

# *The* HUMANITIES

## CULTURAL ROOTS AND CONTINUITIES

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*Volume I*

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# HUMANITIES

## CULTURAL ROOTS AND CONTINUITIES

*Volume I—Three Cultural Roots*

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## PREFACE

This book is designed to introduce students to the humanities in an interdisciplinary context. We feel that in an introductory humanities course the student's personal growth should take place on three levels: 1) historical, 2) aesthetic, and 3) philosophical. The overall purpose of the two volumes can best be described by breaking it down into these three categories.

### **The Historical Level**

We stress the concept of "cultural roots" because one cannot understand the culture in which one lives without some notion of what went into its making. Therefore, we have made every effort here to link the "roots" discussed to aspects of the contemporary American cultural environment. This can be a knotty problem because such links can sometimes be too facile, and we would also like students to discover that cultures remote in time or space can be worth studying simply for themselves. This, too, is part of a growth process in historical depth. Volume I treats three cultural roots: Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian, and West African. This choice needs some justification, since many Americans have other cultural roots as well: oriental, Middle Eastern, north European, Latin American, American Indian, to name a few. Still, the Greco-Roman and the

Judeo-Christian traditions undoubtedly constitute the bases of the Western humanities. African culture, a long neglected field of study, has contributed significantly to modern Afro-American art and thought and in many ways to Western culture in general. In addition, African culture offers the opportunity to study some fundamental aspects of the humanities in a truly interdisciplinary context.

In the discussion of each of these "roots," we adopted the policy of focusing on one period and/or place. The focus for the Greco-Roman root is on fifth-century B.C. Athens, that for the Judeo-Christian on medieval Europe, that for Africa on the Yoruba people. This means, for example, that some significant monuments of classical Greek drama, sculpture, and architecture can be examined rather extensively, while early Greece and Rome receive a briefer treatment. In our discussion of the Renaissance and Reformation periods we emphasize the fusion of the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian roots and focus on the development of humanism in fifteenth-century Italy and its diffusion in the north.

If we pursued the same metaphor, Volume II might be called "stems, leaves, and flowers." Here, too, an attempt is made to focus and spread out, more than to survey and to spread thin. The court of Louis XIV in the seventeenth century, the Enlightenment in France and America, the romantic movement, the Industrial Revolution, the modernist movement and Black culture in the United States all provide centers around which interrelated humanities can be discussed.

### The Aesthetic Level

On the whole, we follow the same "focal" principle in the aesthetic domain. In presenting music, we operate on the assumption that a student will retain more from listening to and analyzing an entire work than from reading music history and theory and hearing snippets. In dealing with art and literature, it is sometimes possible to make an important point with a photograph and a caption or with a close analysis of a brief literary passage. Nevertheless, in the presentation of major works in the focal periods, we assume that it is more useful for a student to look at the whole of Chartres cathedral than to skim the history of medie-

val art, and to read all of *Oedipus Rex* rather than bits and summaries from several Greek tragedies. With lengthy works such as epics and novels this is, of course, not possible. The analyses of extremely short passages such as those from the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* are intended to serve as introductions to the works. A teacher may well wish to assign one or more epics or novels as supplementary reading.

Dance, an often neglected art form, is given more extensive treatment here than in other humanities texts. Entire dance compositions can, of course, be appreciated only in live performance or film, and we will list resources for the latter in the Instructor's Guide. Also in the guide will be some suggestions for "sensitivity exercises" designed to involve students actively in the aesthetic process and in interrelating the arts. These may be used as warm-ups during the first few days of class or introduced at any point. It has been our experience that a long introductory chapter on how to look, listen, and read is largely wasted; therefore, we treat such matters in the introductions to individual works. Questions on the nature of genre are treated in the cultural context in which they originate, notably in ancient Greece. We place much importance on study questions that require the student to read, look, and listen carefully.

While we try to avoid jargon, we feel that some knowledge of the technical vocabulary of criticism in the arts is essential for literate discussion. Difficult or unfamiliar terms appear in italics the first time they are used in any given chapter, indicating that they are defined in the Glossary.

