



## Intellectual Methods in the Humanities

**(41277) HONS 3000-001**

**W: 2:00 – 4:40 PM**

**Bizzini-Hall 204**

**Fall 2023**

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Instructor: **Dr. Ralph M. Becker**  
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Office hours: T/R: 11am.– 2pm.,  
or by appointment, via e-mail and  
Zoom-session.

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### Course Description

Humanities have been developed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century as one of the leading intellectual movements of the Renaissance. It started with a methodology for analyzing and interpreting secular ancient Latin and Greek texts (hermeneutics). In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the method was extended for the general interpretation of human life, employing methods different from those used in natural sciences and mathematics. This seemed necessary since the natural sciences could not sufficiently explain historical, aesthetic, moral, symbolic, linguistic, and other aspects and paradigms of human activities.

This class intends to give a basic orientation of human life and rights connected to political power around the globe. We will study vital definitions of our subjects, and ask basic questions, such as Why and how do people live in groups? What is an individual? What are ways of political organization? How and why do people develop ‘rights’ and ‘laws’ for their societies? Which roles do human institutions such as science, religion, economy, justice play for the power balance of a society? Last, but not least, problems of globalization and the sustainability of diverse cultural lifestyles.

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### Objectives & Learning Outcomes

- Explain why humanities use methods that are different from those of natural sciences.
- Analyze the correlation between human institutions and power structures.
- Develop an understanding of the difference between traditional and modern societies.
- Illustrate the role of cultural institutions in human societies.
- Recognize recent and past population developments.
- Identify the relation between certain types of subsistence strategy and environment.

- Examine the dynamics of the expansion of Western tradition in relation to current global power distribution.
  - Assess the importance of technology for worldwide cultural change and the accessibility of technology for different ethnic groups.
  - Evaluate the current situation of non-Western small-scale societies and their political rights.
  - Identify religious, political, and ethnic resistance against the Western tradition.
  - Compare and evaluate different political organizational forms in relation to sustainability.
  - Examine the importance of individuality for human life.
  - Structure and synthesize arguments and express them in written and oral form consistently.
  - Capability to work and cooperate interdisciplinary.
  - Discuss and problematize subjects as individual and as a team member.
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## Course Materials

There is **no textbook** needed for this class. I chose various articles and chapters of books to cover the subject and, at the same time, examine the subjects from different possible viewpoints. All articles can be found on Canvas. The texts of the subject of the day have to be read before class starts.

### READINGS (on Canvas)

- BLOCH, Maurice (2008), Why is Religion Nothing Special but is Central? In: *Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society*, B (2008) 363, 2055-2061, February 2008.
- BODLEY, John H. (2015) (6<sup>th</sup> ed.), *Victims of Progress*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Rowman & Littlefield. 1-35.
- BEHRENSSEN, Maren (2017), *The State and the Self. Identity and Identities*. London: Rowman & Littlefield. 1-29.
- BOWLES, Paul (2007), *Capitalism*. Harlow (UK) et alii: Pearson Longman.
- CHUA, Amy (2018), *Political Tribes. Group instinct and the Fate of Nations*. New York: Penguin Press. 1-35.
- COTTINGHAM, John (Ed.) (1998), *Descartes*. Oxford UK: Oxford University Press.
- CURTIS, Michael (Ed.) (1961), *The Great Political Theories*. New York: Avon Books. (293-322)
- DIAMOND, Jared (1999), *Guns, Germs, and Steel. The Fate of Human Societies*, New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company. 52-64.
- ESPOSITO, Elena (2017), Artificial Communication? The Production of Contingency by Algorithms. In: *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 2017; 46 (4): 249-265. Also, on-line: <http://doi/10.1515/zfsoz-2017-1014/html>
- FEIN, Helen (1996), The Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust. In: HUTCHINSON/SMITH (Eds.): 270-274.
- HAISCH, Bernard (2010), *The Purpose-Guided Universe. Believing in Einstein, Darwin, and God*. Pompton Plains, N.J.: New Page Books.
- HEDGES, Chris (2009), *Empire of Illusion. The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*. New York: Nation Books. 89-114.
- HUTCHINSON, John/ Anthony D. SMITH (Eds.) (1996), *Ethnicity*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- KUPER, Leo (1996), Genocide and the Plural Society. In HUTCHISON/SMITH (eds.): 262-270.
- LAPPÉ, Frances Moore / Joseph COLLINS (2010/1977), Why Can't People Feed Themselves? In: *Annual Edition: Anthropology 10/11; Thirty-third Edition*; New York: McGraw-Hill. 158-162.

