

**SIX BOOKS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD****Spring 2013****Course  
Syllabus****Instructor Information**

Name:	Robert Martello
Office:	Milas Hall 355
Phone:	781-292-2532
Email:	robert.martello@olin.edu
Office Hours:	By appointment; but boy am I flexible!

**Course Information**

Course Number:	AHSE2112
Course Nickname:	"Six Books"
Meeting Time:	Mondays and Thursdays, 10:50 AM to 12:30 PM
Meeting Location:	AC 417
Course email list:	sixbooks@lists.olin.edu
Course Mascot:	A muscular dolphin giving a "thumbs-up" as s/he dives off a glacier
Coolness Factor:	Unimaginably gigantic

**Learning Objectives**

The philosophy and main objectives of this course are embodied in the following goals:

1. **Conduct textual analysis.** Textual analysis, or the ability to study and interpret the different aspects of a work, is an essential skill for all learners. We will emphasize a few aspects of this skill, such as the study of an author's intent and perspective; identifying major themes, arguments, and goals of the text; and understanding the stylistic techniques employed by an author to achieve these goals.
2. **Analyze the context of important works.** Great works must be understood as products of their social, environmental, historical, cultural, ethical, genre-specific, and other contexts. We will explore how the context of each work shaped its creation, its immediate reception, and its long-term impacts.
3. **Develop communication skills.** This course teaches and assesses a variety of communication skills via the following practices (*NOTE: the assignments for this course are described in horrifying and nightmarish detail in the **Assignments Supplement***):
  - a. **Analytical writing.** This course will stress clear and organized writing, insightful analysis, effective use of evidence and citation, and the ability to balance creativity and professionalism.
  - b. **Class presentations.** Presentation assignments will stress your ability to speak with clarity and organization, work as a member of a team, and present a narrative and analysis in a manner that engages and educates your peers.

- c. **Class discussion.** We will learn to work together in building and advancing a constructive group dialogue, including the importance of listening and responding to other comments. Participation quality is at least as important as quantity.

4. **Have a great time.** We WILL have fun. Oh yes. (thoughtful pause) Oh yes indeed.

## Required Texts

The following five texts are required, and will be read in this order (see calendar at end of syllabus):

1. **Karl Marx, *Communist Manifesto*** (Edited by Frederic L. Bender), Norton Critical Editions, ISBN 0-393-95616-4
2. **Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*** (Edited by Elizabeth Ammons), Norton Critical Editions, ISBN 0-393-93399-7
3. **Darwin, *Third Edition*** (Edited by Philip Appleman), Norton Critical Editions, ISBN 0-393-95849-3
4. **Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*** (Edited by Robert M. Adams), Norton Critical Editions, ISBN 0-393-96220-2
5. **Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*** (use any edition you can find, including free online ones) and **Confucius, *The Analects*** (again, use any edition you like)

## Quick Course Overview

We have about seven weeks (thirteen class meetings) to cover six books that changed the world. After the introductory day, this leaves us exactly two class meetings (one week) for each book. We will study both the *text* and the *context* of each book.

**Textual analysis** of each book uses a study of the style (language, structure, narration, symbolism...), genre, and arguments employed in each book to generate textually-specific answers to questions such as:

- Why did the book have the impact it did? What made/makes it effective?
- What does each book teach us about changing the world? Does the text explicitly approach the task or ideal of changing the world?
- How do we relate to the book from our modern perspective, and how does this differ from the contemporary perspective?

**Contextual study** of each book enables us to understand the creation and impact of each book by exploring contextual issues such as:

- author's background and goals
- comparisons with other relevant and influential works
- political, social, and other contexts framing the creation and introduction of the work
- the book's immediate and long term (social? political? literary? ethical?) impacts

Each student will produce assignments for three of the five books that we all read together.

- The first assignment requires **individual answers to two questions** about one of our books, accompanied by a brief discussion about your answers in class. The individual questions (and your answers) will appear in a google doc so the whole class can read it prior to our discussion. They are due *the night before our first discussion of a given book*.

- A second assignment allows you to be creative and produce an editorial, Wikipedia page, amazon.com book review, presentation (but not to our class), or other **"public" document explaining one of our reading's societal impacts**. They are due *the day after our second discussion of a given book*.
- A third assignment is a **group-facilitated class activity** that adds insightful analysis and new evidence to our understanding of one reading. The activity could be a presentation, class discussion, debate, or anything else. These activities will take place *in class on our second discussion of a given book*.

Again, you cannot produce more than one assignment on the same book. This is all described in cruel and needless detail in the *Assignments Supplement*.

The final week of our course is different because we will discuss "Book six." "Book six" is exciting. "Book six" is awesome. "Book six" appears in quotes to illustrate its lofty status.

