Course Syllabus
Humane Letters IV
12th Grade Level

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Tutoring Information:
Tuesday and Thursday Lyceum
Room 203

Course Overview

In the capstone seminar of 12th grade Humane Letters, a broad range of literature and philosophical works—from the beginning of the first century through the 19th century—provides the basis for discussion. In undertaking such a wide-ranging survey of texts, students will have the opportunity to encounter the ideas and stories that have both shaped, and sprung from, the Western Tradition in the last two thousand years. While there should be no attempt to apply historical criticism to these texts, students are expected to draw upon their readings from previous years to develop a cumulative consideration of the intellectual tradition to which they belong.

The books themselves constitute a kind of common heritage to which we are unknowing, and hence unwilling, heirs. Because we inherit a tradition the sources of which vary so greatly in perspective and are so distant in time, it happens often that we as individuals hold inconsistent views of which we are unaware. Education in the Liberal Arts offers the promise of becoming conscious of the ideas that shape us in such a way that we no longer hold our beliefs passively like dim memories but can think actively the thoughts that determine who we are. Only in this way can we clarify confusions in ourselves and find ourselves in a position to freely choose the principles which will guide our action in the world.

Course Objectives

Students will enter into dialogue with some of the greatest thinkers of Western Civilization as they contemplate questions such as:

- *What is the nature and origin of human goodness and evil?*
- *To what extent is knowing the Good the same as participating in it?*
- *What is the connection between the Good and God?*
- *Can the extraordinary happiness and peace of all rightly be acquired by the torturing of "one tiny creature"?*
- *To whom, or to what, is man responsible?*
- *What is eternity and time, and what relationship do they have with Truth and Goodness?*
- *What is the relationship between body and mind, and can their existence be demonstrated?*
- *What is history?*

Course Materials

Required Readings:

The Aeneid – Virgil
The New Oxford Annotated Bible (Mark, John, Acts, Romans)
The Confessions – Augustine
On Law, Morality, and Politics – Aquinas
The Divine Comedy (Inferno) – Dante
The Prince – Machiavelli
Essays - