

2026-2027 Course Syllabus

9th Grade Honors Western Civilization I

Teacher: Mr. Rinella

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Office Hours: Mon & Tue 7:30-8:00

Room: 210

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Syllabus Note: Each student is responsible for knowing the information outlined in this course syllabus. Please keep a copy of this document and refer to it regularly. Information may be subject to change; students will be notified by the instructor of any changes in course requirements or policies, and changes will be posted on the class website.

Communication Policy: Please use my BFCS email address to communicate with me. Be sure to label all messages with a brief subject description. I urge you to contact me as soon as you have a question or a concern via email. Please don't wait until the last minute to ask for help with an assignment in case I am unable to get back to you right away. I will not check my email in the evenings, even the night before a large project or exam. Plan ahead.

Powerschool: Please use powerschool to access your grades. As a student it is your responsibility to stay on top of your assignments and grades throughout the year. To access your grades sign into [Powerschool](#).

Course Description: Western Civilization I will give students an overview of the history of the Western world from the dawn of civilization to the Late Middle Ages. The class will discuss creation myths, religions, human nature, philosophy, culture, politics, war, and the rise and fall of nations. We will explore the world of ancient philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; we will study the empirical tactics of Alexander the Great, and heroic deeds of Odysseus; we will read religious texts from the Bible, the Qur'an, and the Book of the Dead, to works of philosophy like Nicomachean Ethics, and De Officiis. All the while we will be asking ourselves the questions that mankind has been asking since the beginning of time. Who am I? What is my purpose? What is the nature of man and government? Using the Socratic Method, students will learn how to think, pursue truth, and apply what they have learned to their own lives.

This class will also assign readings that will be mostly completed outside of class. During class we will discuss said readings, at such a level that a failure to complete the readings will result in confusion. The purpose of these assignments is to practice gathering observations and eventual conclusions from limited evidence. We will begin to analyze

primary and secondary sources, have class discussions, and express our opinions through writing and various activities. Below are the expectations of my class and ways for you to be successful. We will begin to analyze primary and secondary sources, have class discussions, and express our opinions through writing and various activities. Below are the expectations of my class and ways for you to be successful.

Supplies: Please bring the following to class everyday (except for the reader)

- Something to take notes on
- Something to take notes with
- Black or blue ink pen for graded assignments
- 9th Grade Humanities Reader (to be picked up at Charger Days)

Classroom Expectations:

- Come prepared with supplies, completed assignments, and your notebook everyday
- Be on time, when the bell rings, be in your seat, quiet, and all necessary materials on your desk
- Be ready to participate in class discussions (see participation sheet)
- Take notes and keep all handouts in your notebook
- Summary quizzes will be given at regular intervals based on class lectures/notes & readings
- Be respectful of teacher, classmates and others; this includes opinions from others and during discussions
- Positive attitude & Always try your best
- NO CELL PHONES
- All school rules will be upheld in this classroom. For further details not covered in the syllabus, please refer to the BFHS Parent Handbook.

If you find yourself struggling in class, please meet with me so I can help you any way I can.

Grading:

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60- 69%

F: 0-59%

Discussions: 30%

Tests/Quizzes: 20%

Class/Homework Assignments: 15%

Essay/Projects: 15%

Semester Grade Breakdown:

Everything listed above = 80%

Final = 20%

Please refer to the [BFHS Parent Handbook](#) for more information.

Socratic Seminars: Throughout the course, *students are required to participate in Socratic Seminars* which allows them to develop their reflective thinking skills and oral communication using self-generated questions. Ideally, these are student-led with minimal guidelines from the teacher. These discussions are also concurrently self-assessed, peer-assessed and educator-assessed. In the event of an excused absence, students will be given an alternative assignment which must be completed within two-days of their absence.

Attendance/Tardy Policy: Students who miss school time lose valuable classroom instruction. It is essential for students to attend school daily and on time, as I can only teach the students I have. I understand that there may be times when students must be absent due to illness. I ask that you make every effort to schedule appointments after school to prevent students from missing essential elements of their education.

On the third occasion that a student has a tardy in a quarter, as per school policy, a detention will be issued to the student. For each subsequent tardy in the quarter, another detention will be issued. When a student has received six detentions for tardiness in a quarter the student will be suspended from school for a duration determined by the principal. Additionally, students who are more than 15 minutes late to class may lose

participation points and may also receive half credit for homework turned in late. For the purpose of tracking attendance, a student's tardy status changes from a tardy to an absence after class has been in session for 15 minutes. Please refer to the [BFHS Parent Handbook](#) for more information.

