

**Term:** Fall 2015  
**Course Number:** OMN 450  
**Instructor:** **Brian Lowry**

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**Course Time:** Thursdays, Whiting Campus (Rm 306), 6p to 10p

**Course Description:** Students will seek to understand the various disciplines of the liberal arts (humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences) through the lens of Western Civilization from around 1500 to the present.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Textbooks:** *A History of Knowledge, Past Present and Future*, Charles Van Doren  
*Introduction to the Great Books, First Series*  
*Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl  
*Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman

**Statement of Plagiarism:**

If an instructor or other Calumet College of St. Joseph personnel find that a student has plagiarized or been involved in another form of academic dishonesty, the instructor or other personnel may elect to bring the matter up for judicial review. The maximum penalty for any form of academic dishonesty is dismissal from the College. The procedures for judicial review are listed under the section of CCSJ handbook that addresses student grievances.

Calumet College of St. Joseph adheres to citation guidelines as prescribed by the particular discipline (i.e., MLA, APA, Chicago Manual of Style or Turabian.). All of these guidelines are available in the Calumet College of St. Joseph library or bookstore. These texts outline how to cite references from a variety of sources, including electronic media.

**Withdrawal from Classes Policy:**

Please see the Degree Completion Program's Student Handbook for withdrawal policy. All withdrawals are completed through the Degree Completion Academic Advisor's office.

**Class Policy on Attendance:**

It is a serious matter when a student misses even one session due to the accelerated format of the program. If the student misses more than one session, the student is required to withdraw from the module by contacting the Academic Advisor (219) 473-4263 and their instructor.

Students not in attendance at the start of class will earn deductions from their class participation points for that evening. Two points will be lost for every 15 minutes the student is late. No points will be granted for a student not in attendance.

**Class Policy For Assignments:**

Late assignments will not be accepted.

**Course Objectives:**

Students in this course will demonstrate:

- Clear, reflective writing
- An understanding of selected social and intellectual trends that have shaped Western civilization from 1500 until the present day through quizzes and class discussions
- An ability to objectively discuss selected complex subjects which are examined and exemplified in selected written works
- An acquaintance with the various methods of inquiry used by the disciplines of the liberal arts

**Format for Written Assignments:**

Students will submit word-processed papers in a timely fashion using 12 point type and one inch margins.

**Week 1**

Review of Course Guidelines & Goals

Readings: *History of Knowledge*  
Chapter 8 “The Invention of Scientific Method”

Additional Readings: *Discourse on Method*, Descartes (attached)  
Observation & Experiment, Bernard  
(*Intro to Great Books*, pp.137-143)

Submit Essay #1 (3-5 pages; **attached**)

**Week 2**

Readings: *History of Knowledge*  
Chapter 9 “An Age of Revolutions”  
Chapter 10 “The 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Prelude Modernity”

Additional Readings: *The Declaration of Independence* (attached)  
Concerning the Division of Labor, Smith  
(*Intro to Great Books*, p.69-73)

Submit Essay #2 (3-5 pages)

**Week 3**

Readings: *History of Knowledge*  
Chapter 11 “The World in 1914”  
Chapter 12 “The 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The Triumph of Democracy”

Additional Readings: *Man’s Search for Meaning, Part I* (pp.3-93), Frankl  
Why War?, Freud (*Intro to Great Books*, pp. 7-17)

#### Week 4

Readings: *History of Knowledge*  
Chapter 14 “The 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Art and the Media”

Additional Readings: *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Postman  
Foreword & Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11

Submit Essay #3 (3-5 pages)

#### Week 5

Students present culminating projects to the class.

#### Assessment:

Essay 1	5 points
Essay 2	10 points
Essay 3	10 points
Three quizzes	15 points (5 points each)
Class Participation	40 points (10 points each week)
Oral Presentation	10 points
Final Paper	<u>10 points</u>
	100 points

#### Grading Scale:

A	100-93	C+	79-77
A-	92-90	C	76-73
B+	89-87	C-	72-70
B	86-83	Below 70%, student must re-take course	
B-	82-80	D	69-60

#### Class Participation:

Obviously, class participation is crucial to success in the course. Students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned material. Students should be able to discuss the material in an intelligent manner. No participation points will be awarded to a student who is absent from a class session. Quizzes are given at the *beginning* of a class session. Students missing a quiz will **not** have an opportunity to make it up.

This syllabus may be changed with little notice. If a student is absent from a class session, it is his or her responsibility to contact the instructor regarding assignments.

## Essay #1

### Due first night of class

In 3 to 5 pages, compare and contrast the three readings for this week. Include your own original thought. Do not merely rehash dictionary definitions or biographical information. Dig into what the authors are saying, how they compare to one another & how they differ from one another. Answer the question:

#### **“What is science and how does it work?”**

As you write, consider the main points of the authors. In what ways do they agree with one another? At which points do their thoughts diverge? Do you agree with these authors? How and why? Cite passages from the works to bolster your argument—not to take the place of an argument.