- LEWELLEN, Ted C. (2003) (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), *Political Anthropology. An Introduction*. Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger Publishers. 15-41.
  - MOFFETT, Mark W. (2019), *The Human Swarm. How Our Societies arise, Thrive, and Fall*. New York: Basic Books.
  - RODISLEWIS, Geneviève (1998), The Epistemological Argument for Mind—Body Distinctness. In: COTTINGHAM, John (Ed.), 186-196.
  - SAHLINS, Marshall (1972), *Stone Age Economics*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton
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## Course Responsibilities

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### Course participants are expected to:

- Be prepared and read the assigned texts in time, prior to class discussion.
- Participate in the discussions and share your thoughts and ideas.
- Be open-minded to other opinions and worldviews.
- Be honest and do not copy or paraphrase from books or internet sources without proper citation.
- Attend the classes. Absence will **negatively** affect your grade. **Less than 60%** of presence in class leads automatically to **disqualification (F)**. **If you have been in class more than 70%, 20 points will be given at the end of the semester under the “Attendance” category.**
- **I do not accept consumption of food in class.**
- Punctuality – **Being unexcused late three times 15 or more minutes, counts as one missed class.**
- **Leaving class before end** - If you want to leave before the class is finished, inform me before the class starts and give reasons for your early departure. I see it as an attempt of deception if you sign in and sneak out of class before the class is finished. It is at my discretion to exclude students who act like this from my course with a final **F** grade.

**This rule does not apply to emergencies!**

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### Academic Integrity: Plagiarism/Consequences

It is expected that members of this class will observe strict policies of academic honesty and will be respectful of each other. Any instances in which cheating, including plagiarism and unauthorized use of copyrighted materials, computer accounts, or someone else’s work is determined, will be referred to Student Services and will be investigated to its full extent.

You can find a definition of plagiarism and examples if desired at: <http://www.csustan.edu/JudicialAffairs> .

Unless otherwise specified, the use of Automated Writing Tools, including ChatGPT and similar artificial intelligence (AI) tools, is strictly prohibited in this course, even when properly attributed. The use of automated writing tools is considered plagiarism and will be handled in accordance with existing policy.

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### DRS Statement

Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor by giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Resource Service at (209)-667-3159 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

## GRADING

**Attendance** **20 points**

**Participation**

-Class 40 points

-Group 40 points

Total Participation **80 points**

**Papers (4 x 10 points)** **40 points**

**Quizzes (10 x 6 points)** **60 points**

**Presentation**

-talk in class **40 points**

-written table of content **10 points**

**Exam** **50 points**

**Total** **300 points**

Grade	Points (Percentages)
<b>A</b>	<b>300-270</b> (100%-90%)
<b>B</b>	<b>269-240</b> (89%-80%)
<b>C</b>	<b>239-210</b> (79%-70%)
<b>D</b>	<b>209-180</b> (69%-60%)
<b>F</b>	<b>≤179</b> (< 60%)

Please note that I do not grade with minus or plus in this class.

**Grade Appeals-** written appeals will be considered 24 hours after the return of an assignment or exam. Please, state the reason for contesting the grades. Success of the appeal is not guaranteed.

**Assignments** - reading of the texts, writing, and turning in papers or essays in time, presenting special themes to the class, or other task that will be evaluated.

The graded categories are:

- ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

**Attendance** - will be taken throughout the semester. At the beginning or end of every session I will give around the attendance list. **Students are responsible for reporting to the instructor!** In the end of the

semester, this will be my evidence for your presence in class. The total maximum score you can get for 'Attendance' plus 'Participation' is **100** points.

If you miss **3** to **5** classes unexcused, the total of missed classes will also be counted as **0** points for 'Participation'.

**If you miss 6 classes or more unexcused, you automatically fail!**

Example: Let's say, you miss **2** or less classes and have 70/80 points 'Participation', then you get 20 points 'Attendance' at the end of the semester, what creates a total of 90/100 points = 90% = **A** (for the Attendance/Participation category). In the hypothetical case that you have missed **3** or up to **5** classes and have also 70/80 points of 'Participation' for the classes you have been present, you do not get the 20 points 'Attendance'. The total of Participation and Attendance is 70/100 points = 70% = **C** (for the Attendance/Participation category), and you have **0** points participation for 3 classes.

**Participation** means that you share your thoughts in class and in the groups and take an active part in group discussions. Participation is divided in two parts: "class", i.e., the individual participation in class, and "group", i.e., your contribution to the teamwork in your group. For each of these two categories you can get **40** points maximum.

- **PAPER:**

For some readings a paper, 1 to 2 pages in length (c. 600 words), has to be written and turned in by the following week after the prompt has appeared. For example, the prompt appears Wednesday, 8/23/2023 at 12am., the paper must be turned in until Tuesday 8/29/2023 11:59 pm.

ALL PAPERS MUST BE TYPEWRITTEN (font size of 11 or 12, spacing 1.5 or 2.0). Late submissions reduce points or are not accepted anymore if later than one week. If the paper is too short (less than 540 words) for every 10 words missing one point is taken off the total score: 539-530 words = **-1**, 529-520 words= **-2** and so on). I will only read papers up to 1,000 words. If the text is longer, I will not read the rest, and grade the first 1,000 words. Header and references (i.e., cited information sources) do not count.

The paper has to be turned in on Canvas in Word doc or docx format. If you decide to upload as a pdf, in the event I cannot correct it, I will grade your paper, but not correct it in any other way. All other formats that you upload will neither be corrected nor graded.

