**Required texts**

* St. Augustine, *Confessions*
* Attar, *Conference of the Birds*
* *The Bhagavad Gita*

**Optional Texts**

* Introductions to texts and footnotes will be included online on Blackboard

**Course Goals**

The Augustine and Culture Seminar will provide you with a foundation of studies in the Humanities in conjunction with the other Mission courses in Theology and Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Ethics. You can build upon these courses as you pursue your major field of study and in your electives.

In addition to helping you see the connections between various humanities disciplines through the common study of primary texts and the pursuit of fundamental human questions, this course will teach you to:

* Analyze and understand difficult and important classical texts.
* Write clearly and persuasively, supporting positions with argumentation and evidence.
* Speak clearly about your interpretation of the readings and respond to the contributions of other students.
* Provide constructive feedback to your classmates to help them identify aspects of their writing that would benefit from further development and revision.
* Engage a vital intellectual community of scholars and student-scholars who learn from each other as active participants.
* Apply new perspectives and make connections between ideas and values, and the texts we study.
* Develop professional skills such as managing your time, setting and meeting deadlines, communicating effectively through email and in person, and collaborating with your peers.

**Open Door Policy**

* If you have questions about the course, are concerned about an assignment, or would like extra help, feel free to send me an e-mail or set up an appointment with me in person through Calendly. Other than weekends, I try to respond to e-mails within the day.
* If you are physically ill or struggling with your mental health, please visit the Student Health Center or the University Counseling Center. If you are diagnosed with an illness that may impact your work, send me proper documentation from your physician and we can form a plan to help you succeed.

**Mask Policy**

* Given University recommendation, I will not require masks for those who have been vaccinated. You are nonetheless welcome to wear a mask if you like no questions asked. Finally, if anyone in private personal communication prefers that the class wears masks, we will do so out of respect for everyone in our learning community.

**Attendance and Deadlines**

* Due allowance is made for physical absences due to quarantine and complete absences for illness. Please do not come to seminar if you do not feel well.
* Given the participation requirements in the class and that it only meets twice a week, you are allowed **3** excused absences this semester. There is room for leeway given the pandemic and the potential need for quarantining or being cautious. For unexcused absences however, I may deduct a third of a grade for every two such absences.
* You are responsible for all work you have missed and must hand in missed assignments within one week of your absence in order to receive credit. If you have an absence due to official school business (e.g., sports, etc.), you can send a two-page written response to readings to satisfy your participation requirement.
* Submit work by the deadline. If there are extenuating circumstances and you would like to ask for an extension, notify me three days in advance. Unless you have been granted an extension, late work will be penalized one grade level per day past the due date.

**Requirements and Grading**

Analytical Essays **40%**

* You will write two analytical essays, each of which you will have the opportunity to revise.
* These essays will be around 4-6 pages in length.
* All essays should present polished and persuasive arguments that respond appropriately to the prompts.
* Be sure to meet the length requirement and format your essays according to the *Guidelines for Submitting Written Work* below.

Short Writing Assignments **25%**

* You will write two 2-3 double-spaced page writing assignments that help you reflect on the content of our readings.
* The writings will typically be due at the start of each new unit and will require you to reflect on the content of the previous unit.
* The writing assignments are meant to allow you to demonstrate your creative capacities (e.g., writing a letter, a T.V. review, a diary entry, a pastiche, etc.).

Participation **30%**

* 15% - Regular and active participation contributes significantly to the classroom experience. Make sure you come to every class with specific observations or questions that can generate further discussion.
* 5% - Each person will sign up to provide a short (3-5 minute) presentation of the reading material for the day and provide two discussion questions for the class to consider.
* 10% - In addition to participating in class discussions and activities, **you are required to attend 3 cultural events this semester and write a short one-page summary and response paper on each one.** Cultural events include things like plays, off-campus trips, or lectures. Although a broad range of events and activities qualify for this credit, you must request approval from me before the event to ensure that you receive credit towards your cultural event requirement.

Oral Final Exam **5%**

* Students will meet in groups of five and discuss the following question for thirty minutes
  + We started the class reflecting on what makes a life good or well-lived. Which text that we have read has changed your mind the most on this issue? Why?

**Grading Scale**

* A+ 94-100—Exemplary—Consistently makes thoughtful comments during discussions based on careful reading of assigned texts. Writing assignments have nuanced arguments substantiated by textual evidence.
* A- 90-93—Excellent—Attentive during discussions and frequently participates with questions/comments from the readings. Papers are insightful but contain occasional flaws or insufficient textual evidence.
* B+—86-89—Good—Comes to class consistently and listens respectfully during discussions but participates infrequently. Shows familiarity with the readings but writing but unable to articulate details from the text. Writing assignments show room for growth and sometimes lack proper textual evidence.
* B 83-85 Adequate—Misses several classes. Shows familiarity with the readings but has trouble elaborating on main points. Listens during discussion but rarely participates. Writing assignments show significant room for growth, including issues with argumentation.
* Etc.

**Respect for your peers, your instructor, and our authors is imperative.**

* In reading these dense and rewarding texts, we will discuss a range of topics that will require us to reflect on our own values. We might not always agree with one another, but we can definitely respect one another.
* Even if you disagree, try to be charitable to your fellow colleagues. This involves trying your best to understand what is reasonable about their view and why they hold it.
* Even if you disagree with a text or its author, be charitable. Try to understand the reasons that are driving the point of a text.

**Portfolio Requirements**

During the fall semester you will add 2 artifacts to your CLAS Portfolio:

1. Your “Life Well Lived” essay.
2. Your best analytical essay.

What this means is that you will need to save all of your writing from the semester, and all of the feedback that you receive, so you can successfully revise and upload what you think is your best piece of analytical writing.

**Additional Requirements**

* Check your Villanova email account on a regular basis to ensure you do not miss important announcements.
* Check the course Blackboard page on a regular basis.
* Meet with me at least once this semester to discuss your writing.
* Visit the Writing Center at least once this semester (be sure to make an appointment in advance as they do fill up quickly—especially around exam time). This is 5% of your participation grade.

**Guidelines for Submitting Written Work**

All writing assignments should be completed by the beginning of class.

When you complete a writing assignment outside of class you should:

* Type all written work in 12pt Times New Roman or some other serifed front (e.g., Garamond, etc.)
* Use double-spaced paragraphs and 1-inch margins.
* Number your pages at the bottom of the page.
* Include an appropriate heading on the first page with your name, the professor’s name, the title of the course, and the date.
* Proofread and spellcheck before bringing any drafts to class.
* Properly cite external sources according to a consistent citation system (e.g., Chicago Manual, etc.).
  + Example, cite the last name of the author and year like this: (Smith 2008).
* Save all files as Word documents and title them with your last name, course abbreviation, and the assignment title (i.e. Lau ACS Essay 2 Draft).

Page requirements are a rough guide to the amount of detail and time I want you to spend on an essay. Be succinct and clear. Do not try to pad the paper to meet the page requirements (which are generally short).

**Writing Center:**

* The University Writing Center is a valuable resource that can help you at any stage in the writing process. You must make and attend at least one appointment with the University Writing Center. Make use of the free resource! In addition to one-on-one tutoring, you might also attend the 30-Minute workshops or utilize their online resources.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:**

* As a member of Villanova’s academic community, you are expected to uphold the Academic Integrity Policy and Code, which you can view at the Academic Integrity Gateway website: <http://library.villanova.edu/Help/AcademicIntegrity>.
* Any incident of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for disciplinary action.
* All work submitted in this course must be written for this course, **not for another**, and must be your own.
* Properly cite your sources.
* Do not cheat, plagiarize, or violate Villanova’s Academic Integrity Policy and Code. Intentional violation could result in the failure of the assignment or the course.
* Most importantly, **do not cheat your own learning and development**. If you need more time on an assignment and want to get things right, I’ll work with you.

**Tech policy**

You are paying good money for this education. I have every intention of giving you your money’s worth. If you don’t text during a movie that you paid $10 to watch, why would you text during a class you’ve paid far more to attend?

