

Honor 2103 – Intellectual Traditions

DIAGNOSTIC CRITICAL ESSAY ASSIGNMENT – 15 points

Write a 1000-1200 word critical essay (this is about 3-4 pages doublespaced), due at 6 p.m., Monday 10/1. Submit your work via Canvas (find it under TYPED ASSIGNMENTS: Diagnostic Critical Essay).

BEFORE PROCEEDING, PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THE GUIDELINES FOR PAPER WRITING IN THIS COURSE, POSTED ON CANVAS UNDER “HELPFUL GUIDES TO WRITING.” PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO “ALF’S GUIDE TO WRITING IN THIS CLASS”

For your paper, answer the following questions in essay form.

In its insistence that the sun (rather than the earth) was at the center of the universe, the Copernican world view did more than just challenge the discipline of *astronomy*. The Copernican system, championed by Galileo as *a physical actuality* rather than just as a useful predictive model, upset the existing *moral geography* of the cosmos. In the divinely prescribed geocentric order that the Catholic Church adapted from Ptolemy and Aristotle, the spatial coordinates, physical qualities, and motions of celestial objects were all infused with spiritual and philosophical significance. What was so disruptive about the specific evidence that Galileo put forth to challenge geocentrism? Give at least three major examples of his telescopic findings and explain in detail how they work. How did Galileo justify his use of the “book of nature” as a legitimate authority and how could he insist that scripture was not in fact contradicted by the new astronomy? What sorts of rhetoric (or—heh—“spin”) did Galileo use to make the Copernican system seem less threatening to the Church (and thereby help save his own skin from the Inquisition)?

Begin your paper by carefully outlining the *spiritual* and *philosophical* significance of the Aristotelian/Ptolemaic world system and then account for how Galileo’s Copernicanism offered a rival account of celestial geography. Throughout your response, demonstrate your clear grasp of pertinent terminology, e.g., geocentrism vs. heliocentrism; translunary vs. sublunary phenomena; the four elements and the ether or quintessence; perfect circles/uniform motion/epicycles, crystalline spheres, prescription vs. description, etc. Use the Penguin Anthology, Matthews text, and notes from class as sources.

To cover this question adequately within 1000-1200 words (yes, it can be done!) you will need to work very hard to stay focused. Write concisely and without any fluff.

TO HELP YOU KEEP FOCUSED, PLEASE COPY AND PASTE THIS QUESTION AS A COVER PAGE TO YOUR PAPER (but do not count it as part of the word count required in response). In the first paragraph of your essay, be sure to establish pertinent **CONTEXT** to situate your full discussion and make a clear **CLAIM** before diving into specific examples. And remember: this should be fascinating material to work with—have fun! 😊

A few general reminders.....

- ANALYSIS. I'm looking for close analysis, not a summary, of the assigned texts. (Note: a "text" is anything that can be read, and in this context includes films as cinematic texts.) In formulating your reply, **work closely with the assigned texts themselves**. *Remember, this is a class rooted in actual words on the page (or images in a film), not a class for discussing abstract ideas unrooted from text. Always back up your answers with textual examples throughout your paper: situate each quotation you use, quote the passage, and then analyze it carefully. Also, always be sure to cite page numbers for all your sources!*
- CRITERIA: *Address the actual question asked, not an imaginary version of it. Contextualize your discussion and make sure that you state a clear, defensible claim early in the paper. Argue by making clear and specific points that you illustrate with textual examples. Stay focused and organized: use clear topic sentences to organize well-developed and logically distinct paragraphs.* Be sure to use proper grammar, punctuation, and MLA-style formatting throughout. *Again, close engagement with the text is vital. But whenever you quote from a text, be sure to **show how** the quotation supports your argument; the quotation will not itself argue for you. As a rule, keep quotations short.*
- HELPFUL RESOURCES: Always **read your own writing out loud** to detect trouble spots. Email me to test ideas. Meet with me if I can help by discussing your questions in person (email me ahead of time to make an appointment). Also, I recommend you visit the University Writing Center, located on the second floor of the Marriott Library, for one-on-one help with your drafts—it's free for all students (sign up at <http://www.writingcenter.utah.edu/>) *You are your own worst editor, so it's crucial to have others read your work and give you feedback on what works and what needs improving.*
- SCORE: This assignment is worth 15 points (fifteen percent of your final grade in the course). Because this is a DIAGNOSTIC essay, I will evaluate it but **I will not grade it**. If you complete the assignment as required, you will score the full fifteen points. Use this opportunity as practice for the later, graded papers coming up.

A few important reminders on FORMATTING...

- General format: **1000-1200 words** of response (don't count the Works Cited page or the pasted-in question at the beginning). Please don't go beyond the posted word limit. Part of your task as a student and scholar-in-training is to learn how to write for an assigned number of words or pages.
- Make sure your submission is typed and **double-spaced**, with 12 point font (I recommend Times New Roman), 1" margins, with page numbers and MLA-formatted in-text citations.
- Spell check! (That is, using both your brain AND your computer.)
- Proofread! Remember that this is a college-level paper you are writing.
- Always include your name on your paper—not just in the file name. Also include the name of the course, and it's generally a good idea to include your instructor's name also.
- To help us both stay focused, please **copy and paste the full question as a cover page to your paper**. (Do **not** include the question as part of your page count.)
- At the top of your first page, **give your paper a clear and specific TITLE**, for example, "Galileo's Challenge to the Geocentric World System." Avoid vague titles like "Galileo" or "Copernicanism."

- **Include a Works Cited page at the end (also MLA format) to show your sources.** (Again, note that the Works Cited page does **not** count toward the required word count.)
- Make sure the **filename** of your paper includes your last name and the name of the assignment. (For example, if I were to submit this assignment, my filename would read “SEEGERT DIAGNOSTIC.”) You would of course use **your own** last name.
- **Submit your paper via Canvas. Attach your response as an MS Word file.** I CANNOT evaluate any work in any other format (I'll be unable to use the comment feature). Use the “save as” feature to save as an MS Word file in case your program does not use that by default.
- After uploading your paper, **DOUBLECHECK** to make sure that it has posted! I cannot be held responsible for papers that you thought you submitted but which were not.
- **THE FORMAT YOU USE (or abuse) FOR YOUR PAPER WILL AFFECT YOUR GRADE, SO PLEASE TAKE THIS REQUIREMENT SERIOUSLY.**

Please spend considerable time working on all papers for this course—don't wait until the last minute to complete them! Contact me **well ahead of the deadline** with any questions! I want you to do well! I'll look forward to reading your work!

Thanks!
Alf