

**HUMANITIES- MEDIEVAL ERA
FORM 3
2024-2025 Syllabus**



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COURSE OVERVIEW:

“A tale is but half told when only one person tells it.” ~ from *The Saga of Grettir the Strong*

Today, the prevailing belief among many thinkers is that people of the medieval era were generally uneducated, superstitious, and intolerant of new ideas and discoveries. Such generalizations have led modern historians to label the period of history spanning from the fall of Rome to the mid-1400’s as “the Dark Ages.” However, this categorization largely neglects the profound beauty, wonder, and intellectual flourishing that occurred across Europe, the Mediterranean, and Asia during this so-called “dark age” of human history.

For this reason, in this course we will incline our ears to hear the many voices that arise from this period, allowing them to paint a full picture of the world they inhabited and the ideas they wrestled with. The hope is that students will develop a deeper appreciation for the intricate beauty of the medieval mind and will also become more aware of what C.S. Lewis called “chronological snobbery”—the modern assumption that the ideas of previous ages are obsolete or outdated and are, therefore, pointless to study. Students will be exposed to a wide variety of texts from this period and will learn to read and interpret them in light of their proper historical and literary context. Together, we will listen carefully to the numerous literary voices that arise from this age and will allow them to tell their stories with integrity. We will approach their thoughts with humility and respect in order to seek the Beauty, Goodness, and Truth that can be found this particular chapter of the narrative of God’s creation.

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will read significant works of medieval literature closely, acquiring a basis for understanding the works and the ability to interpret and respond reflectively to them.
- Students will learn to identify several genres of medieval literature, such as the epic poem, literary confession, spiritual autobiography, and narrative poetry.
- Students will learn some of the basic elements of oral/aural tradition and transmission and how these elements affect our current understanding of medieval literary works.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regards to literary analysis.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION:

To be truly successful in this class, students must be active participants in each area of the course. That is, students must engage with the material presented in class and diligently complete assigned classwork and homework. Willingness to learn can be exhibited in the following areas:

A. Participation in class and readiness to learn:

1. **Bring the tools of learning** (all necessary books, notebooks, and writing supplies, as well as a positive attitude) to class every day. This is the easiest way for students to prepare for class, and this preparation will be factored into the overall grade.

2. **Be ready to volunteer answers** and offer ideas about the previous night's reading or share a question with the class. Students who pay close attention to their nightly reading and arrive in class with discussion questions or reflections will be most prepared to participate.

B. Homework:

A typical day's homework assignment might include reading and annotation of the text and/or comprehension questions, a review for a quiz or a test, or work on a writing assignment. As in any course, the amount of time that you spend on homework will vary according to ability and work habits. The *average* student should take forty to forty-five minutes to complete given assignments Monday through Wednesday and about an hour *each* day on Thursday and Friday. If homework is consistently taking much longer to complete, please send an email to me so that we may discuss the situation. (Please note: on days of the week when we don't meet as a class, students will be given a heavier workload to do at home.)

All homework is due at the beginning of class. Assignments that have not been submitted by the beginning of class will be counted as late and receive a 10% deduction for every day it is late. Students may turn the assignment in during the week it is due for partial credit, but will receive a zero for any work turned in after this week long window. (See below for further information regarding the Late Work Policy).

C. Assessments:

There will be regular quizzes on daily readings, key vocabulary terms, and/or important concepts, so students should come to class prepared. Tests or projects will occur at the end of a unit. Final exams will be administered at the end of each semester. Dates for these will be given to you in advance to record in your planner.

SOCRATIC SEMINAR STYLE OF LEARNING:

The mode of instruction in this class will begin to combine the Socratic Seminar style of learning with lectures and teacher coaching. Because Socratic Seminars are largely student-led, this learning method requires that students participate actively in their search for the fullest understanding of the texts under examination. While the instructor serves as a guide in this project, the students and the instructor investigate and explore the many complex aspects of the stories they read together. Students are expected to follow the rules listed below governing the seminar format:

- Students must come to class having read the assignment in its entirety before they can participate in seminar discussion;
- Students must mentally prepare serious questions for the class to consider during discussion;
- Students must attend fully to the discussion at hand and refrain from any side conversations;
- Students must limit their comments only to the selection assigned for homework;
- Students must support their observations, arguments, or claims with *specific textual* evidence.

