

Ryerson University
Arts and Contemporary Studies Program

ACS 500: Ideas That Shaped the World V

Fall 2007

Instructors:

Dr. Sarah Henstra
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Time/Location:

Lectures;

- Sections 1-3: Wednesday 9-11 KHE 121
- Sections 4-6: Thursday 11-1 SHE 662

Tutorials: Please refer to your RAMSS class schedule to confirm the time/location of your weekly tutorial.

Important: Please ensure that you attend classes with the section in which you are enrolled. Otherwise, you may not receive a final grade! Note also that we are not able to accommodate requests for shifts to different sections due to work schedules or personal preferences.

This course is part of the Bachelor of Arts and Contemporary Studies Program, and is open *only* to students in the Arts and Contemporary Studies Program.

Course Calendar Description

This course focuses on volatile themes of contemporary and post-modern experience, as the world is opened up to the voices of the “other.” The marginalized, and thinkers and artists of other cultures, expand and destabilize the boundaries of the human, while discoveries of genetic science suggest something of the profound unities that underlie the evolution of human diversity. The ideas to be considered range from the genome project to contemporary architecture to the Uncertainty Principle.

Course Synopsis

The era since the end of the Second World War has been a period of unprecedented and dramatic change, accompanied both by a renewed hope for prosperity, freedom, and justice, and by a fear of tyranny and global destruction. The advance of science and technology has produced not only great material benefits, but also weapons capable of eradicating life on earth. The collapse of Communism and the spread of liberal

capitalism around the world has been hailed by some as the victory of freedom and decried by others as a form of insidious economic tyranny or an imminent threat to traditional societies. Societies are integrated and connected in a way never seen before. This facilitates the spread of ideas and culture but also increases our vulnerability to, and our fear of, epidemic disease, environmental disaster, and terrorist threats. Democracy is increasingly seen as an inevitable and universal political system, perhaps even to be forced upon sovereign states. At the same time, critics worry about corrosive effects of apathy and corporate influence on affluent democratic nations. In this course, we consider how differing perspectives on these central issues have shaped developments in popular culture, politics, philosophy, and the arts in today's globalized world.

Course Format

The course will consist of weekly lectures by the instructors, as well as hour-long tutorial sessions led by a Teaching Assistant. At the start of the term, students will be assigned to a tutorial group that will meet once a week throughout the term. The tutorials will be group discussions of course topics, and your participation in these discussions will count towards your final grade (see 'Tutorial Participation Assessment' below). More details concerning tutorial scheduling and topics will be provided during the first class.

Texts

You will need to purchase four texts for this course:

1. Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (Knopf, 1999)
2. Jean Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays* (Verso, 2003)
3. Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity* (House of Anansi, 1991)
4. A coursepack of assorted readings

All texts are available at the Ryerson bookstore.

Contacting the Instructors/Email

Feel free to email us at the addresses indicated above, but be aware that we set aside a specific day of the week to answer student emails, so depending on when you email us you may not get an instantaneous response. Email is fine for quick logistical questions, but if you have a substantial question, we recommend that you use the scheduled office hours, or make an appointment, to come talk to us in person. Your TA is also an excellent source for information and advice.

Note also that you are required to use a Ryerson email account for this course (see 'Course Policies' section on Turnitin.com, below). The instructors reserve the right not to respond to non-Ryerson email addresses (*e.g.* yahoo, hotmail, etc.) and be aware that faculty junk mail filters tend automatically to delete such messages. For information on how to activate your Ryerson email account, go to:

<http://www.ccs.ryerson.ca/students/index.cfm?nblockID=22>

Important Dates

- The Faculty Course Survey will be administered online through Blackboard during the period of November 10th-25th (11th and 12th week of the course).
- The last day to drop a course (no refund of fees) is Friday November 16th.
- The university is closed on Monday October 8th for Thanksgiving holiday.
- There are no tutorial sessions on the following days: Tuesday Sept. 4th; Thursday Oct. 4th, Friday Oct. 5th; Monday Oct. 8th; Tuesday Oct. 9th; Thursday Nov. 29th; Friday Nov. 30th; Monday, Dec. 3rd.
- Classes end Monday, December 3rd.

