

Transformative Ideas
First Year Seminar 117
Professor Dumm
203 Clark House
Office hours: MW: 3:30 to 5 and by appointment

This course explores a series of ideas from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that have substantially changed the way people think about humanity in the Western world. Each idea is closely associated with an author. While from year to year the ideas will change, for 2007 we will closely read and write about, Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto*, Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality, Volume One*. Students are also required to purchase a copy of Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*.

Requirements:

This course will emphasize the development of several skills, including note-taking, close reading, and expository writing. You will be required to keep a journal into which they will transcribe notes and pose critical questions concerning the readings. These journals – written in longhand in a notebook -- will be submitted for review by the professor at the mid-term and conclusion of the course. You will also be required to write every week, a brief essay commenting on a passage in the week's reading. This is a discussion-based course with the expectation of active participation by students. You are required to have the reading for each class meeting completed prior to class. You will be evaluated for their ability to engage thoughtfully with the texts and with each other. Evaluation of participation will constitute the remaining 10% of the final grade for the course.

Texts: The above titles are for sale at Amherst Books in beautiful downtown Amherst.

- 9/6 Introduction: No reading, viewing, *The Incident at Tower 37*
- 9/8 Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
- 9/13 Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*.
- 9/15 Arendt, *On Revolution*, Introduction, Chapters One and Two
- 9/20 Arendt, *On Revolution*, Chapters Three and Four
- 9/22 Arendt, *On Revolution*, Chapters Five and Six
- 9/27 Thoreau, *Walden*, "Economy"

9/29 Thoreau, *Walden*, “Where I Lived, What I Lived For,” “Reading,” “Sounds,” “Solitude,” “Visitors.”

10/4 Thoreau, *Walden*, “The Bean-field,” “The Village,” “The Ponds,” “Baker Farm,” “Higher Laws”

10/6 Thoreau, *Walden*, “Brute Neighbors,” “House-Warming “Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors,” “Winter Animals”

FALL BREAK

10/13 Thoreau, *Walden*, “The Pond in Winter,” Spring,” “Conclusion”

10/18 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Introduction and First Essay

10/20 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay

10/25 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay

10/27 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, Preface, Chapter I.

11/1 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, Chapter II

11/3 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, Chapter III

11/8 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, Chapter IV

11/10 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, Chapters 1-3

11/15 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, Chapter 4

11/17 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, Chapter 5

Thanksgiving Break: November 19 to November 27

11/29 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Part One and Two

12/1 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Part Three

12/7 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Part Four

12/14 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Part Five