**! Each paper must include:**

- (i) A) Your name,  
B) Title of your class,  
C) Semester term  
D) Instructor's name,  
E) Name and page numbers of the text you are required to write about.
- (ii) A brief summary of the text and its subject.
- (iii) A quote (with the source and page number as footnote or in brackets within the text). Quotes cannot exceed 20% of your text.
- (iv) A comment or question about the text.
- (v) The complete "Reference(s)" at the end of the text:

- (a) Author(s) name(s)
  - (b) year of publishing,
  - (c) title (book, DVD, webpages, movie titles in italics),
  - (d) place of publishing,
  - (e) name of publisher).
- (vi) In the case of internet sources:
- (I) the author(s), (if possible)
  - (II) the year of publication in the net,
  - (III)** the day (and hour) when you retrieved the material.

Per paper you can get **10** points maximum.

- QUIZZES

For some classes you have to read texts for which you have to pass a quiz in class. The quiz will be answered at the beginning of these classes. It consists of some simple questions about the reading, just to verify that you have read it and memorize some facts. The quizzes are mostly multiple choice. For each quiz you can get **6** points max.

- PRESENTATION/ Research

Every student has to present a different subject for the class. The talk consists in the presentation of your individual research work. You decide to talk about an area of your interest that is connected to the humanities and their methods. The subject **cannot** be one that was previously presented in class. Decide in a timely manner, because, if another student has already chosen your subject, you have to find something else. The talk should be 15 to 20 minutes long. Less than 15 minutes costs points (-1/ one minute). You have to write a content list of the topics you present and show it to me at least one day **before** the presentation for possible corrections. The sources of your research must be listed in the outline. You can use class material; however, at least **three** sources have to be reliable non-class material and found by yourself. **The talk itself should not be read out**; however, being based on and following the items described in your content list. You can get **40** points for your talk and **10** points for a good outline/content list.

- EXAM

The exam serves to test and evaluate your knowledge and understanding of the course material. The exam covers assigned readings, contents of the lectures, Power Points, video clips, documentary films, and class discussion items. The exam is mostly a **multiple-choice** test, and you can get up to **50** points.

## RUBRICS:

### Positive:

1.	Showing that you have identified and understood the problem in question.
2.	Relating to the question in a meaningful and personal way, not just copying from the textbook or other external sources:
3.	Including material from the course (e.g., quote, line of thought, ideas) in your argumentation. It is important that you mention the source of this material:
4.	Showing critical thinking and/or meaningful creativity:
5.	Correct reference and header:
6.	Independent research in external sources (with citing the source/s).

### Negative:

a)	Contradicting yourself.
b)	Contradicting class content.
c)	Unfounded Opinion.
d)	Incomprehensible statement.
e)	Not indented quotes which are longer than 2 lines.
g)	Too late: <b>-1 points / day</b> , <u>after 7 days I will not accept it anymore.</u>



## Schedule HONS 3000-001 –Intellectual Methods in the Humanities– Fall 2023

Week	Day	Topic Areas & Activities	Readings	Assignments Papers due by 11:59 PM the week following the prompt
1	8/23	Intro to course work and syllabus Definition and Operationalization		
2	8/30	Groups & Politics	CHUA (1-35) <b>Q1</b>	
		Animal and Human Societies	MOFFETT (57-78) <b>Q2</b>	
3	9/6	The Human Individual	RODIS LEWIS (197-210)	
		The Human Individual & the Community	BEHRENSEN (1-29)	
4	9/13	The supposed origin of competition	CURTIS (293-315) <b>Q3</b> DIAMOND (52-64)	Paper 1 (prompt)
5	9/20	Social organization	LEWELLEN (15-41) <b>Q4</b>	Paper 1 due!
		Collision of interests	BODLEY, ch. 1,2 (1-35) <b>Q5</b>	
6	9/27	Australia & Indigenous rights: Documentary: “Our Generation”	LAPPE (158-162)	Paper 2
7	10/4	Genocide	KUPER (262-270), FEIN (270-274) <b>Q6</b>	
		Culture, Tradition, & Heritage	BOAS (68-79)	
8	10/11	Economics: Stone Age and other	SAHLINS (134-167) <b>Q7</b>	Paper 3
		Capitalism 1	BOWLES, ch. 2 (23-54) <b>Q8</b>	
9	10/18	Capitalism 2	BOWLES, ch.3 (55-88)	
		Education	HEDGES (89-114) <b>Q9</b>	
10	10/25	The New Technology	GAWDAT (1-17) ESPOSITO (249-265)	
		Science	HAISCH, ch.8 (151-168)	
11	11/1	Religion	BLOCH (2055-2061)	Paper 4
		Global Politics, Documentary: <i>The End of Poverty?</i>	BURUMA (1-12: 13-47) <b>Q10</b>	



12	11/8	<b>Presentations</b>	
13	11/15		
14	11/22		
15	11/29	<b>Presentations</b>	
16	12/6		
17	<b>Finals Week: EXAM: Monday, December 11, 2023, Online.</b>		

**The syllabus and course schedule are subject to change if need be.**