### The Philosophical Level

It may well be objected that we compromise the focal method in our presentation of philosophy since no entire philosophical works appear in the book. This is largely due to considerations of space; but it is also true that, when dealing with a work in terms of certain fundamental ideas rather than in terms of aesthetic wholeness, the "snippet" method is not so objectionable. Beginning humanities students are probably not ready to read Aristotle's *Ethics* in its entirety, yet they should be able to see how Aristotle's ideas are essential to the cultural roots of the modern world.

The student's personal growth in the philosophical area means, however, something much broader than his or her contact with formal philosophy. The (ideal) student whose historical awareness is increased by an understanding of cultural roots and whose aesthetic sensitivity is heightened by personal confrontation with a variety of works of art should also be able to expand his or her mind through contact with diverse ideas. A humanities course should enable students to refine their thinking on the basic questions that affect all mankind, to formulate more clearly their personal values, and to discuss these with intellectual rigor rather than in vaporous bull sessions. Teachers should welcome debates that might arise from a comparison between Genesis and African mythology, the "woman"

question in *Lysistrata* and in John Stuart Mill, and the relative merits of realistic and abstract art or tonal and atonal music. We offer some topics for controversial discussion in the guide, but teachers and students will find many more.

Individual teachers will decide which aspects of the humanities and which cultural roots they wish to emphasize. We hope that this book will offer enough flexibility to be useful for a variety of approaches.

MARY ANN FRESE WITT  
CHARLOTTE VESTAL BROWN  
ROBERTA ANN DUNBAR  
FRANK TIRRO  
RONALD G. WITT



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The plan for this textbook grew out of the four years I spent initiating and directing an interdisciplinary humanities program at North Carolina Central University in Durham. It would not have been possible without the stimulation and aid of my students and colleagues there. Professor Charles Ray and Dean Cecil Patterson, who provided me with the time, encouragement, and wherewithal to create the program, deserve a special word of thanks. The professors who worked closely with me, Elizabeth Lee, Phyllis Lotchin, Ernest Mason, Norman Pendergraft, Earl Sanders, Winifred Stocling, and Randolph Umberger, have all left their mark on this book. The generous support of the Kenan Foundation, which provided the humanities program with a four-year grant, enabled me to research and compile much of the material here. The Kenan Foundation also provided me with the opportunity to attend numerous conferences on the humanities. The stimulating workshops given at North Carolina Central University by

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MARY ANN FRESE WITT

## *Chronicle of Events*



1100

Early Assyrian Empire  
Early Biblical books written  
Saul made King of Hebrews (c. 1025)

Greek cities on Aegean coast and Greek colonies in Asia Minor established

## AFRICA

MESOPOTAMIA-  
SYRIA-PALESTINE

## ROME

GREEK POLITICAL  
EVENTSGREEK CULTURAL  
EVENTS

1000 B.C.

David King of Hebrews  
(1000-961)

Solomon (961-922)

Hebrew kingdom divides  
into Israel and Judah  
(922)

900

Assyria conquers  
Phoenicians and Israel  
(876-605)

Phoenicians found  
Carthage (814)

Homer?

800

Traditional date for  
founding of Rome (753)

700

Iron age begins at Meroe

Nineveh falls (612)  
Neo-Babylonian Empire  
of Nebuchadrezzar

600

Jews taken captive to  
Babylon (586)

Sappho (c. 600)

Beginning of Drama and  
Panathenian Festivals

Archaic  
Age  
(750-480)

Persians take Babylon  
(539)

Jews return home (538)  
Darius of Persia (521-486)

Kings expelled and  
Republic created (509)

Aeschylus (525-456)

500

Persian Wars (499-479)  
Pericles (498-427)

Euripides (480-406)  
Thucydides (470-400)  
Socrates (470-399)  
Building of Parthenon  
(447-432)

Peloponnesian War  
(431-404)

Plato (427-347)  
Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*  
(411)  
Sophocles' *Oedipus* (406)

Classical  
Age  
(480-350)

400

Philip of Macedon  
(382-336)