For a full listing of significant dates go to <http://www.ryerson.ca/calendar/2007-2008/pg11.html>

Evaluation

Grades will be calculated as follows:

	Due Date	Value
First Essay (1500-1800 words; <i>i.e.</i> , roughly 5-6 double-spaced pages)	9:00 pm on Blackboard (Friday Oct. 12th)	25%
Tutorial Participation/Assignment	Assignment due date to be assigned	15%
Second Essay (1800-2200 words; <i>i.e.</i> , roughly 6-7 double-spaced pages)	9:00 pm on Blackboard (Friday Nov.16th)	30%
Final Exam	Exam Period	30%

- Note that, unless students make alternative arrangements with us by the end of the second week of classes, the essays for this course must be submitted electronically to Blackboard.
- Note that, unless students make alternative arrangements with us by the end of the second week of classes, assignments for this course will be screened, upon Blackboard submission, by the Turnitin.com plagiarism detection service (see ‘Course Policies’ below for further information).
- Essays are due on Blackboard by 9:00 pm on the date indicated; essays received after this time are considered late. The penalty for late submission is one grade per day (*e.g.* an A+ paper submitted one day late receives an A, a C- paper two days late receives a D, and so on), including weekend days, up to a maximum of seven days. Papers that are more than seven days late will receive a grade of zero, unless there is documented medical or compassionate grounds for an extension (see ‘Course Policies’ below).
- Tutorial Participation Assessment: The tutorial sessions in this course are intended to facilitate discussion of the course material in a small group setting. Developing your ability to engage profitably in such discussion is one of the aims of this course. Accordingly, students are expected to contribute verbally to their tutorial sessions by voicing questions, comments or responses. Students’ participation in the tutorial will be assessed by the TA using a combination of attendance records, in-class assignments, and observation during in-class discussions. Please note, however, that quantity is not rewarded over quality when it comes to such contributions. The most helpful and stimulating contributions are those that are well-reasoned, respectfully worded, and attentive both to the perspectives of other participants (*i.e.*, the person who spoke before you) and to the overall goals of the discussion (*i.e.*, the “big picture” of that day’s topic).
- The final examination will consist of essay-format questions; the date and location of the final exam will be determined when the university releases its Fall examination schedule during the term.

Description of Letter Grades

The following is a general description of the meaning of the various letter grades, as we understand them. The term in brackets following each grade is the meaning of that grade according to Ryerson's official policy on grading ([academic council policy #46](#)).

- *A Grade (excellent) work.* Papers at this level are very well organized; they display a clear thesis and a clear aim, and carry that aim off well. They display well-rounded understanding of the issues and concepts deployed and show the ability to analyze and synthesize complex ideas. Arguments are clear and cogent and do not merely repeat arguments or ideas discussed in class notes or texts. Few or no errors are made, and possible responses are anticipated and dealt with in a highly effective way. Papers at this level reflect a deep and thorough grasp of the issues and manifest enough argumentative skill to compel a sceptical reader to accept the thesis offered.
- *B Grade (good) work.* Papers at the B level are well organized: they have a thesis and provide cogent arguments for that thesis. B level papers, however, may contain arguments that are not as original or as sharply presented as those in A papers. Minor errors in the treatment of ideas or concepts may appear, but no serious errors are present. Analysis of ideas and concepts may be sloppy or inaccurate in places. Some obvious objections may remain unaddressed, leaving the whole less than convincing to a sceptical reader. Overall, these papers are good but some work remains to take the paper to the A level.
- *C Grade (satisfactory) work.* Papers at this level present a coherent and relevant argument, but display more problems than B level papers, such as an unclear thesis, difficulties with overall organization, unclear or ambiguous argument or substantial errors in the presentation of ideas. Demonstration of the ability to analyze and synthesize complex ideas may be lacking, and the paper may need to be better informed in light of the course material. Overall, a paper at this level displays a grasp of the issues but needs work in one or more areas to reach the B level.
- *D Grade (marginal) work.* Papers at this level have one or more serious problems. For example, they may be poorly organized, lack a discernible thesis, or present basic concepts inaccurately. Papers at this level tend to drift rather than flow: the reader may have trouble following whole sections of the paper, or in seeing how the different sections together into a coherent whole.
- *F Grade (unsatisfactory) work.* Papers that receive an F are generally uninformed (displaying only rudimentary familiarity with the issues and concepts discussed in the course), incoherent, or both.