You will each choose and propose your own sixth book by the second class. Please fill in the gaps of this course by selecting another book that changed the world. You have five weeks to read the book that you selected. By our final class session you will write a paper that summarizes the book and its impacts, and you get to present the book to the rest of the class via a poster or PowerPoint talk. Our last two class sessions will be devoted to class presentations and indescribably poignant closing ceremonies, which will also be simultaneously broadcast on the Food Network, hosted by Mila Kunis.

## Random Course Policies

- **Attendance**
  - Attendance is required and will be considered in computing your grade. This is a half semester class, so each meeting is precious and special.
  - If you are too sick to come to class ... don't come to class! Focus on getting healthy. Please contact me as soon as you can – before class if possible or at the first opportunity after class if necessary. I will help you make up the missed material, but if you do not make up missed work your grade will suffer.
  - If you have a different reason for missing class, contact me as early as possible. I may or may not allow the absence.
  - Perfect attendance will be rewarded at the end of the year with a small peppermint candy. You will also receive a single piece of gum (bubble gum, spearmint, or halibut) if you heroically participate in class discussions.
  - Lateness is disruptive. I will make sure we end on time, and you should arrive on time. Excessive lateness will earn you a stern grimace.
- **Class participation** is really vital, a critical learning objective of this course that will play a substantial role in determining your grade. *You must participate in class discussions!* If participating in discussions is stressful for you, please contact me and we'll talk. If contacting me and talking to me is stressful for you, please participate in class discussions. (See what I did there?)
- **Laptop use in class:** *Laptop use is only allowed by explicit permission!* This policy is a response to numerous cases of "Laptop Overuse And Distraction" (LOAD). If you have a reason to use your laptop, such as a research project during class, ask me at any time, I will probably say yes.
- **Honor code issues:** the honor code helps me focus on important things, like designing interesting PowerPoint slides and researching fascinating lectures, and saves me from the need to worry about dishonesty, plagiarism, cheating, or Ragnarok.<sup>1</sup> Please follow the spirit of the honor code and ask me to clarify anything that is unclear. Primary honor code related issues include:

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<sup>1</sup> Norse mythology posits a cataclysmic battle, Ragnarok, at the end of time. In this battle the gods, heroes, and writing tutors will battle various forces of evil (monsters, giants, serpents, Bill Gates), causing the world to perish in an epic conflagration.

- **Plagiarism:** always take extreme care to acknowledge the source of all quotes, content, images, and theories. Even if you paraphrase the information, you need to cite all sources that informed your analysis. Citations must include page numbers, website addresses, times of interviews, or other details as needed. When in doubt, cite.
- **Collaboration:** see the description of each assignment for exact guidelines on the degree of allowable collaboration. If you receive help where help is allowed, you must acknowledge it in a brief note at the end of the assignment.
- **Calling out dated catchphrases:** (e.g., “A double rainbow!”): oh no.
- **Time expectations:** A diligent and reasonably efficient student, supplied with plenty of Vanilla Coke, should spend about 12 hours per week doing everything associated with this course including attending class. If you are spending more than 12 hours a week on this course please contact me and we’ll see what we can do.

## Grading

This course will use the ABCDF grading system as outlined in the Student Handbook, including pluses and minuses (note that Olin does not use the A+ grade: an A is fully delightful in and of itself). Final grades will be assigned in accordance with the guidelines provided in the Student Handbook.

Grades for this course are computed from a combination of assignments, shown on the chart below. All assignments are discussed in worrisome and ghastly detail in the *Assignments Supplement*.

Course Assignment	Percentage
Instructor assessment ( <i>participation, attendance, timeliness, engagement...</i> )	20 (*)
Google Docs Response to Readings	20
Change the World Impacts Analysis	20
Group Project: Class Facilitation	15
Book six presentation and report	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

(\*) Instructor assessment will impact more than 20% of your grade in exceptionally good or bad cases.

## Format for Written Assignments

All writing assignments must exist as *MS Word* documents using the following settings:

- 12 point font, spacing 1.5, and margins 1 inch all around
- A font such as Times, Century Schoolbook, Arial, Verdana
- Page numbers somewhere
- File name containing your last name and the assignment title
- If you are citing a required text for this course you can simply mention authors and page numbers throughout your paper, e.g., “According to Darwin [page 28] ...” or “In the words of Karl Marx, ‘The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles’ [page 55].”
- DO NOT SEND ME A PDF.

All assignments must be emailed to me (at robert.martello@olin.edu) or posted to google docs on or before the deadline -- submission logistics are covered in unimaginable mind-shattering detail in the *Assignments Supplement*. Late assignments will be penalized.

