

ALTERNATE FINAL ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES – ‘CC AND COVID-19’
Spring, 2020 | Marris

This assignment, **worth 15% of your semester grade** for Spring 2020, asks you to consider the usefulness of Contemporary Civilization texts in the process of understanding and reacting to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as planning for a changed world after the lockdowns and quarantines end.

In basic terms, the assignment asks you to **present to me for approximately 15 minutes about 3+ CC authors** (from Spring 2020, or a combination from both semesters of the year’s curriculum) and the connections you have found between them and our current circumstances. There are **two ways** you might go about planning this:

1. Choose the three texts/authors you are most interested in discussing, and search through them for relevant material for confronting the pandemic in various ways;
or
2. Settle on a *question* you want to talk about in connection with the pandemic, and choose your texts according to how useful they might be in answering them. Your choices might include, but are certainly not limited to:
 - a. How do human beings define and deal with sickness and/or health?
 - b. How are human beings affected by isolation? Do we thrive or suffer there? Is it a desirable state?
 - c. Are human beings naturally social animals? Why, and what sort of society do we apparently need to consider ourselves healthy and happy?
 - d. How do (or should) human beings react when confronted with sudden, overwhelming crises?
 - e. What is ‘normal’ life, and do we want to return to it?
 - f. What rights and resources should be protected or promoted, for whom, when we emerge from the other side of this crisis?

You may choose and talk about your texts as containing *positive examples of advice* you would like to take when dealing with COVID, **or as containing *negative examples of advice*** you would very much like your social circle/our nation(s)/our world to avoid as the pandemic continues.

The main criteria for achieving a Pass on this assignment are that you have **clearly demonstrated careful thought in choosing your question and texts**, and that, as we converse, you are able to **point me to specific passages of evidence** in your chosen works to back up your assertions. **You may** prepare a PowerPoint or some other sort of visual presentation to help convey this evidence if you like, **but extra measures beyond discussion are not required.**

Our conversation will likely last between 15 and 30 minutes in total. **The due date for this assignment will be end-of-day on Friday, May 15th.** You can reserve a time for your conversation, when you are ready, through our normal office hours booking system.

P.S. An **optional** aspect of this assignment would be to allow me to record our Zoom conversation and share it on our Courseworks site for your classmates to view and think about. Please keep this in mind, as I will ask for your opinion/permission on this when we meet.