#### A NOTE REGARDING ESSAYS

Traditionally, an essay has been understood as a composition reflecting a personal point of view regarding a particular subject. It is an opinion paper. Understood in this way, an essay does not require extensive research into a subject matter for it to be recognized as complete. However, an essay does not prohibit such research, either.

When grading your essays, I will look for more than the expression of mere and unsubstantiated opinions. Although everyone certainly has the right to express their opinions, it must be recognized that some opinions are ‘more right’ than others. Some opinions are more important, more crucial, and more valid than others. This, of course, begs the question, ‘If everyone can have an opinion and is free to express theirs, how can we tell the good ones from the bad ones?’

We can tell in this way: Good opinions—like good essays—are supported by a marshalling of facts, a rigorous argument, an acknowledgement of differing points of view, and a clear expression. Good opinions extend beyond merely personal feelings and prejudices and instead appeal to logic, a common body of knowledge, and a recognition of others’ ideas. Your papers will be graded in this spirit. Please feel free to express your ideas on a matter in your papers, but please make sure that you have thought-through them and can defend them if challenged.

Needless to say, grammar and punctuation play an important role in the clear expression of your ideas and will appropriately contribute to your grade on these essays.

Descartes

*Discourse on Method*

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**Part One**

From my childhood I lived in a world of books, and since I was taught that by their help I could gain a clear and assured knowledge of everything useful in life, I was eager to learn from them. But as soon as I had finished the course of studies which usually admits one to the ranks of the learned, I changed my opinion completely. For I found myself saddled with so many doubts and errors that I seemed to have gained nothing in trying to educate myself unless it was to discover more and more fully how ignorant I was.

Nevertheless I had been in one of the most celebrated schools in Europe, where I thought there should be wise men if wise men existed anywhere on earth. I had learned there everything that others learned, and, not satisfied with merely the knowledge that was taught, I had perused as many books as I could find which contained more unusual and recondite knowledge . . . And finally, it did not seem to me that our times were less flourishing and fertile than were any of the earlier periods. All this led me to conclude that I could judge others by myself, and to decide that there was no such wisdom in the world as I had previously hoped to find . . .

I revered our theology, and hoped as much as anyone else to get to heaven, but having learned on great authority that the road was just as open to the most ignorant as to the most learned, and that the truths of revelation which lead thereto are beyond our understanding, I would not have dared to submit them to the weakness of my reasonings. I thought that to succeed in their examination it would be necessary to have some extraordinary assistance from heaven, and to be more than a man.

I will say nothing of philosophy except that it has been studied for many centuries by the most outstanding minds without having produced anything which is not in dispute and consequently doubtful. I did not have enough presumption to hope to succeed better than the others; and when I noticed how many different opinions learned men may hold on the same subject, despite the fact that no more than one of them can ever be right, I resolved to consider almost as false any opinion which was merely plausible . . .

This is why I gave up my studies entirely as soon as I reached the age when I was no longer under the control of my teachers. I resolved to seek no other knowledge than that which I might find within myself, or perhaps in the great book of nature. I spent a few years of my adolescence traveling, seeing courts and armies, living with people of diverse

types and stations of life, acquiring varied experience, testing myself in the episodes which fortune sent me, and, above all, thinking about the things around me so that I could derive some profit from them. For it seemed to me that I might find much more of the truth in the cogitations [reflections] which each man made on things which were important to him, and where he would be the loser if he judged badly, than in the cogitations of a man of letters in his study, concerned with speculations which produce no effect, and which have no consequences to him . . .

After spending several years in thus studying the book of nature and acquiring experience, I eventually reached the decision to study my own self and to employ all my abilities to try to choose the right path. This produced much better results in my case, I think, than would have been produced if I had never left my books and my country . . .

## **Part Two**

. . . As far as the opinions which I had been receiving since my birth were concerned, I could not do better than to reject them completely for once in my lifetime and to resume them afterwards, or perhaps accept better ones in their place, when I had determined how they fitted into a rational scheme. And I firmly believed that by this means I would succeed in conducting my life much better than if I built only upon the old foundations and gave credence to the principles which I had acquired in my childhood without ever having examined them to see whether they were true or not . . .

. . . Never has my intention been more than to try to reform my own ideas, and rebuild them on foundations that would be wholly mine . . . The decision to abandon all one's preconceived notions is not an example for all to follow . . .

As for myself, I should no doubt have . . . [never attempted it] if I had had but a single teacher or if I had not known the differences which have always existed among the most learned. I had discovered in college that one cannot imagine anything so strange and unbelievable but that it has been upheld by some philosopher; and in my travels I had found that those who held opinions contrary to ours were neither barbarians nor savages, but that many of them were at least as reasonable as ourselves. I had considered how the same man, with the same capacity for reason, becomes different as a result of being brought up among Frenchmen or Germans than he would be if he had been brought up among Chinese or cannibals; and how, in our fashions, the thing which pleased us ten years ago and perhaps will please us again ten years in the future, now seems extravagant and ridiculous; and I felt that in all these ways we are much more greatly influenced by custom and example than by any certain knowledge. Faced with this divergence of opinion, I could not accept the testimony of the majority, for I thought it worthless as a proof of anything somewhat difficult to discover, since it is much more likely that a

single man will have discovered it than a whole people. Nor, on the other hand, could I select anyone whose opinions seemed to me to be preferable to those of others, and I was thus constrained to embark on the investigation for myself.