Aristotle (384-322)



| AFRICA  | MESOPOTAMIA-SYRIA-PALESTINE   | ROME   | GREEK POLITICAL EVENTS                     | GREEK CULTURAL EVENTS   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| 400 B.C.  |   |  |  |   |
| Alexander conquers Egypt (332)<br>Greek dynasty rules (331-304)   |   | Vigorous program of Roman conquest of Italy begins (343)                               | Alexander of Macedon (the Great) (356-323) | Epicurus (342-270)<br><br>Zeno (336-264) and founding of Stoic school |
| 300   |   | I Punic War (264-241)<br><br>Sardinia and Corsica annexed (238)                        |  |   |
|   |   | II Punic War (218-201)<br><br>Terence (195-159)  | Rome begins conquest of Greece             |   |
| 200   |   | III Punic War (149-146)<br><br>Cicero (106-43)<br>Caesar (100-44)<br>Lucretius (99-55) |  | Hellenistic Age (350-150)   |
| Nok civilization at its height (200 B.C.-200 A.D.)<br><br>Carthage sacked (146)<br>Rome conquers North Africa | Occupation of Israel by Romans (63)<br><br>Reign of Herod the Great in Palestine (37 B.C.-4 A.D.) |  |  |   |
| 100   |   |  |  |   |

| AFRICA | ROME AND EUROPE   | PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN CULTURE   |
|--------|---|---|
| A.D.   |   |   |
|        | Death of Augustus (14)<br>Conquest of Britain (43-51)<br>Sack of Jerusalem (70) | Birth of Jesus Christ<br><br>Persecution of Christians by Nero (64) |
| 100    |   | Juvenal's <i>Satires</i> (c. 100)<br>Roman Pantheon built (118-125) |
| 200    | Period of disorder (235-284)  | Plotinus (205-270) and Neo-Platonism                                |

|     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 300 | Reforms of Diocletian (285–305)   | Edict of Toleration by Constantine (313)<br>Building of Old St. Peter's (330–340)  |
| 400 | Alaric sacks Rome (410)   |  |
| 500 | Vandals sack Rome (455)<br>Traditional date for end of Western Roman Empire (476)                         | Justinian (483–565) extends Roman Empire in East and temporarily conquers parts of Italy, Africa, and Spain—Codifies Roman Law |
| 600 | Moslem conquest of Africa   |  |
| 700 | Empire of Ghana (700–1230)  |  |
| 800 | Moslem conquest of Spain (711)<br>Defeat of Moslems at Poitiers (732)                                     |  |
| 900 | Charlemagne (768–814)<br>Second period of invasions (c. 800–950): Northmen, Hungarians, and Saracens      |  |
|     | Northmen establish Normandy (911)<br>Otto I founds German Empire (962)<br>Hugh Capet King of France (987) | First systematic teaching of Aristotle's Logic (975)   |
|     | Beginnings of Benin   |  |

| AFRICA | EUROPE   | EUROPEAN CULTURE   |
|--------|--|--|
|        |  | Building of St. Sernin—Romanesque (11th and 12th centuries)  |
|        | Norman invasion of England (1066)  | Romanesque Style (11th and 12th centuries)   |
|        | First Crusade (1095)   | St. Bernard (1090–1153)  |
|        |  | Play of Daniel (12th century)<br>Rebuilding of St. Denis on new lines—early Gothic                                 |
|        |  | Bernart de Ventadorn (late 12th century)<br>Marie de France (late 12th century)<br>Chartres Cathedral begun (1194) |
|        | Mongol invasion of Russia<br>European embassy sent to China                | Aquinas (1225–1274)  |
| 1200   | Revolt of Mande peoples against Ghana (c. 1200)<br>and rise of Mali Empire |  |



