

AS.100.392**The Art of Lying: Lie, Dissimulation, and the "Fake News" in Pre-modern Europe
Wednesdays, 4:30-7:00****Classroom:**

Prof. Pawel Maciejko

Classroom: Bloomberg 176

Office Hours: by appointment

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Course Description:

This course will examine the attitudes to lie, falsity, and dissimulation in pre-modern European society. We shall begin by exploring the concepts of lie and discussions of permissibility of lying in canonical texts of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. We shall focus on the texts composed between the 16th and the 18th centuries and explore questions posed by theologians (“Is lying always a sin?”, “Can one lie to protect lives?”, “Can God lie?”), philosophers and politicians (“Are the rulers subject to different morality than the ruled?”, “Are politicians bound to lie?”), and courtiers (“Is not telling the truth a necessary part of being polite?”, “Is all civility based on falsehood?”). We shall then move beyond the question of lying and probe the questions of dissimulation, self-fashioning, and false or invented identities. We shall end with a discussion of early romantic “cult of sincerity”.

Learning Goals:

The main goal of this course is to acquaint the student with an important historical phenomenon. However, in an age in which the questions of the permissibility of lying and self-invented identities are on a foray, the course may have some contemporary significance.

Required Texts:

Catalina Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince: A Revised Translation, Backgrounds, Interpretations, Marginalia*, trans. Robert M. Adams, New York: Norton, 1977, reprint 1992.

Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Life is a Dream* trans. Michael Kidd, Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2004.

Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (Oxford World's Classics), New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Course Requirements:

This seminar puts heavy emphasis on close reading and careful analysis of the reading assignments. The reading assignments listed below a given session should be completed by the date under which they appear. In order for us to have the intense, exciting give-and-take that a class like this allows and deserves, we need to talk to each other and pay attention to our shared texts. **I will ask you to put away your laptops, phones, and other multi-use screens for the duration of each class session.** Fountain pens are not, strictly speaking, required, but are highly recommended. **Given that I do not want electronics in the classroom, you should either print the required readings and bring them to class and/or bring a hardcopy of the books that contain the selections.**

The final decision on any grade derives from my global assessment of your work and cannot be quantified exactly. Roughly speaking, however, the breakdown is as follows:

Participation: 40%

First assignment (3-pages): 20%

One 10-page final paper: 40%

No extensions will be granted without my *prior* permission, and late papers will be graded lower at the rate of one grade-step per day (A to A-, A- to B+, etc). Needless to say, complete honesty and probity in your work is a must. For information, see <http://ethics.jhu.edu>

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Dr. Richard Sanders, in Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Please note: syllabus is a map, not the territory. Readings may change as we go on. Pay attention to class announcements.

08/30: Christian foundations

Required Readings:

The New Testament, Galatians 2-3

Augustine of Hippo, "On Lying" in: *Treatises on Various Subjects*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari, The Fathers of the Church 16 (Washington, DC, 1952).

Suggested readings:

The Correspondence (394-419), between Jerome and Augustine of Hippo ed. Carolinne White Lewiston, E. Mellen Press, 1990, 65-175.

09/06: Jewish foundations

Required Readings:

The Hebrew Bible, Genesis 18:12-13; 50:16-17
Babylonian Talmud, Yevamot 65b, Ketubot 16b

Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2010, 7-94.

Recommended reading:

Moshe Halbertal, *Concealment and Revelation: Esotericism in Jewish Thought and Its Philosophical Implications*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, 49-68.

09/13: Muslim Foundations

Required Readings:

Devin Stewart, “Dissimulation in Sunni Islam and Morisco taqiyya”, *Al-Qantara* 34 (2013), 439-488.

Maria Dakake, “Hiding in Plain Sight: The Practical and Doctrinal Significance of Secrecy in Shi’ite Islam”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, June 2006, Vol. 74, No. 2, 324-355.

Recommended Readings:

Maria del Mar Rosa-Rodriguez, “Simulation and Dissimulation: Religious Hybridity in a Morisco Fatwa”, *Medieval Encounters* 16 (2010), 143-180.

Assignment: write a brief comparison of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim attitudes to lying.

09/20: Machiavelli and Raison d'etat

Required Readings:

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince: A Revised Translation, Backgrounds, Interpretations, Marginalia*, trans. Robert M. Adams, New York: Norton, 1977, reprint 1992, 1-72.

Niccolò Machiavelli, “Letter #179, To Francesco Guicciardini, 17 May 1521”, in: Allan H. Gilbert (ed.), *The Letters of Machiavelli: A Selection of His Letters*, New York: Capricorn Books, 1961

Recommended Readings:

Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison D'etat and Its Place in Modern History*, New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1998, 1-48.

Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics, 1250-1600*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 126-177.

09/27: Nicodemism and Crypto-Catholicism

Required Readings:

Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990, 63-132.

Carlos M. N Eire, "Prelude to Sedition: Calvin's Attack on Nicodemism and Religious Compromise", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 76 (1985), 120–45.

Recommended Readings:

J C. H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe: The Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation*. London. Blond and Briggs, 1976, 52-110.

D.P. Walker, "A Secret Conspiracy Exposed!", *The New York Review of Books*, September, 23rd, 1971.

Assignment due

10/04: Court Culture

Required Readings:

Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier: An Authoritative Text, Criticism*, ed. Daniel Javitch, New York: Norton, 2002, 9-145.

Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2014, 3-44, 86-126.

Recommended Readings:

Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007, 1-38.

10/11: The Conversos and Crypto-Judaism

Required Readings:

Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990, 38-62.

David Nirenberg, "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain," *The American Historical Review*, 107, no. 4 (2002), 1065-1093.

Recommended Readings:

Stefania Pastore, "From 'Marranos' to 'Unbelievers': The Spanish Peccadillo in Sixteenth-Century Italy", In: Eliav-Feldon M., Herzig T. (eds) *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2015, 79-95.

David M Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews*, Philadelphia, JPS, 1996, 99-134, 501-522.

10/18: Theatre of the World

Required Readings:

Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Life is a Dream*

Jose Ortega y Gasset, "The idea of Theater: an Abbreviated View", *Phenomenology and Art*, New York: Norton, 1975, 163-195.

Recommended Readings:

Frances A Yates, *Theatre of the World*, New York: Barnes & Noble, 2009, 1-61.

10/25: Dissimulating in the New World

Required Readings:

Catalina Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

David Runciman, *Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power, from Hobbes to Orwell and Beyond*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018, 74-115.

11/01: Casuistry and Mental Reservation

Required Readings:

Blaise Pascal, *The Provincial Letters*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1955, Letters 6-10, 36-80

Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990, 153-185.

Johann P. Sommerville, "The 'new art of lying': Equivocation, mental reservation, and casuistry" in: E. Leites (Ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 159-184.

Recommended Reading:

Leszek Kołakowski, *God Owes Us Nothing: A Brief Remark on Pascal's Religion and on the Spirit of Jansenism*, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998, 61-67.

11/08: Libertinism

Required Reading:

Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008

11/15: Libertinism II

Movie: Milos Forman, *Valmont* (1989)

11/29 The Rhetoric of Frankness

Required Readings:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, trans. Angela Scholar, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, Book I (1-44).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, Fourth walk (33-48).

Arthur Melzer, "The Origin of the Counter-Enlightenment: Rousseau and the New Religion of Sincerity", *American Political Science Review*, 90(2) 1996, 344-36.

Recommended Reading:

Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Transparency and Obstruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, 180-200, 254-267.

12/6 Atheism

Readings to be announced