Nevertheless, like a man who walks alone in the darkness, I resolved to go so slowly and circumspectly that if I did not get ahead very rapidly I was at least safe from falling. Also, I did not want to reject all the opinions which had slipped irrationally into my consciousness since birth until I had first spent enough time planning how to accomplish the task which I was then undertaking, and seeking the true method of obtaining knowledge of everything which my mind was capable of understanding . . .

. . . I thought that some other method [beside that of logic, algebra, and geometry] must be found to combine the advantages of these three and to escape their faults. Finally, just as the multitude of laws frequently furnishes an excuse for vice, and a state is much better governed with a few laws which are strictly adhered to, so I thought that instead of the great number of precepts of which logic is composed, I would have enough with the four following ones, provided that I made a firm and unalterable resolution not to violate them even in a single instance.

The first rule was never to accept anything as true unless I recognized it to be evidently such: that is, carefully to avoid precipitation and prejudice, and to include nothing in my conclusions unless it presented itself so clearly and distinctly to my mind that there was no occasion to doubt it.

The second was to divide each of the difficulties which I encountered into as many parts as possible, and as might be required for an easier solution.

The third was to think in an orderly fashion, beginning with the things which were simplest and easiest to understand, and gradually and by degrees reaching toward more complex knowledge, even treating as though ordered materials which were not necessarily so.

The last was always to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I would be certain that nothing was omitted . . .

What pleased me most about this method was that it enabled me to reason in all things, if not perfectly, at least as well as was in my power. In addition, I felt that in practicing it my mind, I was gradually becoming accustomed to conceive its objects more clearly and distinctly . . .

#### **Part Four**

As I desired to devote myself wholly to the . . . search for truth, I thought that I should . . . reject as absolutely false anything of which I could have the least doubt, in order to see whether anything would be left after this procedure which could be called wholly certain.

Thus, as our senses deceive us at times, I was ready to suppose that nothing was at all the way our senses represented them to be. As there are men who make mistakes in reasoning even on the simplest topics in geometry, I judged that I was as liable to error as any other, and rejected as false all the reasoning which I had previously accepted as valid demonstration. Finally, as the same precepts which we have when awake may come to us when asleep without their being true, I decided to suppose that nothing that had ever entered my mind was more real than the illusions of my dreams. But I soon noticed that while I thus wished to think everything false, it was necessarily true that I who thought so was something. Since this truth, *I think, therefore I am*, was so firm and assured that all the most extravagant suppositions of the skeptics' were unable to shake it, I judged that I could safely accept it as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.

*From: Rene Descartes, **Discourse on Method**, Laurence Lafleur, trans., (New York; Macmillan, 1960).*

## **The Declaration of Independence of the United States of America**

*WHEN in the Course of human Events*, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

**WE** hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness -- That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great- Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

**HE** has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

**HE** has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

**HE** has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

**HE** has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

**HE** has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

**HE** has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of the Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and the Convulsions within.

**HE** has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

**HE** has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

**HE** has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

**HE** has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harrass our People, and eat out their Substance.

**HE** has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the consent of our Legislatures.

**HE** has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

**HE** has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

**FOR** quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us;

**FOR** protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

**FOR** cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World:

**FOR** imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

**FOR** depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

**FOR** transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences:

**FOR** abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rules into these Colonies:

**FOR** taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

**FOR** suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

**HE** has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

**HE** has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

**HE** is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

**HE** has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

**HE** has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.

**IN** every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.

**NOR** have we been wanting in Attentions to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

**WE**, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with

a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

***John Hancock.***

GEORGIA, *Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, Geo. Walton.*

NORTH-CAROLINA, *Wm. Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn.*

SOUTH-CAROLINA, *Edward Rutledge, Thos Heyward, junr., Thomas Lynch, junr., Arthur Middleton.*

MARYLAND, *Samuel Chase, Wm. Paca, Thos. Stone, Charles Carroll, of Carrollton.*

VIRGINIA, *George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Ths. Jefferson, Benja. Harrison, Thos. Nelson, jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton.*

PENNSYLVANIA, *Robt. Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benja. Franklin, John Morton, Geo. Clymer, Jas. Smith, Geo. Taylor, James Wilson, Geo. Ross.*

DELAWARE, *Caesar Rodney, Geo. Read.*

NEW-YORK, *Wm. Floyd, Phil. Livingston, Frank Lewis, Lewis Morris.*

NEW-JERSEY, *Richd. Stockton, Jno. Witherspoon, Fras. Hopkinson, John Hart, Abra. Clark.*

NEW-HAMPSHIRE, *Josiah Bartlett, Wm. Whipple, Matthew Thornton.*

MASSACHUSETTS-BAY, *Saml. Adams, John Adams, Robt. Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry.*

RHODE-ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE, *C. Step. Hopkins, William Ellery.*

CONNECTICUT, *Roger Sherman, Saml. Huntington, Wm. Williams, Oliver Wolcott.*