

**ACS 103: Introduction to the Humanities**

Time: Wed. 8-11 (section 3)  
Location: TRS2003 PT  
Instructor: Chris Dragos  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Office Location: POD375  
Email address: idragos@ryerson.ca

**Calendar Description:**

In this course students learn to identify a humanistic perspective, and analyze how this perspective can infuse our understanding of the world around us. Students are also introduced to the various ways in which this perspective is applied in Arts and Contemporary Studies—in particular in the program's subject-based and interdisciplinary options—while gaining some of the academic skills relating to effective research, writing and expression that they will require to excel in a university setting.

**Required Texts:**

To be provided by instructor on course page.

**Recommended Texts:**

*Worldviews*, by R. DeWitt (Wiley-Blackwell, Second Edition, 2010).  
*How to Read a Book*, by Mortimer J. Adler, Charles van Doren (Touchstone Books; Revised Edition, 1972).

**Evaluation:**

- (1) Précis (400 words)..... **15%**..... **Due Sept. 29** (11:59pm)
- (2) Response Paper (700 words)..... **20%**..... **Due Oct. 27** (11:59pm)
- (3) In-Class Précis (500 words)..... **20%**..... **In-Class Nov. 7**
- (4) Term Paper (4-5 pages)..... **35%**..... **Due Dec. 6** (11:59pm)
- (5) Participation..... **10%**

A précis is a short expository paper. Students will have 400 words to convey the core idea or claim of an assigned text. The word limit will be **strictly** enforced. This assignment is intended to foster concision and the ability to distinguish between the primary and auxiliary contents of a text.

In the response paper, students will concisely convey an idea or claim from an assigned text (400 words), then offer their own analysis, which can be either a defence or criticism of the idea or claim (300 words).

The In-Class précis is intended to foster the skills necessary to excel in written and informal components of tests and exams. Students will be given a text at the beginning of class and will produce a précis of that text within the allotted time.

Assignments 1-3 will prepare students to write an organized and clear term paper that forwards a compelling thesis that can be either interpretive or analytical.

**Course Website:** Materials for the course will be available on D2L. All announcements will be through D2L. It is your responsibility to check D2L on a regular basis and to keep up-to-date with the course.

**Email Policy:** All emails for this course should be directed to [idragos@ryerson.ca](mailto:idragos@ryerson.ca), and should be sent from your Ryerson University email account. Emails will generally be answered within 48 hours. However, I may not answer emails if (1) the relevant information is available on the course page or syllabus, or if (2) the question is best addressed during class (e.g. a detailed question about content).

**Extensions and Late Papers:** Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, unless (a) prior arrangements have been made with me **by email** for an extension or (b) there is a medical or family emergency (in which case documentation may be required). **Plan ahead:** you may request extensions **by email up until 48 hours** before assignments are due; after that, extensions will be granted only for illness or family emergencies.

**Accessibility:** Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Ryerson's accessibility services as soon as possible (<https://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support/>). We will work together to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from Ryerson University is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Ryerson University's Academic Integrity Office (<https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/students/penalties-and-consequences/>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from the Academic Integrity Office.

**Copyright in Instructional Settings:** If a student wishes to record or reproduce lecture presentations, course notes, or other materials provided by the instructor, the student must obtain the instructor's consent beforehand. Otherwise reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

**Schedule of Topics & Readings:** This schedule may change. Any changes will be announced. You are expected to have the readings completed prior to class.

**Sept. 5:** Housekeeping & Overview

### **Unit 1: Nature as Text—Historical Worldviews**

**Sept. 12:** Aristotelian-Medieval Worldview  
Reading: DeWitt, *Worldviews*, chs. 9-12.

**Sept. 19:** Cartesian & Newtonian Worldviews

Reading: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditations 1-4;  
DeWitt chs. 18-20, 22.

**Sept. 26:** Philosophical Foundations of the Contemporary Scientific Worldview

Reading: DeWitt, chs. 24-25.

**[Sept. 29: Précis Due @11:59pm]**

**Oct. 3:** Science & Values

Reading: Gorham, ch.5 (excerpt); Chalmers, *What is this Thing Called Science*, Intro-ch.2.

### **Unit 2: Culture, Country, & City as Text**

**Oct. 17:** Global Poverty & Moral Obligation

Reading: Singer, “Famine, Affluence and Morality”; Arthur, “World Hunger and Moral Obligation: The Case Against Singer.”

**Oct. 24:** War & Repression in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Reading: Browning, *Ordinary Men* (excerpts); Cronon, “The Goals of a Liberal Education.”

**[Oct. 27: Response Paper Due @11:59pm]**

**Oct. 31:** Guest Lecture by Peter Adourian: *The Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms*

Reading: TBA

**Nov. 7:** Précis & Term Paper Boot Camp

Part 1: **In-Class Précis** (90 minutes)

Part 2: Term Paper Boot Camp.

Reading: None—Guidelines, Tips, & Exercises will be provided by instructor.

### **Unit 3: Image & Film as Text**

**Nov. 14:** Film & Humanities—Film: *The Death of Stalin*

Reading: Dostoevsky, *The Devils* (excerpts).

**Nov 21:** Guest Lecture by Arne Kislenko: *Global Studies*

Reading: TBA.

**Nov. 28: Term Paper Drop-In Day @TRS2003**

(Schedule an appointment with me during normal class time: 8am and 11am.)

**[Dec. 6: Term Paper Due @11:59pm]**