Bring paper copies of the text to class. If you want to use a laptop or some other electronic device for texts or notetaking, do the following:

* Disconnect the WiFi so that you refrain from checking e-mail, social media, news, etc.
* I recommend bringing a paper notebook to write down observations, ideas, and questions. Physically writing something down helps with the learning process.
* Engage actively in class. If I’m doing my job right and you are trying your best, you shouldn’t be tempted to check Tiktok on your phone. We’re in it together.

**Office of Disabilities and Learning Support Services**

* Students with disabilities who require reasonable academic accommodations should schedule an appointment to discuss specifics with me.
* Present verification and register with the Learning Support Office by contacting (610) 519-5176 or learning.support.services@villanova.edu.
* For physical access or temporary disabling conditions, please contact the Office of Disability Services at (610) 519-4095 or email Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu. Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.

**Mental Health and Counseling**

* If you would like to receive counseling or would just like to talk to a mental health professional, the Counseling Center is available to help you with personal and emotional concerns. Appointments can be scheduled in person at 206 HSB or by phone at 610-519-4050.  Counseling sessions occur between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays. Services are available to all current Villanova students. Counseling is free and confidential.
  + Personal note: I have used such services as a student myself and it can be helpful. Just as it is a good idea to have check ups on your physical body, it is also a good idea to have check ups on your mental health.

**Absences for Religious Holidays**

Villanova University makes every reasonable effort to allow members of the community to observe their religious holidays, consistent with the University’s obligations, responsibilities, and policies. Students who expect to miss a class or assignment due to the observance of a religious holiday should discuss the matter with their professors as soon as possible, normally at least two weeks in advance. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the absence. https://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/provost/resources/student/policies/religious holidays.html

**Schedule**

* This is the general outline of the pacing and due dates for the course.
* I will email more specific prompts and page assignments two weeks before the readings are due and three weeks before the due date for each writing assignment. Check your email and Blackboard for these updates.
* Other than Augustine, all readings will be on Blackboard as a pdf or in your course pack.

Week 1 Introduction: What is it to live well?

8/24 Introduction: What is it to live well?

Week 2 Bhagavad Gita

8/29 Gita 1-6

**Life Well Lived Essay Due 8/30**

8/31 Gita 7-12

Week 3 Gita and Genesis

9/5 Gita 13-18

9/7 Genesis 1-4

Week 4 Finishing Genesis

9/12 Gensis 5-9

9/14 Genesis 12-22

Week 5 Plato on Love

**Short Paper 1 Due 9/18**

9/19 Symposium Part 1- Beginning to Aristophanes

9/21 Symposium Part 2 – Aristophanes to Diotima

Week 6 Love and How to Write an Analytic Paper

9/26 A Movie Debate: *In the Mood for Love*

9/28 Writing Exercise: Is a hotdog a sandwich?

Week 7 Two Ancient Views on Virtue

10/3 Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book 1 Selections

10/5 Confucius Analects (selections)

[Fall Break]

Week 8 Antigone

10/17 Antigone (first half)

10/19 Antigone (second half)

Week 9 Gospel of John

**Analytic Paper 1 Due 10/23**

10/24 Introduction, John 1-12

10/26 John 13-21

Week 10 Confessions (Part 1)

10/31 Introduction Books 1-2

11/2 Books 3-4

Week 11 Confessions (Part 2)

11/7 Books 5-6

11/9 Books 7-8

Week 12 Augustine and Kendrick

11/14 Book 9

11/16 Kendrick Lamar good kid m.A.A.d city

Week 13 Wrapping Augustine Up

**Short Paper 2 Due 11/20**

11/21 Review Session

[Thanksgiving Break]

Week 14 Attar Conference of the Birds (Part 1)

11/28 p. 1-12, 36-68

11/30 p. 181-229

Week 15 Attar Conference of the Birds (Part 2)

12/5 p. 229-235, returning to Gita

12/7 Course Review

**Analytic Paper Due 12/12**