

IDH2930 — Honors (Un)Common Read – Spring 2017
‘The Secrets of Alchemy’ by Lawrence M. Principe

Instructor	Dr. Alexander Angerhofer (Dr. A.)
Phone	392-9489 (office, CLB 318A), or 392-4582 (office, LEI 214A).
E-mail	alex@chem.ufl.edu
Class Times	R 5 th period (11:45am-12:35pm) in CLB 313
Office Hours	W 6 th period (12:50 – 1:40pm) CLB 318A

Holidays	01/16 (MLK Day), 3/6-3/10 (spring break), 4/20+21 (reading days).
Class Text	“The Secrets of Alchemy,” by Lawrence M. Principe, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago/IL, 2013, ISBN #978-0-226-10379-2.
Points Earnable	5× discussion paragraphs @ 4 pts. each for 20 pts. total. 5× active discussion participation @ 4 pts. each for 20 pts. total. 1× discussion leader @ 20 pts. each for 20 pts. total. 1× 15 min. presentation @ 40 pts. each for 40 pts. total. Extra points available: 2× discussion paragraphs and 1× active discussion participation for a total of 12 extra points. Maximum earnable points: 112 out of 100.
Grading Scheme	Out of 100 points: A ≥ 94% (94 pts.) 94% (94 pts.) > A– ≥ 91% (91 pts.) 91% (91 pts.) > B+ ≥ 88% (88 pts.) 88% (88 pts.) > B ≥ 82% (82 pts.) 82% (82 pts.) > B– ≥ 79% (79 pts.) 79% (79 pts.) > C+ ≥ 76% (76 pts.) 76% (76 pts.) > C ≥ 70% (70 pts.) 70% (70 pts.) > C– ≥ 67% (67 pts.) 67% (67 pts.) > D+ ≥ 64% (64 pts.) 64% (64 pts.) > D ≥ 58% (58 pts.) 58% (58 pts.) > E.

Course Schedule (tentative):

Date	Reading	Topic	Assignments
01/05/17		Syllabus	
01/12/17	pp. 1 – 26	Introduction: What is Alchemy? 1. Origins: Greco-Egyptian Chemeia	Discussion paragraphs, student-led discussion
01/19/17	pp. 27 – 50	2. Development: Arabic al-Kīmiyā	Discussion paragraphs, student-led discussion
01/26/17	pp. 51 – 82	3. Maturity: Medieval Latin Alchemia	Discussion paragraphs, student-led discussion
02/02/17	pp. 83 – 106	4. Redefinitions, Revivals, and Reinterpretations: Alchemy from the Eighteenth Century to the Present	Discussion paragraphs, student-led discussion
02/09/17	pp. 107 – 136	5. The Golden Age: Practicing Chymistry in the Early Modern Period	Discussion paragraphs, student-led discussion
02/16/17	pp. 137 – 171	6. Unveiling the Secrets	Discussion paragraphs, student-led discussion
02/23/17	pp. 173 – 210	7. The Wider Worlds of Chymistry Epilogue	Discussion paragraphs, student-led discussion
03/02/17		Topics of Student Interest Related to the Book	Student Presentations
03/16/17		Topics of Student Interest Related to the Book	Student Presentations
03/23/17		Topics of Student Interest Related to the Book	Student Presentations
03/30/17		Topics of Student Interest Related to the Book	Student Presentations
04/06/17		Topics of Student Interest Related to the Book	Student Presentations
04/13/17		Topics of Student Interest Related to the Book	Student Presentations

Further Important Information:

1. **Overview:** IDH2930 are discussion-oriented courses centered around a single book. They provide 1 academic point toward Honors Completion if completed with a grade of B or higher. Grading is primarily participation based. All students are expected to participate vigorously and earn an 'A' in the course.
2. **Goals:** Lawrence Principe is an internationally renowned scholar on the history of alchemy as well as a well respected organic chemist. His goals in writing this book were to try and answer such questions as: What is alchemy? Who were the alchemists, and what did they believe and do? What were their goals, and what did they accomplish? How did they envision their world and their work, and how were they seen by contemporaries? In reading this book we will follow his search for answers as well as raise our own questions. We will look at alchemy from a variety of vantage points, the most obvious ones being history and modern chemistry. However, we may include other fields of study such as art history, religion, literature, cultural world views, *etc.* In the end we hope to come to a better understanding and appreciation of the history and the practice of alchemy as well as the cultural settings in which it was practiced.
3. **Logistics:** During the first approximately half of the semester we will read the book, approximately one chapter each week. During this period the classroom meeting will be dedicated to active discussion of the text. Students will have read the assigned chapters (see above list) ahead of time and prepare two distinct paragraphs describing topics they found to be