| AFRICA | EUROPE   | EUROPEAN CULTURE  |
|--------|--|---|
| 1250   | St. Louis (1214–1270)  | Giotto (1276–1337)<br>Dante's <i>Divine Comedy</i> (1300–1321)<br>Petrarch (1304–1374)<br>Boccaccio (1310–1375)   |
| 1300   | Hundred Years War begins (1337)<br>First appearance of Black Death (1348–1350)                               | Gothic Style (12th–15th centuries)  |
| 1350   | Mansa Musa pilgrimage to Mecca (1324)<br>Exploration of Canaries (1330's and 1340's)                         | Bruni (1370–1444)<br>Brunelleschi (1377–1446)<br>Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i> (1390–1400)  |
| 1400   | Jeanne d'Arc burned (1431)   | Masaccio (1401–1428)<br>Henry the Navigator founds navigation school at Sagres (1419)<br>Piero della Francesca (1420–1492)<br>Medici dominate Florence (1434)<br>Alberti's <i>On Painting</i> (1435)<br>Leonardo da Vinci (1442–1519)<br>Botticelli (1444–1510)<br>Lorenzo il Magnifico (1449–1492) |
| 1450   | Spanish Inquisition established (1478)<br>Columbus discovers America (1492)<br>DaGama sails for India (1497) | Renaissance Style (15th and 16th centuries)<br>Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494)<br>Isaac's <i>On the Death of Lorenzo</i>   |

| AFRICA | EUROPE  | EUROPEAN CULTURE   | NEW WORLD  |
|--------|---|--|--|
| 1500   | Duarte Pacheco Pereira's <i>Esmeraldo de situ orbis</i> (1507)<br>Benin at the height of its power (16th and 17th centuries)                                      | Michelangelo's <i>David</i> (1504)<br>Raphael's <i>School of Athens</i> (1510–1511)<br>Machiavelli's <i>Prince</i> (1513)<br>First edition of Erasmus' <i>Colloquies</i> (1516)<br>Luther publishes German New Testament (1521)<br>Renaissance Style (15th and 16th centuries) | First black slaves in New World (1505)<br>Magellan circumnavigates the globe (1519)<br>Cortez in Mexico (1519–1521)<br>Verrazano establishes French claims in North America (1524) |
| 1525   | Peasants' Revolt in Germany (1525)<br>Henry VIII declares himself head of Church of England (1534)<br>Jesuit Order founded (1540)<br>Council of Trent (1545–1563) | First edition of Calvin's <i>Institutes</i> (1536)<br>Copernicus' <i>Revolution of Heavenly Bodies</i> (1543)  |  |
| 1550   | Peace of Augsburg legalizes Lutheranism in Germany (1555)   | Titian (1477–1576)<br>Bruegel (1520–1569)  |  |



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England (1558–1603)</p> <p>Wars of Religion begin in France (1561)</p> <p>Massacre of French Protestants (1572)</p>   | <p>Building of St. Augustine in Florida (1565)</p>  |   |
| <p>First edition of Montaigne's <i>Essays</i> (1580–1588)</p> <p>Shakespeare (1564–1616)</p> <p>Kepler (1571–1630)</p> <p>Caravaggio's <i>Calling of St. Matthew</i> (1599–1600)</p> <p>Rubens' <i>Raising of the Cross</i> (1609–1610)</p> <p>Giambattista Marino (1569–1625)</p> <p>John Donne (1572–1631)</p> <p>Descartes (1596–1650)</p> <p>Corneille (1606–1684)</p> | <p>Defeat of Spanish Armada (1588)</p> <p>Edict of Nantes (1598)</p>  | <p>Settlement at Jamestown (1607)</p> <p>Founding of Quebec (1608)</p> <p>First slaves in Virginia (1619)</p> <p>Plymouth colony established (1620)</p> |
| <p>Harvey demonstrates circulation of blood (1628)</p> <p>French Academy founded (1635)</p> <p>Galileo's <i>Discourse on Two New Sciences</i> (1638)</p> <p>Richard Crashaw (1612–1649)</p>  | <p>Thirty Years War begins (1618)</p>   |   |
| <p>Civil War in England begins (1643)</p> <p>Peace of Westphalia in Germany (1648)</p> <p>Restoration of English Monarchy (1660)</p> <p>Louis XIV (1638–1715)</p> <p>Louis revokes Edict of Nantes (1685)</p>  | <p>Rome's Cornaro Chapel (1645–1652)</p> <p>Rembrandt (1606–1669)</p> <p>Milton (1609–1674)</p> <p>Lully (1632–1687)</p> <p>Royal Society of London created (1662)</p> <p>Construction of Versailles begins (1669)</p> <p>Molière's <i>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</i> (1670)</p> <p>Robert Boyle (1627–1691)</p> <p>Newton publishes <i>Mathematical Principles</i> (1687)</p> <p>Locke's <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> (1690)</p> <p>Darby cokes coal (1709)</p> <p>Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)</p> | <p>New York City taken by English from Dutch (1664)</p> <p>Salem Witch Trials (1692)</p>  |
| <p>Foundation of Ashanti Confederacy (1701)</p>  | <p>Union of Scotland and England (1707)</p> <p>War of Spanish Succession (1701–1713)</p> <p>Hanover (Windsor) dynasty begins in England (1714)</p>  |   |

|      |  |   |   |  |
|------|--|---|---|--|
| 1725 | AFRICA   | EUROPE  | EUROPEAN CULTURE  | NEW WORLD  |
|      |  | War of Austrian Succession (1740–1748)  | Building of Hotel Soubise (1732)<br>Kay's Flying Shuttle (1733)<br>English repeal laws against witchcraft (1736)<br>Voltaire's <i>Micromegas</i> (1739)<br>Handel's <i>Messiah</i> (1742)<br>Montesquieu's <i>Spirit of the Laws</i> (1748)                     | Georgia, last of original thirteen colonies, founded (1733)  |
| 1750 |  | Death of George II (1760)   | Volume I of the <i>Encyclopédie</i> (1751)<br>Mozart (1756–1791)<br>Rousseau's <i>On the Origins of Inequality</i> (1755)<br>First blast furnace (1761)<br>Rousseau's <i>Social Contract</i> (1762)<br>Watt patents steam engine (1769)<br>Schiller (1759–1805) | French and Indian War (1754–1763)<br>English take Quebec (1759)  |
| 1775 |  | Accession of Louis XVI (1774)<br>Meeting of Estates General (May, 1789)<br>Taking of Bastille (July, 1789)<br>Fall of Robespierre (1794)<br>Napoleon's coup d'état (1799) | Goethe's <i>Werther</i> (1787)<br>Wollstonecraft's <i>Vindication of Rights of Women</i> (1792)   | English acquire Canada by Treaty of Paris (1763)<br>Boston Massacre (1770)<br>Revolutionary War begins (1775)<br>Treaty of Paris ends war (1783)<br>Constitution goes into effect (1789)<br>Washington dies (1799) |
| 1800 | AFRICA   | EUROPE  | EUROPEAN CULTURE  | AMERICA  |
|      | Rise of Fulani Empire (19th century)<br>Britain abolishes slave trade (1807) | Napoleon Consul for life (1802)<br>Napoleon crowned Emperor (1804)<br>End of Holy Roman Empire (1806)   | David (1748–1825)<br>Madame de Staël (1766–1817)<br>Wordsworth (1770–1850)<br>Constable (1776–1837)   | Jefferson elected President (1801)   |
| 1810 | France abolishes slave trade (1815)  | Defeat of Napoleon and Congress of Vienna (1815)<br>Industrialization of England (1815–1850)  | Stephenson's locomotive (1814)<br>Byron (1788–1824)<br>Goya <i>Executions of the 3rd of May</i> (1814)<br>Blake (1757–1827)   | War of 1812 (1812–1814)<br>Founding of <i>North American Review</i> (1815)   |
| 1820 | Liberia established (1822)   | Greek War of Independence (1821–1829)   | Beethoven's <i>Ninth Symphony</i> (1824)<br>Heine (1797–1856)   |  |
| 1830 | France annexes Algeria (1830)  | Revolutions in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Poland (1830)<br>Industrialization of France and Belgium (1830–1860)<br>Industrialization of Germany (1840–1870)      | Delacroix (1799–1863)<br>Dickens' <i>Old Curiosity Shop</i> (1840)<br>Giselle (1841)<br>Chopin (1810–1849)<br>Turner's <i>Rain, Steam, and Speed</i> (1845)<br>Communist Manifesto (1848)   | Emerson (1803–1882)<br>Poe (1809–1849)   |
| 1840 |  | Revolutions in France, Italy, Germany, and Austria (1848)   |   | Mexican War (1846–1848)<br>Gold discovered in California (1848)  |