Concerns about Grades

Concerns about grades will be handled through a five-step procedure, based on and consistent with Ryerson's Academic Policy #134, Undergraduate Academic Consideration and Appeals. For further information, consult this policy, which is available at <http://www.ryerson.ca/acadcouncil/current/pol134.pdf>.

1. Meeting with the Original Marker. When a student has a concern about the appropriateness of a grade assigned to their work, the first step is for that student to meet with the original marker to discuss the grade in person. Students with questions or concerns about a grade assigned to their work cannot request a re-grade until and unless they have held such a meeting. This meeting must take place within ten working days of return of the graded assignment to the class. You ought to contact the original marker, whether one of us or a TA, directly by email to arrange a time for this meeting. In order for this meeting to be profitable, students are expected to have carefully reviewed the assignment and any provided comments beforehand.

2. Re-grade request. We will entertain requests for re-grading only if students have specific concerns regarding our original comments (Policy #134, article IC1b). An example of a specific concern is: "The marker wrote on my essay that I failed to mention philosopher X, but on page six I talked about him for two paragraphs." "I thought I did better", "My roommate felt this was an A paper", or "The TA marked my essay" are not specific concerns about our original comments on your work. Note that requests for re-grading made before a meeting has been held with the original marker, or more than ten days after work has been returned to the class, will *not* be considered.

3. Decision by original marker. If the student makes a request for a re-grade, as described in (2) above, the original marker will decide, based on the specific concerns presented by the student, either to make no change to the original grade, or to re-grade the work. If the original marker decides to re-grade the work, the new mark becomes the official grade, whether it is higher or lower than the original mark. In other words, a re-grade is precisely that: a reconsideration of the work. It is not necessarily the assignment of a higher grade (Policy #134, article ICi).

4. 'Out of course' re-grade request. If the student is not satisfied with the original marker's re-grading, or with a decision not to re-grade a piece work, the student can ask the relevant department chair or program director to have another qualified instructor re-grade the work. Note that the student "must submit specific and detailed reasons, in writing to the Chair/Director, as to why the original grade was inappropriate, including any evidence from course notes, textbooks, etc. Asserting that the work deserves more marks or that the student disagrees with the mark is not sufficient support for the reassessment" (Policy #134 IC1fi).

5. Decision by Chair/Director. If the student makes a request for an 'out of course' regrade, as described in (4) above, the Chair/Director may decide to have another qualified instructor re-grade the work, or he/she may refuse the request. This decision is final. If the work is re-graded, we will provide all relevant information on the assignment, as well as any marking key or specific grading criteria employed, to the designated instructor. The new grade assigned may be higher, lower, or the same as than the original grade, and this grade is final.