# Semester Schedule

**Note: all assignments (reading and writing) are DUE on the date listed.**

<b>WEEK 1</b>	<b>Thursday Jan. 24</b>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Choose Your Own Adventure</b></p> <p><i>Welcome!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose discussion groups</li> <li>Discuss assignments</li> <li>Plan the future (proposal, overview...)</li> <li>Book chat and fun for all</li> </ul>	
<b>WEEK 2</b>	<b>Monday Jan. 28</b>	<b>Thursday Jan. 31</b>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Communist Manifesto</b></p> <p><i>Reading (pages from First Edition!):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Communist Manifesto pages vii-ix (Preface); 1-3; 8-9; 34-39</i></li> <li>Choose <b>one</b> of these sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9-18 (<i>history of Communist League and Marx' context</i>); <b>or</b></li> <li>18-24 (<i>Marx principle of alienated labor and how communism fixes it</i>); <b>or</b></li> <li>24-33 (<i>materialism, production, classes, ideology, revolution</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Read 54-66</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“From each according to his ability, to each according to his need”</b></p> <p><i>Reading (Pages from First Edition!):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skim and look for differences between a few of the prefaces on pages 43-53</li> <li>Communist Manifesto pages 67-75 and 85-86</li> <li>Also read 127-131 (<i>after six decades</i>); 139-145 (<i>90th anniversary</i>); and 161-163 (<i>The State and Revolution</i>)</li> <li>Choose <b>one</b> of these sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>153-160 (<i>economics</i>); <b>or</b></li> <li>171-176 (<i>ethics</i>); <b>or</b></li> <li>189-199 (<i>rhetoric</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>DUE: Email me a brief proposal for your sixth book. Check out details in the Assignments Handout, page 6</b>		
<b>WEEK 3</b>	<b>Monday Feb. 4</b>	<b>Thursday Feb. 7</b>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</b></p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin pages vii-ix; xiii-xiv (preface stuff)</i></li> <li><i>Pages 1-100 (first 11 chapters of text)</i></li> <li><i>Pages 391-397 (maps and historical documents -- read them very carefully)</i></li> <li><i>Pages 406-417 (various narratives and historical writings)</i></li> <li><i>Pages 454-455 (Uncle Tom shows)</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“So you’re the little lady who started this big war...”</b></p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin pages 100-223; 370-388</i></li> <li><i>Quickly skim other parts of novel – read chapter summaries online if need be</i></li> <li><i>Read 442-446; 463-467; 483-488; 491-494</i> <i>Optional: read whole novel and schedule a Robchat™ to discuss it for extra credit</i></li> </ul>

<b>WEEK 4</b>	<b>Monday Feb. 11</b>	<b>Thursday Feb. 14</b>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>On the Origin of Species</b></p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darwin pages 2-17; 23-29 (historical context)</li> <li>• Origin of species text on 95-115</li> <li>• Responses to Darwin on 257-264; 287-288; 426</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Survival of the Fittest?</b></p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darwin: <b>lightly skim</b> pages 115-157</li> <li>• Carefully read recap and conclusion on 158-174</li> <li>• Read 289-290; 296-300; 342-344; 396-398; 527-530; 534-541; 569-576</li> </ul>

<b>WEEK 5</b>	<b>Monday Feb. 18</b>	<b>Tuesday Feb. 19</b>	<b>Thursday Feb. 21</b>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>President's Day, No Classes</b></p> <p>Live life to the fullest, my friends.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Olin Monday The Prince</b></p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Prince pages vii-xvi (historical context)</li> <li>• Pages 3-33 (text chapters I-XI); Pages 74 (map); 150-155 (fortune...)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>On Avoiding Contempt and Hatred...</b></p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Prince pages 33-72 (rest of text)</li> <li>• Pages 155-169 (theory of the state); 271-275</li> <li>• Look up Machiavelli and/or The Prince online and add to our knowledge of this book's impacts</li> </ul>

<b>WEEK 6</b>	<b>Monday Feb. 25</b>	<b>Thursday Feb. 28</b>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Art of War</b></p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Art of War (all chapters!)</li> <li>• Watch: documentary "The Art of War" (on reserve in Olin's library)</li> <li>• Locate two or more sources that offer context about Sun Tzu, his location and time period, and the impacts of his book over the years</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Marxist victory (i.e., no classes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sorry, that was an awful joke indeed</li> <li>• use today to finish your sixth book and start preparing your presentation and paper on it</li> <li>• again, I apologize for the joke in the header</li> </ul>

<b>WEEK 7</b>	<b>Monday Mar. 4</b>	<b>Thursday Mar. 7</b>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Art of War and Analects</b></p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Analects sections 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 20</li> <li>• Watch: the documentary about Confucius (on reserve)</li> <li>• Locate two or more sources that further explain Confucius' context and impacts (defined broadly)</li> <li>• <b>NOTE:</b> at this point you should read your sixth book with the intensity of a thousand novas</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Book Six Presentations</b></p> <p>By this point you should have finished your sixth book. Be ready to present it!</p> <p style="background-color: #cccccc; text-align: center;"><b>DUE: Book Six Presentations</b></p>

<b>WEEK 8</b>	<b>Monday Mar. 11</b>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Last Day! Presentations!</b></p> <p>More presentations. Closing ceremonies.</p> <p style="background-color: #cccccc; text-align: center;"><b>DUE: Book Six Paper ...and all assignments!</b></p>