Updated Schedule of Classes and Topics

LSHV-601-01

Fall 2015


Case 1: Cultural stress between Plato and Aristotle (the new idea: rise of biology and the philosophy of science), and between Aquinas and Aristotle (the new idea: the Christian faith) 9/28, 10/5, 10/19.

Case 2: Cultural stress between the Renaissance and the Medieval intellectual style (the new idea: the new science) 10/26, 11/2


Summary: 11/30, 12/7.

A Brief Introduction

The single greatest achievement of human intelligence has been the survival of the human species. It is hard for us in our present dominance of our environment to appreciate the odds against that achievement. This success was made possible by our special capacity for organization coupled with the dynamics of cultural evolution, i.e., the ability to come up with a better idea. As the Handbook says, this dynamic is the organizing concept of the Foundational Courses. It will be the specific task of this first of these courses to make clear just what this concept means and entails.

To do this will require building an understanding of the evolutionary process from which our species emerged, the overwhelming advantages of our competition in the contest for natural selection, the role of organization in our survival, and finally how the capacity for new and better ideas challenge and eventually replace inherited institutional structures. Each of the Foundational courses tells a story about an episode in which an institutional structure was transformed by a new idea. And taken together they begin to show us how we have gone from survival to control of the world we inhabit.

Note:

HONOR CODE

MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor system: To be honest in any academic endeavor: and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT:

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.