Please note that requests for re-grading are *not* academic appeals, as that phrase is defined in Ryerson's Academic Policy. "Academic Appeals are reserved for issues related to grades or academic standings that could not be resolved with an instructor or a Chair/Director... The grounds for academic appeals are "Prejudice; Medical; Compassionate; Course Management; and Procedural Error" (Policy #134 IIB). For further information on academic appeals, see Policy #134, as well as Ryerson's [Student Guide to Avoiding Academic Appeals](http://www.ryerson.ca/acadcouncil/Other.html/guideavoidappeals.pdf) (<http://www.ryerson.ca/acadcouncil/Other.html/guideavoidappeals.pdf>)

Course Policies

Classroom Policy on Technology

Unless arrangement is made with the instructors in writing in advance (*i.e.* in the first two weeks of the semester), no laptop computers, MP3 players, cell phones, audio or video recorders, or other electronic devices are to be used during lectures or tutorials as they are distracting to other students. Students disregarding this rule or abusing their written permission will be asked to leave the lecture. Note also that Ryerson's Examination policy prohibits the bringing of any electronic device, such as a cell phone, PDA, or other such device, into a test or examination. This policy will be enforced in this course.

Alternate Arrangements for Missed Exams and Assignments

- In general, **circumstances interfering with your ability to perform required course work must be brought to the instructors' attention as they arise, and if at all possible, in advance of missed work.** Requests made at the end of term for extensions, rewrites, etc. due to ongoing personal circumstances will not be considered (for more information, see Ryerson's [Student Guide to Avoiding Academic Appeals](#)). Alternate arrangements for missed exams and assignments will normally be granted ONLY for reasons of illness or injury, religious observance, disability and compassionate grounds (see below).
- Alternate Arrangements/Extensions will NOT be granted for the following reasons:
 - Computer failure, loss of work (keep a backup copy of all your work)
 - Social engagements, including family-related events
 - Work schedules
 - Coincident deadlines in other courses
 - Travel other than home-to-school commuting (holidays, cancelled flights, *e.g.*)
- Requests for alternate arrangements will be considered in the following cases:
 1. *Illness/Injury.* Students must provide, within three working days of the missed assignment, essay, or exam, a completed Ryerson Medical Certificate or a letter from a physician (on letterhead) with the student declaration portion of the Ryerson Medical Certificate attached (this form can be obtained at www.ryerson.ca/rr/medical.pdf). The nature of the alternate arrangement for making up the missing grade is left to the discretion of the instructor. For further details, refer to Ryerson Academic Policy 134, Undergraduate Academic Consideration and Appeals, available at www.ryerson.ca/acadcouncil/current/pol134.pdf.
 2. *Religious Observance.* Ryerson policy allows accommodation for religious observances. Requests for such accommodation must be made formally during the first two weeks of class. For the appropriate forms and instructions, see <http://www.ryerson.ca/rr/observemain.htm>. Ryerson's full policy on Accommodation of Student Religious Observance Obligations is available at www.ryerson.ca/acadcouncil/current/pol150.pdf.

3. *Disability*. Students with a diagnosed physical or learning disability should register with the Ryerson Access Centre at the start of the term. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.ryerson.ca/accesscentre/>
4. *Compassionate Grounds*. Students unable to complete assignments due to loss of a family member or loved one, or due to personal difficulties that are interfering with their studies, should speak to the instructors as soon as is possible. The instructors reserve the right to require documentation, depending upon the circumstances.

Academic Misconduct and Turnitin.com

- Students are reminded that they are required to adhere to all relevant University policies, such as the Student Code of Academic Conduct (available online at <http://www.ryerson.ca/acadcouncilcurrent/pol60.pdf>). This code treats plagiarism (the misrepresentation of someone else's work as your own) as a form of academic misconduct. For detailed information concerning academic misconduct and the relevant penalties, see the Student Code. Note that **the instructors will be distributing information specifying the required citation practices for assignments in this course, and that you are responsible for being aware of and employing this information**. Note also **that it is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes plagiarism**, and that ignorance of this is not an acceptable excuse. See also Ryerson's *Guide to Avoiding Student Plagiarism* (available online at: <http://www.ryerson.ca/acadcouncil/Other.html/guideavoidmisconduct.pdf>)
- Ryerson University subscribes to Turnitin.com, an on-line service that evaluates the originality of written work. Students agree that by taking this course, they are aware that all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Detailed instructions on submitting written work to Turnitin will be provided. Note that you are required to use an official Ryerson email account when submitting to Turnitin.com: assignments from other email addresses (yahoo, e.g.) will not be accepted. In accordance with Ryerson's academic policy, students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must, by the end of the second week of classes, consult with the instructor to make alternate arrangements. Also, students should be aware that "when an instructor has a reason to suspect that an individual piece of work has been plagiarized, the instructor shall be permitted to submit that work to any plagiarism detection service", including Turnitin.com. For more information, see Ryerson's Course Management Policy, Section 4.3.a, available at <http://www.ryerson.ca/acadcouncil/current/pol145.pdf>.
- Students should be aware that the instructors reserve the right to conduct an oral examination on the contents of any submitted assignment.