ABSENCES AND LATE WORK POLICY:

Since class participation is an important part of this course and factors into the final grade, good attendance is vital for effective learning and academic progress. However, if a class is missed, it is the scholar's responsibility to get notes/assignments from the teacher or a classmate and make whatever arrangements necessary to catch up. If a test or quiz was missed, students should be prepared to take it as soon as they return. It is their job to schedule a time with me to make up this

assessment. Students will have one day for every day absent to make up anything that they missed. In the case of extenuating circumstances or emergencies, please communicate with me so I can work with you to accommodate.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:

In conjunction with your parents/guardians, Saint Benedict Hall has the goal of developing not only habits of good scholarship and critical inquiry, but the virtues of courtesy, promptness, forgiveness, self-control, responsibility, diligence, courage, generosity, and magnanimity. Good behavior is expected of all students and will not be specially rewarded at school. Rather, it should be its own reward in the esteem earned from teachers and fellow students. The classroom is a communal meeting place founded on mutual respect where the joy of learning is cultivated and the love of Christ is reflected. Thus, student behavior should align with this philosophy. When it fails to do so, the instructor will first invest in a conversation with the student using love and logic as well as the tenets laid out in the class creed handed out on the first day, proceeding from there using the disciplinary model outlined in the SBH Program Handbook.

MATERIALS:

Students will read the following texts this year:

Beowulf
The Song of Roland
Confessions by St. Augustine
The Consolation of Philosophy by Boethius
The Divine Comedy: Inferno by Dante

Students must report to class each day with the following materials:

- Pencil bag containing the following: a blue or black pen, a red pen, sharpened pencils, and a highlighter;
- Course binder or folder with loose leaf paper and sections for handouts;
- Designated course notebook;
- Text we are currently reading;
- Previous night's homework.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE:

Knowledge, skill, and character are fundamentally the possessions of individuals, and only the individual, through their actions, may obtain and preserve these goods. The Academic Honor Code exists to guide individual students towards those actions which promote honesty and learning and away from those actions which sacrifice honesty and learning to other ends. The Honor Code codifies those values which must be upheld for the health of our academic community, and universal subscription to it builds trust amongst students, faculty, and families. The Academic Honor Code is given below.

As a student in this class, I agree to the following:

- *I will not lie, cheat, or steal in any of my academic endeavors.*
- *I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.*
- *I will not request, receive, or give aid in examinations/tests/quizzes.*
- *I will not give or receive illicit aid in class work, homework, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the teacher as the basis of grading. I will understand the difference between studying and reviewing with others (which often is acceptable) and producing written documents that are submitted under my name for credit (which can only be done alone).*

- *I will not copy from or collaborate with others in completing homework. When I put my name on a homework assignment, I attest that all of the work on the assignment is my own in origin and content.*
- *In the case of all essays and research papers, I will carefully cite all external sources. I will not represent someone else's work as my own. I will do my very best to learn from my teachers the clear distinctions between appropriate research and plagiarism, intentional or unintentional.*
- *I will never use any "study aids" such as Cliff's Notes, Sparks Notes, or other materials, nor will I watch a movie/video version of a work of literature before or during study of it in school. I will do the reading for myself and strive to understand it for myself.*
- *I will give prompt (and confidential) notification to the appropriate faculty member or the Dean and Headmaster if I observe academic dishonesty in any course. I will let my conscience be my guide if I should make such a report.*
- *I join the entire student body of the Academy in a commitment to this Code of Honor.*

-Portions of this honor code are derived from the current Duke University and Stanford University honor codes.

"Begin to be now what you will be hereafter." – St. Jerome

PROGRAM HANDBOOK:

For all other policies and procedures, please refer to the SBH Program Handbook on the Parent Dashboard.

Dear Parents,

Please take time to review this syllabus with your student. After reading it over, sign below to indicate that you and your student understand and agree to the expectations outlined and agree to provide the necessary materials and support to ensure your student's success.

If you have any questions about the class, please do not hesitate to contact me via Slack or the email provided.

The main portion of the syllabus should be placed in the scholar's binder or notebook for future reference. Please tear this page off and have your student return it to school by the end of the first week of school. Mahalo!

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Comments or questions: