Often she initiates the discussion on an important topic, question, or passage from the text without waiting for others to do so. Her remarks do not summarize or give broad, superficial glosses of the text; they do not consist of trivial observations or subjective expressions of taste. She poses significant questions and points that demonstrate close analysis of the text, attention to details and specific features in the text. When pertinent, she also discusses how she has synthesized her ideas with other texts we've read. Her contributions, however, do not digress, go off on tangents, or otherwise monopolize discussion time. She listens carefully to the remarks made by fellow discussants, and responds as readily to these as she does to questions from the instructor. Importantly, she does not dominate the discussion by talking too much or being too eager to answer questions. Indeed, she makes explicit efforts to involve less talkative peers into the conversation. Her participation aims for, and if well met by her colleagues, achieves, genuine dialogue on the matters at hand; thus, she contributes to our understanding of the text and challenging, thought-provoking, and insightful conversation.

On the other hand, actions that will harm your participation grade include, but are not limited to:

- looking intently but silently at the table/your book/your hands during discussions
- holding independent private conversations during a class discussion
- dominating discussions to the exclusion of others
- lack of civility toward others, including dismissive or hostile remarks or gestures, sleeping, allowing cell phones or other devices to disrupt the class, *etc.*

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. Disruptive behavior is anything that interferes with our class and includes (but is not limited to) having private conversations during class, sleeping, doing work for other classes, reading non-course-related materials, or texting. *If you engage in such behavior, you will get a verbal warning and receive an automatic absence for that day.* If I have to interrupt class a second time during the semester because of your behavior, you will receive an automatic zero for participation for the course.

Participation Self-Evaluation (0%): Three times during the semester you will be asked to complete a short online reflection on your participation during the period since the last reflection. Look at the grading rubric and give yourself an honest grade. Justify that

grade. Think about what is working for you, what isn't. What *you* need to improve and how the *group as a whole* is functioning.

Written Assignments (50%): Your writing must present a clearly organized and persuasive argument relating to the material we have read. You must develop a claim about the work(s) and use evidence to substantiate your claims. Remember, you are being evaluated on the quality of *your* ideas, the form in which *you* present those ideas, and *your* use of textual evidence.

I am a fair grader who expects you to pay close attention to both the content and form of your written work. I tend to return papers with more negative than positive comments – this does not mean that your paper was excessively “bad,” merely that given time and space constraints I am identifying the issues which I feel you can address and thus improve your future writing.

The Barrett Writing Center (BWC) will be available during the semester to assist students with their papers for all their classes. Directed by Barrett faculty and staffed by writing tutors who themselves have completed THE, the Center offers individual tutoring on writing papers for THE and other courses. Its goal is to help you improve your lifelong writing and critical thinking skills, so please take advantage of its services. See <http://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/barrett-writing-center/> for further details

CONTACTING ME OUTSIDE CLASS (OFFICE HOURS & E-MAIL):

Generally speaking, I recommend discussing any issues you may have with me either before or after class as it is usually more efficient that way. Occasionally after an initial discussion, I may recommend you e-mail me regarding an issue.

As per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), I cannot discuss grades over email or on the phone. If you would like to discuss your grades, please arrange to meet with me in person.

I am available to meet with you in my office at the times listed on the first page of this syllabus. This is an opportunity for you to discuss any concerns & issues you have about the course and /or your performance or interpretive issues with the texts we read. I welcome you to come see me either singularly or in small groups.

My office hours are “open-door”, i.e. you can come on in if I am not otherwise engaged with a student. If I am engaged with a student, please do not wait in the corridor but use the designated waiting area. I will come get you once I finish.

If you cannot make these hours, I encourage you to e-mail me to seek an appointment. That said, I teach multiple classes and have other duties, so it may not be possible for us to schedule a time. E-mail me with *three* potential times (within normal business hours, Tuesday through Friday, 9am to 4:30pm) that you can meet and give me a clear indication as to what you wish to discuss. *Missing a scheduled appointment results in an absence.*

Further details on e-mail etiquette are given in the “Guide to the Human Event” available on BlackBoard. If you deviate from these guidelines I will - without notice - ignore your email. If you have not received a reply to an email within two working days (i.e., excluding weekends), please resend the message.

OTHER ISSUES:

“Adult” Material: Some of the works we will be reading will be concerned with “adult” themes and may use language that is colloquial and often vulgar. Our class periods may involve frank discussions of religion, morality, politics, and gender, areas of fundamental importance to any society. Although some students may consider such content offensive, such materials are deemed important for the learning process. You are not excused from interacting with such materials, but are certainly encouraged to express well-formed opinions that express those objections and their reasons for them.