Attendance Expectation

After a student has accumulated 9 absences during the school year, any Socratic Seminar or major in-class assignment missed beginning with the 10th absence will only be eligible for written credit only (up to 60%).

Make-Up Policy: Please make every effort to attend class regularly so you do not miss important instruction and learning activities. Attendance is especially important in a discussion-based history classroom where learning occurs not only through direct instruction but also through thoughtful dialogue, collaboration, and engagement with peers.

If you are absent, it is your responsibility to obtain any missed notes and complete eligible make-up work in a timely manner. Students will have two school days from the day they return to complete assignments eligible for make-up after an absence. Failure to obtain missed notes after an absence will not excuse students from completing quizzes, tests, or other assessments.

Students who miss a Socratic Seminar or a major in-class assignment due to an absence will have an opportunity to complete an alternative makeup assignment since collaborative discussions, peer interactions, and real-time engagement that occur during class cannot be fully replicated outside of the classroom.

To receive full credit, the make-up assignment will include:

- 60% Written Assessment: Completion of the assigned written activity demonstrating understanding of the lesson objectives.
- 40% Teacher Conference: A one-on-one or small-group discussion with the teacher and students to demonstrate comprehension, critical thinking, and application of the material.

Late Work

- Late work will be accepted for partial credit for up to one week after the original due date. Work submitted after one week will not receive credit.

Students are responsible for completing all quizzes, exams, long-term assignments, and coursework by the assigned deadlines unless prior arrangements have been approved.

Discipline Policy:

1. Verbal Warning (1 strike)
2. Private Conversation (2 strikes)
3. Detention/contact parents (3 strikes)
4. Administrative Action

Academic Integrity and AI:

“It is more honorable to fail than to cheat.” – Abraham Lincoln

Academic integrity is not just an educational matter but a moral one as well. A major aspect of classical education is instruction on growing in character and our goal of becoming a virtuous person. With this in mind, BFHS takes very seriously the willful misrepresentation of another student’s work as their own. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (intentional or unintentional), cheating on exams, and copying the work of other students.

Every effort will be made by the teacher to discern intentional plagiarism from unintentional plagiarism. In the case of the latter, remediation will take place between student and teacher in order to review how to properly cite others’ work. This is not a punitive measure but rather an opportunity for the student to understand and correct his/her citation skills. On the other hand, intentional plagiarism and cheating will result in a zero on the assignment, suspension, removal from extra-curricular activities or leadership positions held in the school, and, in the case of repeat offenders, corrective action.

BFHS uses a variety of tools to uphold academic integrity via plagiarism similarity reports and generative AI probability. Any papers submitted with a plagiarism similarity report of 25% or more and/or returned as 25% or more of “qualifying text...[being] determined to be generated by AI” may not be accepted for credit. Suspected papers will be reviewed by the teacher and could result in a conference with the student and/or parent. Consequences can include but are not limited to referral to administration and a score of 0 on the paper. Students are encouraged to draft all of their written work using their school Google account and Google Drive. This allows teachers the ability to check version and

revision histories to help mitigate plagiarism (intentional or unintentional) as well as the use Please refer to the [BFHS Parent Handbook](#) for more information.

In Class Discussions:

We will be talking about sensitive topics at times pertaining to religion, morality, justice, politics, and values. At these times, students must remain mature and never get into heated arguments that attack other people's views or beliefs. We can have discussions on these topics, and we should, but they cannot be taken personally or should not be an attempt to attack other students. Any attempt to attack another student will result in disciplinary measures.

Religion in class:

One cannot be a great student of history and leave out the impact that religion has made, therefore, we will learn about religion in this class. However, any teaching on religion will be taught in the historical context. These discussions are meant to better learn about the people and what they believed in their time and should in no way shape or form be misconstrued that the teacher's beliefs are being pushed on a student. Personal beliefs will not be focused on, rather simply seeking to understand how these religions affected people's lives.

War in class:

One cannot be a great student of history without understanding wars and their impact on economics, social, political and cultural issues. These wars will be taught in a historical context, however they will lead to sensitive topics (listed in class discussions). Discussions and small video clips will be used in order to allow students to grasp a deeper understanding of wars and their impact on societies.

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Office Hours: Mon & Tue 7:30-8:00

To be completed by student and guardian:

Please use the link or the QR Code below to verify that you have read and understood the course requirements, procedures, and policies:

I acknowledge that I have read the class information and policies, and I agree to abide by its contents. I understand that the onus is on me to contact my teacher should I have a concern or begin to struggle.



Alternatively, you can find the Google Form by clicking [here](#).

**** PLEASE COMPLETE NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, July 25, 2025 ****