ACS500: Ideas that Shaped the World V Reading List

Please Note:

- At each lecture, students will be expected to have read the indicated readings beforehand.
- All readings are in the course reader, except for those marked with an asterisk, which are separate texts that you need to purchase.

Postmodernism

Rudy Wiebe. “Where is the Voice Coming From?”

Is History Over?

Francis Fukuyama. “The End of History?”

World Corporatocracy

Naomi Klein, *No Logo** (parts 1&2, pp. 1-194)

Transhumanism

Nick Bostrom, “In Defense of Posthuman Dignity”

Michael J. Sandel. “The Case against Perfection”

Postcards from the Posthuman

Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto”

Animal Rights

Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal”

Hybrid Living

Kanishka Goonewardena and Stefan Kipfer, “Spaces of Difference”

Jhumpa Lahiri, “Interpreter of Maladies”

The End of Art

Arthur Danto, “The End of Art”

Culture of Terror

Jean Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays**

Environmentalism

Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic”

Holmes Rolston III, “Challenges in Environmental Ethics”

Grassroots, Greening, and Groundswell

Naomi Klein, *No Logo** (parts 3&4, pp. 195-458)

Will Modernity Destroy Itself?

Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity**

ACS500: Ideas that Shape the World V Tentative Course Schedule

Notes:

- Whichever day your tutorial is held, it will always deal with the topic/readings covered *in the previous lecture* (for the lone qualification of this rule, see week of Oct. 8-12 below).
- There are a total of eleven meetings of your tutorial group, the first of which is an organizational meeting with your TA following the first lecture slot. There are no tutorials following the final lecture in the course.
- Please see your RAMSS schedule for your section number and corresponding lecture and tutorial locations/times.
- For the required readings for each lecture, see the attached reading list.

Week	Lecture Topic	Lecturer	Notes
Sept 3-7	Introduction/Overview of course	----	Tutorial groups will have an organizational meeting following this first lecture slot (Sept 6-11).
Sept 10-14	Postmodernism	Henstra	Tutorials Sept. 13-18
Sept 17-21	Is History Over?	Parsons	Tutorials Sept. 20-25
Sept. 24-28	World Corporatocracy	Henstra	Tutorials Sept. 27-Nov.2
Oct. 1-5	Transhumanism	Parsons	No tutorials after the Transhumanism lecture, due to Thanksgiving holiday next week.
Oct. 8-12	Postcards from the Posthuman	Henstra	Tutorials Oct. 11-16, covering this topic <i>and</i> Parsons' Transhumanism topic. Essay #1 due Friday Oct. 12
Oct. 15-19	Animal Rights	Parsons	Tutorials Oct. 18-23
Oct. 22-26	Hybrid Living	Henstra	Tutorials Oct. 25-30
Oct. 29-Nov.2	The End of Art	Parsons	Tutorials Nov. 1-6
Nov. 5-9	Culture of Terror	Henstra	Tutorials Nov. 8-13
Nov. 12-16	Environmentalism	Parsons	Tutorials Nov. 15-20 Essay #2 due Friday Nov. 16
Nov. 19-23	Grassroots, Greening, and Groundswell	Henstra	Tutorials Nov. 22-27
Nov. 26-30	Will Modernity Destroy Itself?	Parsons	No tutorials after this lecture.