Plagiarism: You are obviously expected not to engage in any form of plagiarism which, according to the ASU Student Code of Conduct, means representing the words or ideas of another as your own. Plagiarism is an act of fraud - it involves both stealing someone else’s work and lying about it afterward. Note, that for an act to count as plagiarism, the representation *does not* have to be intentional. See <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity> for ASU policies regarding academic dishonesty.

As this course aims to have you think critically about primary sources, no material beyond our assigned readings may be utilized in your papers and you should not read such material even to prepare for class unless instructed to do so by me. In short, resources such as Wikipedia, SparkNotes, Cliff Notes etc. are strictly forbidden and any evidence for their use will result in punishment.

While I will not be enacting Dante’s punishment for fraud, as a minimum punishment, detection of *any* plagiarism will result in failure of the course. Egregious cases of plagiarism will result in me petitioning the Office of the Dean to award you a grade of XE (“failure due to academic dishonesty”). This grade cannot be removed from your

transcripts and will result in your expulsion from Barrett. It will also preclude you from entry into any reputable graduate or professional school or any venue where ethical behavior is valued.

The bottom-line is, *don't consult anything beyond our primary texts and don't plagiarize!*

Attendance: In accordance with Barrett policy, you are allowed two absences without penalty. Each subsequent absence will result in a loss of 5% from your final grade. Your running total of absences will be given on the back of your name plate. Please follow the appropriate University policies to request accommodation for religious practices or university sanctioned activities. *Arriving late for class (i.e. after we have begun discussion), not bringing your printed text to class, or bringing the wrong edition, all count as an absence.*

Grades: Final numeric grades will be converted to plus / minus grades in accordance with Barrett policy. During the semester, grades for individual assignments will be posted on Blackboard. Final grades will be available on myASU after finals week.

Grade Appeals: Grades can only be contested in writing (not by e-mail) and not before the class period following return of the assignment. Please enclose all relevant material (i.e. the paper as I returned it to you) with your appeal, which should engage the comments I have made. Avoid claiming that because you worked hard, you deserve an 'A' – it is assumed that you worked hard.

Incomplete: The grade of "I" (Incomplete) can only be given when a student, who while doing otherwise acceptable work, is unable to complete a course after the withdrawal date because of illness or another condition beyond their control. Documentation of this need is required *before* the final assignment is due. See <https://students.asu.edu/forms/incomplete-grade-request>.

Technology: At some point this semester your computer may spontaneously combust or some other technological disaster will befall you. You must save your work and you must have access to an alternate computer in the event your primary machine stops working. *Technological difficulties of any kind are not an acceptable excuse for late or missed work in this course.* Use Dropbox or another cloud service to ensure you always have a remote copy of your work.

All formal written assignments should be submitted as Word (DOC or DOCX) documents (*not* PDF, ODT, RTF or other formats) through Blackboard. I am aware of the

ploy of submitting a corrupted file so as to obtain extra time for an assignment and will automatically fail anyone who submits such a file.

You need to contact the ASU Help Center for all IT questions. Contact the ASU Help Center 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at: 1-855-ASU-5080 (1-855-278-5080). You can also live chat with the Help Center at <http://help.asu.edu>.

E-mail: Please ensure your ASU mailbox (or wherever it is being forwarded to) is not full. If an email announcement gets returned to me, I will not attempt to resend the message. It is your responsibility to ensure that communication is possible. Blackboard announcements will be our primary method of communication.

Cell Phones: I silence my phone when I come to class; you should do so as well. *A phone ringing is an automatic absence for the day.*

Food: In accordance with ASU policy, eating is not allowed in the classroom as it distracts others.

Americans with Disabilities Act: As per the Americans with Disabilities Act, I am happy to provide reasonable accommodations for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning or psychiatric disabilities. You need to meet with staff from ASU's Disability Resource Center early in the semester as I alone cannot make accommodations for you and will not do so after your performance may have suffered. Contact the DRC by going to <https://eoss.asu.edu/drc>, calling (480) 965-1234 or emailing DRC@asu.edu.

Seeking Help: If you feel that you are falling behind or under-performing in this course, please come talk to me. It's better to deal with such issues early than to have them affect your grades. For other issues, I recommend you contact Dr. Dawn Rendell, Assistant Dean of Students here at Barrett (dawn.rendell@asu.edu, 480-965-2836) who can assist you and help you find resources.

