This course is designed to introduce students to a selection of modern texts from the Enlightenment to the present, which have been chosen for their outstanding cultural and historical significance. As we study these texts, we will develop skills and habits of close observation, analysis and argument, as well as respect for different ideas and cultures. We will discuss the importance of these texts in their cultural context; their significance in shaping cultural norms; their influence on literature, art, and the performing arts; and their meaning for us today. We will focus primarily on three skills: a firm knowledge of the content of the works; the ability to do close reading and analysis; and the ability to integrate various works through the discussion of common themes. This course has no prerequisite, and it satisfies in part the humanities requirement for most majors. It can also be applied to the English major or minor.

July 2-3 Voltaire, *Candide* (1759)  
4 No class  
5-11 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, Part I (1808)  
12-23 Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (1866)  
24-26 Frank Kafka, *The Trial* (1925)  
30 Albert Camus, *The Stranger* (1942)  

Aug. 1 Review  
2 Final Exam

*This schedule is subject to slight modification if we should fall behind. The review day may be used as an extra day to catch up if necessary.*

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Attendance and Punctuality (30%)**: This is an intensive course: we cover an entire semester in four weeks! The reading is therefore intensive, and you will miss a lot of material if you miss just one class. It is therefore essential that you attend class regularly. You are permitted one unexcused absence. Other absences will be excused on the basis of a note from a doctor, dean, or coach. If it is not possible for you to get a note but you feel your absence is justified, you must inform me of your situation and I will decide whether or not to excuse you. *Communication is essential! If you are absent and do
not tell me why, your absence will be counted as unexcused. Repeated lateness may add up to an absence. If you are absent, you are still responsible for all material covered in class and posted on Blackboard.

2. Participation (10%): You will get the most out of class and improve the verbal formulation of your thoughts if you participate in the discussions. You must bring the readings to class, as we will be doing close readings of particular passages. I encourage you to speak with all of your classmates and respond to one another’s ideas during discussion, rather than addressing your thoughts only to me.

3. Daily Assignments (25%): For each class meeting, I will post one question on the readings on Blackboard under Assignments. You should briefly respond to that question and pose one discussion question of your own by 8 a.m. on the day of the class. Your question should not be a yes/no or a factual question, but rather one that you believe will stimulate class discussion. If you would like, you may post additional questions, including factual questions, for me to respond to individually. Only I will see your responses and questions, though I may use them in class anonymously. I will also publish the most interesting assignment responses of the day online, particularly if we did not get around to discussing them in class. Please read all published responses! This will not only stimulate your thinking about the material, but also help you to improve your own responses and study questions. **PLEASE NOTE** that I will respond to all assignments and send you your HW grade (⁻, √, √+) as soon as possible, usually within one day. You must read my responses to your assignments—they are for you! No late responses will be accepted after the beginning of the relevant class, unless you have an excused absence. **If you will not have regular Internet access, please see me at the start of the summer session.**

4. Opening Discussion (10%): At the beginning of the semester you will sign up to open discussion on one day. You will be expected to briefly discuss something that interests you in the assignment and raise a topic to initiate class discussion on that day. You should briefly explain the topic, say why you think it is significant, offer a few of your own thoughts on it, and then ask the class what they think (max. 5 minutes). On some days we will have two presentations.

5. Final Exam (25%): The final will be an essay exam.

Other Important Information:

**Required Editions:** I have carefully selected the editions of the texts we are reading as the best available translations. **This is especially true of Goethe’s Faust.** I understand that many of you are short of cash, but I recommend very highly that you purchase the editions I have ordered (see the bottom of the syllabus). Translations can range from excellent to execrable! Please note also that many ebook editions and free online editions are closer to execrable than to excellent.
**PowerPoint Presentations and Other Audiovisual Material:** Links to presentations and clips shown in class will be posted on Blackboard *if possible* so that you may review them. Additional recommended and required materials will occasionally also be posted on Blackboard.

**Office Hours:** My office hours are given above, and I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have, whether they are about the texts we are reading, assignments, absences, or anything else—or you may just come by to talk. If you can’t make my office hours, we can make an appointment or even have a live chat on Blackboard!

**Academic Accommodations:** If you require special accommodations, please contact Disability Support Service, 168 Clark Student Center, 397-4140, at the beginning of the summer session so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements cannot be applied retroactively.

**Course Policies:**

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism will not be tolerated, including on the daily assignments. If you plagiarize on the assignments or the exam, or engage in any other form of academic dishonesty as defined by the MSU Student Handbook, you will get an F in the course and disciplinary proceedings will be initiated.

**Cell Phones:** No cell phones should be visible in class at any time! If you try to hide your phone under your desk or behind your bag, don’t think I won’t see it. If I see you use your cell phone during class, you will be marked late or absent without any warning. You may not leave class to use your cell phone except under exceptional circumstances, of which you have informed me beforehand. You may not use your cell phone during the final exam. The same policy applies to iPods and other electronic devices.

**Food:** You may bring beverages to class, but please do not eat while class is in session.

**Computers:** You may bring your computer to class only to consult the texts we are discussing or to take notes. If you use your computer for any other purpose during class, you will be marked late or absent without warning.

**Attention:** Please be alert and do not lay your head down on your desk during class, or I will mark you late or absent without warning.

**Class Dismissal:** Please do not start to pack up your things or leave until I have dismissed the class. If you believe I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.

**Email Communication:** The only way I can communicate with you outside of class is through email. You are responsible for checking your “preferred” email daily for any reminders, clarifications, or other communications from me.
Safe Zone Statement: This classroom is a “safe zone” in which all students will be treated and will treat one another equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is encouraged.

Break: We will have a five-minute break halfway through class, during which you may use your cell phone, have a quick snack, go to the restroom, lay down your head, or whatever you wish.

REPEATED AND/OR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF ANY OF THESE POLICIES WILL RESULT IN A LOWERED GRADE WITHOUT WARNING, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR GRADE IS BORDERLINE.

Required Texts (available at the College Bookstore):