SYLLABUS (Shortened Version) for HUM 101 CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS-I
2026/27 Fall

Course Description: HUM 101 is the first course in a two-semester, interdisciplinary survey series, team taught by faculty. It consists of mandatory lectures and discussion sections. Each week, students attend a main lecture on Monday evening at Albert Long Hall, where a guest lecturer, an expert in the field, introduces the week's subject. This is followed by smaller in-class discussion groups. The lectures, organized both chronologically and thematically, provide a general framework for understanding the assigned text(s), while the discussions allow for deeper analysis and critical engagement.

Course Objectives

1. Introduce students to the diverse people, places, ideas, and experiences that span the breadth of human history.

2. Begin an exploration of the humanities disciplines—history, religion, literature, philosophy, cultural studies, and more—by understanding human beings in their full complexity, without prioritizing one ability, emotion, or faculty over another.

3. Develop an appreciation for connecting historical ideas with contemporary realities through dynamic engagement with philosophy, music, religion, and art.

4. Foster vibrant, meaningful discussions that encourage deeper insight, understanding, empathy, and compassion for both ourselves and the world around us.

Course Expectations

Students are expected to complete assigned readings before class and arrive prepared to engage with lectures and discussions. HUM 101 is a reading-intensive course that emphasizes careful interpretation of primary texts, critical thinking, and the comparative study of major intellectual, philosophical, and religious traditions.

Because class meetings build upon both the readings and in-class discussion, regular attendance is strongly encouraged. Students are responsible for all material covered during class, including lectures, examples, and discussions.

Announcements

Students are responsible for checking Moodle and their emails regularly for announcements.

Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities who may require accommodations are encouraged to contact the University Services and the instructor promptly so that appropriate arrangements can be made in a timely and effective manner.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. All submitted work must be the student's own. Any form of plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, or academic misconduct will be handled in accordance with university regulations.

Semester Reading Plan

Week 1 Introduction: The Cosmos and Beyond

Lecture: Introduction to the Semester

MANDATORY READING:

- Biblical Creation, Genesis (*Sacred Texts of the World*, pp. 49-51)
- "Fulani creation story" (Mali) *World Religions: Primary Sources*, p. 2
- "Popol Vuh" (Mayan) *The Northon Anthology of World Literature*, pp. 1695-1699
- "An Earth-Diver Narrative from Siberia (Siberian-Altaic) *Sacred Texts of the World*, p. 345
- "Hainuwele, the Maiden of Ceram" (West Ceram, Indonesia) *Sacred Texts of the World*, pp. 345-347

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING:

- Creation in the Qur'an, *Sajda* 32:1-11 and *Baqara* 2:30-37
- "Enuma Elish" (Akkadian) *Sacred Texts of the World*, pp. 6-9
- "The Cosmic Parents and Twin Brothers" (Zuni, Native American) *Sacred Texts of the World*, p. 341
- Creation Story from *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* (Japanese) *World Religions: Primary Sources*, p. 16-20

Week 2 Life as the Great Voyage: Gilgamesh and Buddha

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- The Epic of Gilgamesh *in Puchner Anthology*

  Tablet I (pp. 22-24)

  Tablet X & Tablet XI (pp. 60-74)
- *The Life of the Buddha According to the Pali Canon,* pp, 8-28

Week 3 Journeying and Home: *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- Homer

  The Iliad, 'The Wrath of Achilles', lines 1-255

  The Odyssey, 'Odysseus with Calypso', pp. 67-68

Week 4 The Greek Divide: Plato and Aristotle

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- Plato, *Republic*, 'Allegory of the Cave' (VI 507b-509c)
- Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, p. 23-37.

Week 5 On Human Nature: Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- Confucius, *The Analects* (Book III and IV, pp. 26-34)
- Mencius, *Book of Mencius,* 'Ox Mountain Parable' (pp. 281-285)
- Xunzi, 'Man's Nature is Evil' (pp. 150-155)

Week 6 Un/Knowability: *Tao te Ching* and Ancient Judaism

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- Laozi, *The Tao Te Ching* (pp. 3-10)
- Hebrew Bible, Proverbs (Ch. 1-3)

Week 7 War and Peace: *Bhagavad Gita* and Thucydides

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- *The Bhagavad Gita*, (Ch. II, Verses 11-47)
- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, "Pericles' Funeral Oration"

Week 8 Courage and Virtue: Marcus Aurelius

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book V

Week 9 Flight of the Soul: Rumi, Attar & Ghazali

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- Farid Al-din Attar, *Conference of the Birds* (From Book III)
- Rumi, *Mathnawi*

  'The Boatman and the Grammarian' (Verses 1-34)

  'Moses and the Shepherd' (pp. 165-68)
- Ghazali, Epitaph

Week 10 Redemption and Renewal: St. Augustine and St. Macrina the Younger

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- Saint Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions* (Book II: Ch. 1-4; Book VIII, Ch 10-12)
- St. Macrina the Younger, "Deathbed Prayer"

Week 11 Revelation and Reason: Ibn Tufayl and Maimonides

Lecture on Monday

MANDATORY READING:

- Ibn Tufail, *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* (pp. 130-39)
- Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* (pp. 220-241)

Week 12 REVISION OF THE SEMESTER

Lecture on Monday