THE BARRETT COMMUNITY

Statement of Ethics: We are committed to upholding values of academic, professional, and personal honesty of the highest order. We believe that ethical and respectful behavior is one of the most important measures of the worth of an individual and, as such, the overall integrity of our community as a whole.

Respect for Diversity: We are committed to creating a diverse learning environment, which is broadly defined as a place where cultural diversity is valued and respected. I hope that you will contribute your unique perspectives to this effort by respecting others' identities and personal life histories and by considering and raising issues as appropriate to course content.

Discrimination: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. Sexual harassment, which includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. Barrett is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on sex and provides a number of resources and services to assist students in addressing issues involving sex discrimination, including sexual violence.

Sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking and relationship violence have a profound impact on a victim's academic, social, working, and personal life, and negatively affects victims' friends and families, other students, co-workers, and members of the university community. Barrett strongly encourages victims of sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking and relationship violence to seek support and report the incident. An excellent resource is <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/>

The Office of Equity & Inclusion has been designated as ASU's Title IX coordinating office. Help from the Title IX Office on campus can be found here: <https://cfo.asu.edu/hr-titleIX>

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Week of Monday	Day	Reading or Assignment
Aug 14	2	Introduction to the course
Aug 21	1	<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> Mesopotamia, 1900 to 250 BCE.
	2	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> (pp. 1 - 56) Greece, 8th C BCE
Aug 28	1	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> (finish) Greece, 8th C BCE
	2	In-class Writing Exercise
	Sa	Writing Exercise submitted to BlackBoard by noon.
Sep 4	1	Aeschylus, <i>Prometheus Bound</i> Greece, 5th C BCE
	2	Sophocles, <i>Philoctetes</i> Greece, 409 BCE
Sep 11	1	Euripides, <i>Bacchae</i> Greece, 405 BCE
	2	Workshop: Writing a Human Event Paper
Sep 18	1	Laozi, extracts from <i>Daodejing</i> [PDF] China, 6th to 3rd C BCE
	2	Chuangzi, extracts from <i>The Inner Chapters</i> [PDF] China, 6th to 3rd C BCE
Sep 25	1	In-class Peer Review. Complete draft of paper due in class (0%). Please see online instructions for formatting your paper and reviewing those of our peers.

Week of Monday	Day	Reading or Assignment
	2	<i>Kohelet / Ecclesiastes</i> [PDF] Israel, 450 - 180 BCE Participation Grade Pt 1 to be distributed (10%) Paper Due on Blackboard by 11:59pm Friday
Oct 2	1	Lucretius, <i>On the Nature of Things</i> (pp. 1 - 98) Rome, ~55 BCE
	2	No class, instructor out of state.
Oct 9	1	No class, Fall Break
	2	<i>Beowulf</i> England, ~1000 CE
Oct 16	1	<i>Tain</i> , pp. to be decided. Ireland, ~12C CE
	2	<i>Tain</i> , to end.
Oct 23	1	Selection of Buddhist texts [PDF]
	2	"The Death of Atsumori" from <i>Tale of the Heike</i> [PDF] Motokyo, "Atsumori" [PDF] Japan, 14th C CE Participation Grade Pt 2 to be distributed (20%)
Oct 30	1	Dante, extracts from <i>Inferno</i> [PDF] Italy, 1320 CE
	2	Dante, further extracts from <i>Inferno</i> [PDF] Italy, 1320 CE
Nov 6	1	In-class Peer Review. Complete draft of paper due in class (0%)
	2	No class, Veteran's Day Completed paper #2 due on Blackboard by Thursday 11:59pm (20%)

Week of Monday	Day	Reading or Assignment
Nov 13	1	Bartolomé de las Casas, extracts from <i>A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies</i> [PDF] Spain, 1542
	2	Michel de Montaigne, extracts from <i>Essays</i> [PDF] France, 1580 CE
Nov 20	1	William Shakespeare, <i>Julius Caesar</i> , Acts 1 - 3 England, 1599 CE
	2	No class, Thanksgiving
Nov 27	1	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , finish
	2	Last Day of Class Participation Grade Pt 3 to be distributed (20%)

**** Paper #3 due Wednesday Dec 6th by noon (10%) ****

The above list of readings may be altered in response to prior discussions or my evaluation of the overall abilities of the class. You will usually receive at least a week's notice of any changes.