of interest to them that they wish to consider in the class discussion. These paragraphs will be submitted on canvas and are due the day before class meets at 12:00pm to allow the discussion leaders to review and help them prepare to lead the discussion the next day. Students will take turns serving as discussion leaders (min. two discussion leaders per class discussion). The second half of the semester will be devoted to student presentations on 'mini research projects' of the students' own choosing. Out of the many topics of interest that were discussed in the first half of the semester students will pick what interests them most and explore it further with their own research. These mini research projects will likely involve further reading in the secondary literature and/or other sources of information. Students will make a 15 minute presentation to the class community during the second half of the semester (~12 minutes talk and 3 minutes discussion). Please make use of your instructor's office hours to help you fine-tune your presentation. The grade students receive for their presentation (50 points) will come from both peer and instructor evaluations. Sign-up sheets for students to volunteer for the discussion leader role and for classroom presentations will be available.

4. **Textbook:** The listed book serves as the basis for the reading and is required. It is available in hardcover, paperback, and as an ebook. Any of these editions are fine.
5. **Elearning:** This course uses the canvas elearning site. Please log on at <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/> to get access to your course page. Assignments should be submitted on canvas.
6. **Assignments – Reading:** Please refer to the reading assignments in the course schedule above. Reading of the book is essential for your participation. You will have to finish reading the assigned chapter(s) on Wednesday prior to our Thursday class meeting at which the material will be discussed. We will have finished reading the book by the end of February.
7. **Assignments – Discussion Paragraphs:** After reading the assigned chapters each week you are expected to write a paragraph each on **two** topics of interest which you would like to see addressed in the discussion that week. These paragraphs may contain statements in the book that you found intriguing, questions that have arisen in your mind after the reading, *etc.* Anything that is related to the reading assignments for that week is fair game. There are seven student-led discussions for which discussion paragraphs will be formulated. The deadline for their submission is on the day before the discussion at noon. This will allow discussion leaders to look at the paragraphs and organize their talking points for the following day.
8. **Assignments – Discussion Participation:** Active participation in the student-led discussions is essential for this book to come to life. Be prepared to expand verbally on your discussion paragraphs, be ready to ask questions, answer questions, and in other ways constructively contribute to the discussion. The instructor will keep track of your participation for grading.
9. **Assignments – Leading the Discussion:** For one of the seven discussions you will be a discussion leader together with at least one other student. You should work as a team and come prepared to lead the discussion. Typically, you should start with a very brief review of the chapter that had been assigned for the week, followed by discussion points you have picked from the various topics that were indicated in the discussion paragraphs of your classmates as well as your own. In leading the discussion feel free to utilize powerpoint, demonstration objects, youtube videos, *etc.* Most importantly, make sure to draw your fellow students into a lively discussion. Your instructor will keep track of these activities for grading.
10. **Assignments – Student Presentations:** In the second half of the semester (starting on March 2nd) each student will deliver a 15 minute presentation to the class. Students should select a topic of interest to them that is related to the book. It is expected that the presentations are more in depth than just a review of parts of the book. You should use the rather large bibliography in the book to do your own research on your topic of interest and educate the class on what you found out. Examples of such topics are: further background research on the history of alchemy during a certain period, focus on the history and/or personality of certain practitioners of alchemy, the study of alchemical theories of matter and how they differ or are similar to modern

ones, connections between gnosticism and alchemy, the chemical basis of famous alchemical recipes, representation of alchemy in art, *etc.*, if it is connected to the topic of our book it is fair game. Students may start working on their research as soon as they decide on their topic of interest. They should feel free to utilize the expertise and resources of the instructor. To make sure that your presentation will be successful it is a good idea to share it with your instructor approximately a week in advance so that he can give you guidance on content and delivery.

