

LS 801: Reflections on Reason and Passion II

Spring 2019 | Dr. Stephen Duguid

Course Description

This course explores a variety of texts that express or reflect upon the human passions and upon the relationship between those passions and the realms of action, will, and reason. While there is some chronological coherence in the ordering of the texts, the primary intent is to examine issues and themes that reflect human experiences, feelings and behaviours. We start with the 'Ancient World' followed by a (necessarily) short exploration of the Medieval era and then proceed to the Modernity we all participate in. At the end of the term we will examine three contemporary critiques of this Modernity.

Course Requirements

Following an introduction and a review of contextual issues by the instructor, each week one or more students will be asked to present the salient points or issues (as they relate to passion and reason) raised in one of the readings, followed by general discussion and debate. The week after the class, the student responsible for the animation of the discussion will submit (via e-mail to the class) a two/three page summary of the presentation and the class discussion. In addition there will be one written essay assignment and time will be set aside in the seminars to discuss your writing projects.

Required readings

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* – Martha Nussbaum, "Therapeutic argument: Epicurus and Aristotle", (Chapter Two in the *Norms of Nature: Studies in Hellenistic Ethics* (1986)

Lucretius, *The Nature of Things*; Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*. Plus continuation of Nussbaum reading

Augustine, *Confessions*; Abelard and Heloise, *The Personal Letters* and Abelard's *Historia calamitatum*.

Mencius; Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Thomas More, *Utopia*; Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*; Immanuel Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* – Review of Student Essay Topics

Michel Foucault, ed., *I, Pierre Riviere, having slaughtered my...*; Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*.

Albert Camus, *The Outsider*; Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*

J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*; Jacques Derrida, "The Animal that Therefore I Am (More to Follow)", opening chapter of Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am* (pp. 1-51)

Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*

Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*