

HNRS 1352.060—Spring 2023
World, Text, and Image 2
Mankind's Search for Meaning and Well Being
Dr. Matt Stith and Dr. Robert Sterken
TR 9:30a–10:50a

Dr. Stith's Contact Information:

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TT 10:50a–12:50a and by appointment.

Dr. Sterken's Contact Information:

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Office Hours: 11a – 1p TT and by appointment.

Course Description (from catalog): Comparative study in the humanities and social sciences from the Renaissance to the Twenty-First Century. This seminar course takes an interdisciplinary approach to literature, history, and art of this period. This course is writing intensive. Prerequisite: Invitation by Honors Committee. Satisfies core requirement for Language, Philosophy, & Culture.

Mankind's Search for Meaning and Well Being

Beginning with early thinkers and working forward, this class explores the big ideas all humans have struggled with justice, happiness, purpose, suffering, religion, war, and the environment. We will engage these important topics and persistent questions through readings and multimedia. Most of all, this course is underscored by a rich and ongoing class-wide conversation through which we will collectively grapple with many of the same questions philosophers and great thinkers continue to struggle with. Our focus, then, is not just on the texts. It is about the ideas and questions manifested by the texts and how they apply to our time and our lives as humans and scholars.

Student Learning Outcomes

To develop and improve critical thinking and writing skills about ancient and modern versions of the self and the other. (papers and discussions)

To learn how to read critically, analyze, and interpret philosophical texts. (papers and discussions)

To define and study figures of meaning and well-being as conceptualized by the peoples of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries. (papers)

To differentiate the characteristics of Eastern and Western thought and world views in the Modern Era. (papers and discussions)

Required Books

1. **Starry Messenger: Cosmic Perspectives on Civilization** Hardcover – September 20, 2022 by Neil deGrasse Tyson ISBN-13: 978-1250861504.
2. **The Alchemist**, 25th Anniversary Edition by Paulo Coelho. ISBN-13: 978-0062315007.
3. **The Best Cook in the World: Tales from My Momma's Southern Table** by Rick Bragg ISBN-13: 978-1400032693.

Please note: to avoid confusion in class, all students must use these editions/translations. Students are required to bring appropriate books to class to supplement discussion.

Assessment of Student Learning:

Analytical papers (1st x 10% and 2nd x 15%) 25%
Analytical paper 3 25%
Reading Worksheets 35%
Participation and Attendance 5%
Presentations of Assigned Readings 10%

Analytical Papers: Thrice during the course of the semester, students will turn in a 2-3 page, double-spaced, 12-point font, type-written essay with 1-inch margins. In these papers, the student will be asked to discuss some aspect of the readings. These papers must have and support a thesis. All writing assignments will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

Reading Worksheets: There will be six reading worksheets due throughout the semester. These are meant to help students think carefully and critically about the readings. Each worksheet will consist of two or three guided questions, and no outside sources are allowed. Answers to each question should be approximately 200 words long, and should be written in a single paragraph.

Participation: Participation in class means that you are present, engaged in the discussion and not engaged in other activities (do not let your digital device distract you from being fully present). Reading assignments are listed below. All students are expected to have read the assigned material by the beginning of class. Partial completion of an assignment is unacceptable; coming to class unprepared will result in a full letter-grade reduction (10%) of your participation grade. On the other hand, please understand that while we expect you to have read the assigned readings, we do not necessarily expect you to have mastered them. Like all readers, you will have questions and perhaps even occasional problems with these texts. That's part of the reading process. In such cases, please be sure to bring those problems and questions to class so that we can discuss them as a group. We strongly suggest

that you take notes on each text while you read it, focusing on its central ideas, characters, and plot points. Such careful reading will prepare you for discussion, a vital part of this class. Also, be sure to plan. Because of scheduling constraints, reading assignments are not always evenly divided. The participation grade also includes active participation in the group project at the end of the semester.

A note on lateness: Attendance will be noted at the beginning of the class meeting. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to make sure that your name has been recorded on the role. Repeated lateness indicates a lack of respect for your colleagues and professors; to avoid showing such disrespect, please be on time or you may be denied entry.

A note on academic honesty: Any sort of unauthorized aid such as copying or loaning homework assignments, talking or the use of notes during tests or quizzes, will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, the unacknowledged use of another person's language or ideas, will not be tolerated. If you cheat on anything in this class you will receive an "F" for the course. If you are unsure of what constitutes cheating in this class, see the University document at the end of this syllabus. Ignorance of the rules will not be tolerated as an excuse for cheating.

A note on the University Writing Center: Located in BUS 202, the UT-Tyler Writing Center provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning—you will be expected write and/or discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix your paper for you. Appointments: 565-5995. For more information: www.uttyler.edu/writingcenter.

A note on student absence due to religious observance or athletics. Any student who will miss any class days during the semester because of religious observance or participation in University athletics must inform the instructors of this course no later than the second day of class.

Schedule of Discussion of Readings:

(Please note: This schedule is subject to revision)

For Assignments, please see the "Assignment" or the "Modules" tabs.

January

Week 1 (1-10/1-12): Starry Messenger

Week 2 (1-18/1-20): Starry Messenger

Week 3 (1-25/1-27): Starry Messenger

February

Week 4 (2-1/2-3): The Alchemist

Essay 1 Due at 11:59pm on Sunday, Feb. 7.

Week 5 (2-8/2-10): The Alchemist

Week 6 (2-15/2-17): The Alchemist

Week 7 (2-22/2-24): The Alchemist

March

Week 8 (3-1/3-3): Greatest Cook

Week (3-7/3-12): Spring Break!

Week 9 (3-15/3-17): Greatest Cook

Essay II Due at 11:59pm on March 20.

Week 10 (3-22/3-24): Greatest Cook

Week 11 (3-29/3/31): Greatest Cook

April

Week 12 (4-5/4-7): Greatest Cook

Week 13 (4-12-4/14): Greatest Cook

Week 14 (4-19/4-21): Greatest Cook

Week 15 (4-26/4-28): Greatest Cook

Week 16 (4-27/4-29): Finals Week; Final Essay Due at 11:59pm on April 30.