

Afterlife of the Reformation: Embodied Souls and Their Rivals

Folger Shakespeare Library Seminar

Prof. Brad S. Gregory

Spring semester, 2015

Fridays, 1:00-4:30

February 6-April 24, except for March 6 and April 3

Rival claims about human beings in the contemporary world—what they are, how they should live, what they should prioritize—are extraordinarily diverse and contentious, both within and between numerous academic disciplines across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. From evolutionary psychology and neuroscience to analytical philosophy and cultural studies, radically disparate and incompatible claims are made about what human beings are, ranging from the most scientifically reductionist and evolutionarily determined to the most culturally self-constructivist and voluntaristically undetermined, with more traditional philosophical and theological views also very much alive. The emergence of this diversity of anthropological claims has a history, which no single course could possibly cover and the contemporary particulars of which belong to the recent past. But the longer-term history of rival views of human beings in the Western world has played a crucial role in the formation of these latter-day expressions. This Folger Seminar has two main objectives: (1) to explore some of the most fundamental influences on competing views of human beings between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries, and (2) to provide a forum for workshop presentations by participants of papers related to this theme.

The course is divided into two halves. The first half (February 6 – March 13) is intended to provide some basic common reading material for discussion about human nature in late medieval and early modern Europe. In successive weeks, we will read primary and secondary sources related to the most influential trends that shaped discourse and debate about human beings in this period: inherited medieval Christian culture, Renaissance humanists' retrieval of and interaction with ancient sources, the Protestant Reformation, interactions between European and non-European peoples, and the advent of new philosophy and natural philosophy in the seventeenth century. These readings and discussions are intended to provide a common framework for the second half of the course (March 20 – April 24), which will focus on individual workshop presentations by participants in the form of a paper, dissertation chapter, book chapter, or article on which s/he is working.

The schedule for presentations will be determined during our first class meeting on February 6. Each participant is asked to provide one article or book chapter that in some way helps to illuminate or introduce an important idea relevant to her/his own presentation; these will be added to the syllabus and we will read them in common in preparation for the class meeting in question. Except for March 6 and April 3, we will meet each Friday from February 6 through April 24 in the Folger Library from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m., with a break from 3:00-3:30.

Our first class meeting has several additional readings, selected to give an idea of some contemporary competing views about human beings by a philosopher and psychologist, sociobiologist, sociologist, and theologian, respectively. Participants should read these and the other assigned readings each week before coming to class. The schedule of class meetings and readings is as follows:

February 6: Introduction and Inheritances

Background readings: contemporary competing views

Raymond Martin and John Barresi, *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self: An Intellectual History of Personal Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 290-305.

E. O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 1-13.

Christian Smith, *What Is a Person? Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 1-22.

David Bentley Hart, *The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 46-84.

Primary sources:

Aristotle, *De anima*, ed. and trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1986), pp. 125-221.

Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* [c.1420], ed. and trans. Joseph N. Tylenda (New York: Vintage, 1998), pp. 47-70.

Secondary readings:

Katharine Park, "The Organic Soul," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 464-484.

Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 1-16, 78-114.

Denys Turner, *Thomas Aquinas: A Portrait* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 70-99.

February 13: Humanistic Recoveries and Initiatives

Primary sources:

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, excerpt from "On the Dignity of Man" [1487] in *On the Dignity of Man, On Being and the One, Heptaplus*, trans. Charles Glenn Wallis, Paul J. W. Miller, and Douglas Carmichael, Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 3-19.

Erasmus, *The Enchiridion of a Christian Soldier* [1503], trans. Raymond Himelick (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1963), pp. 63-83.

Secondary readings:

Charles Trinkaus, "The Dignity of Man in the Patristic and Medieval Traditions and in Petrarch," in *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian*

- Humanist Thought*, vol. 1 (1970; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), pp. 179-199.
- Christopher S. Celenza, "The Revival of Platonic Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 72-96.
- Jill Kraye, "The Revival of Hellenistic Philosophies," in *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Hankins, pp. 97-112.

February 20: The Reformation and Divided Christianity

Primary sources:

- Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* [1525], trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Fleming H. Revell, 2002), pp. 97-107.
- John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* [1536/59], ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 2.1, 2.3, pp. 241-255, 289-309.
- François de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* [1609] (New York: Vintage, 2002), pp. 3-36.

Secondary readings:

- Peter Marshall, *The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 11-41, 129-136.
- Mark Greengrass, *Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648* (New York: Viking, 2014), pp. 1-37.
- Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 75-128.

February 27: New Worlds, New Peoples

Primary sources:

- Francisco de Vitoria, "On the American Indians" [1537-8], in *Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Anthony Pagden and Jeremy Lawrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 231-292.
- Michel de Montaigne, "On the Cannibals," in *The Complete Essays* [1580], ed. and trans. M. A. Screech (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), pp. 228-241.

Secondary readings:

- Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 15-49.
- Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 57-108.

March 13: New (Natural) Philosophy

Primary sources:

René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul* [1649], trans. Stephen H. Voss (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1989), part 1 (articles 1-50), pp. 18-49.

Thomas Hobbes, *On Man* [1658], in *Man and Citizen*, ed. Bernard Gert (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1991), pp. 37-70.

Secondary readings:

Daniel Garber, "Soul and Mind: Life and Thought in the Seventeenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 759-795.

Roger French, *Medicine before Science: The Business of Medicine from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 157-221.

Fernando Vidal, "From the Science of the Living Being to the Science of the Human Mind," in *The Sciences of the Soul: The Early Modern Origins of Psychology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 58-97.

March 20: Participant Presentations

March 27: Participant Presentations

April 10: Participant Presentations

April 17: Participant Presentations

April 24: Wrap-up Discussion (readings to be determined)