11. **Class Attendance:** Regular class attendance is essential for your success in this class. However, we will not do roll-calls. Repeated absence in class and discussion session will make it very difficult to earn full participation points. For further information on UF's attendance policies which are in effect for this course, see:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> .
12. **Office Hours:** I have set apart period 6 on Wednesday, approx. an hour after discussion paragraphs are due. Discussion leaders should seek to take advantage of these office hours if they wish to get my feedback on their planned discussion for the following day. However, I am also available by appointment (please request by email at least one day in advance), particularly if your schedule prevents you from coming to my office hours.
13. **Email Policy:** For all course-related business, use your official @ufl.edu gatorlink email address or the e-learning messaging system. I will generally not respond to emails from other sources (*e.g.*, your gmail or yahoo address).
14. **Cell Phone Etiquette:** Please put all cell phones or other electronic devices on ‘**silent mode**’ during all class and discussion periods. Please do not leave the classroom during lecture to make a phone call. Thank you!
15. **Classroom Behavior:** Please conduct yourself professionally and responsibly during classroom times. If you want to contribute to the class discussion or ask a question, indicate so by lifting your hand and wait until you are called upon by the discussion leader or presenter. Arriving late or leaving class early can be very disrupting to the presentation, discussion, and other students and should be kept to a minimum. If you have to arrive late for a class period, please enter quietly. If you have to leave the class early you may do so quietly but you should not come back during the same class period. You are permitted to use your notebook computer for note-taking during class as long as it does not disturb your fellow students (*i.e.*, sound has to be off, very quiet keys or use of pen-enabled tablet).
16. **Online Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Announcements will be made to students about the specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.
17. **Students with Disabilities:** Students requiring special accommodations should register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/>, 352-392-1261) and the Disability Resource Center (DRC, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>, 352-392-8565), and present documentation from that office to the instructor.
18. **Counseling Services:** The University of Florida provides counseling services for students, staff, and faculty. See <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>. If you or a friend are in distress, call (352) 392-1575 (available 24/7), email umatter@ufl.edu, or walk in for an emergency consultation during regular service hours (8:00am – 5:00pm) at the Radio Road Site, 3190 Radio Rd., or the Peabody Hall Site, on the 4th floor of Peabody Hall, adjacent to Criser Hall. For other hours or weekends, call the Alachua County Crisis Center, (352) 264-6789. For sexual assault recovery services call the Student Health Care Center at (352) 392-1161. For life-threatening emergencies always call 911.

19. **Emergency Numbers and Web Sites:**

UFPD (UF Police Department): In case of emergency dial 911. The UF campus police non-emergency number is (352) 392-1111. Their web site: <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>,
UF Emergency management: (352) 273-2100. <https://emergency.ufl.edu/>,
Infirmary (student health center): (352) 392-1161, <http://shcc.ufl.edu/>.
EH&S (Environmental Health & Safety): (352) 392-1591, <http://www.ehs.ufl.edu/>.

20. **Other Academic Resources:** UF provides several other resources for students, such as

Library Support can be obtained here: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>, where you can find various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

The Career Resource Center is located on level One in the Reitz Union, (352) 392-1601, and provides career assistance and counseling. Refer to <http://www.crc.ufl.edu/> for further info.

The Teaching Center is located in Broward Hall, call (352) 392-2010 or (352) 392-6420 and provides students with tutoring services and counseling regarding general study skills. Refer to <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> for further info. It may also provide employment opportunities as tutors for well qualified students.

The Writing Studio is located at 302, Tigert Hall, (352) 846-1138, and provides help with brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers, see: <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.

The Ombuds Office is located at 31 Tigert Hall, (352) 392-1308, and provides students assistance in resolving problems and conflicts that arise in the course of interacting with the University of Florida. By considering problems in an unbiased way, the Ombuds works to achieve a fair resolution and works to protect the rights of all parties involved. For further information go to <http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/> or refer to the official complaints policy here: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf.

21. **Honors Code:** This class will operate under the policies of the student honor code which can be found at: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html> The students, instructor, and TAs are honor-bound to comply with the Honors Pledge: **We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.**

If you have further questions, please contact me. Have a great semester!

Sincerely, Alexander Angerhofer.