HON 1810W/PSCH 1817-66  William Franke

Fall 2022 Office: 221 Furman (tel: 2-6900)

TR 11:15 pm-12:30pm Hours: T 2:30-3:00 & R 2:30-4:00

The Prophetic Muse, or Poetry as Revelation: Dante, Cervantes, Goethe

This course offers an introduction to Dante’s *New Life*, Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, and Goethe’s *Faust* as outstanding “great books” of Western intellectual tradition in which literary form becomes a means of poetic vision and even religious revelation. The texts range from the periods of the early Renaissance to Romanticism.  These periods see the dramatic rise of science and technology.  This puts pressure on older forms of knowledge by divine revelation and creative imagination.  The singularity and uniqueness of the human individual becomes problematic.  We will follow some historically significant attempts to retain connection with pre-modern tradition and its presumably timeless forms of wisdom as assimilated into the new modern outlook in seminal works of fiction and poetry.  The dialogue between scientific and literary modes of comprehension will thus serve as a guiding thread across the readings selected for the semester.

The texts will be read and discussed in English, but the encounter with these great books will transpire also through attention to the key expressions in the original languages.  We will learn to appreciate language and rhetoric not just as instruments for communication of information (the technological view), but also as forms of life intrinsic to all human culture and experience (a humanities-based point of view), beginning with the experience of Western cultural tradition in certain great books and their forms of “poetic knowing.”

BASIC TEXTS (in order of use):

Dante, *The New Life*, Franke translation (Cambridge UP). ISBN 978-1-316-51617-1

Cervantes, *Don Quixote,* Grossman translation. ISBN 978-0-06-09434-7

[Spanish text: Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El Ingenioso Don Quijote de la Mancha,* ed. Salvador Fajardo and James A. Parr (Asheville, N.C.: Pegasus Press, 1998)]

Goethe, *Faust*, translated by Walter Kaufmann (Anchor Books). ISBN 9780385031141

SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

Week 1 Introduction to Knowledge in the Humanities (“Poetic Epistemology,” Introduction toFranke, *The Revelation of Imagination,* pp. 3-28.ISBN 978-0-8101-3182

Week 2 *The New Life,* chapters1-14

Week 3 *The New Life*, chapters15-30

Week 4 *The New Life*, chapters31-42

Week 5 *Don Quixote,* part I, chapters 1-25

Week 6 *Don Quixote,* part I, chapters 26-52 + Epilogue

Week 7 *Don Quixote,* part II, chapters 1-15

Week 8 *Don Quixote,* partII, chapters 16-29 FIRST PAPER DUE

Week 9 *Don Quixote,* partII, chapters 30-45

Week 10 *Don Quixote,* part II, chapters 46-60

Week 11 *Don Quixote,* part II, chapters 61-72

Week 12 *Faust* I, Dedication to Auerbach’s Keller

Week 13 *Faust* I, Witches’ Kitchen to Martha's Garden

Week 14 *Faust* I, At the Well to Dungeon

Week 15 Student Presentations of Final Papers. FINAL PAPER DUE

EVALUATION AND REQUIREMENTS: Every other week there will be a brief quiz consisting in short answer questions to check on basic familiarity with the reading. The average of the quiz grades will count as the equivalent of a paper in calculating final grades.

Papers are to be expository essays interpreting one or more of the works studied. Students are free and encouraged to write on a topic of their own choosing. Each student is required to turn in **TWO PAPERS**, one 5 pages at mid-term and another, a final paper 10 pages in length. The first paper may serve to prepare the ground for the final paper, which should go further with the aid of responses to the first paper.

Presence and participation of each student in every class is expected. Final grades will be weighted as follows: quiz average 30%, first paper 20%, final paper 40%, class participation 10%.

The Vanderbilt University Honor Code applies to all work submitted for this course.

RECOMMENDED METHOD OF STUDY: The interpretation of assigned texts may begin by the student's formulating and analyzing main ideas in a notebook at the conclusion of each reading assignment. Another entry likewise composed of 1) summary statements and 2) evaluative remarks--on facing pages--may be made punctually after lectures and discussions of each class. These notes can be reviewed and discussed with instructor for the purpose of focusing essay topics based on the student's own emergent interests.

OBJECTIVES TO KEEP IN MIND: Remember that in reading/writing you are competing only against yourself. The goal is to discover *personal* significance in the universal human experiences conveyed by great books and to develop your own discourse for articulating your experience of these texts and of life and human concerns generally.

By the end of the semester, by virtue of assiduous, active questioning and reading of each assignment, you should have a basic working knowledge of these foundational texts of European humanities. You should be able to put this knowledge to work in debating key issues for life in society today, but framed within pertinent contexts in intellectual history that illuminate them. You will demonstrate this ability by articulating historically informed arguments in papers and in class discussions. You have to persuade your classmates and your instructor of the cogency of your views by providing reasonable support based on explaining and investigating your reactions to the texts. You will receive written feedback from the instructor, including assessments of what you are doing more or less well, your strengths and weaknesses, and strategies for reaching your full potential.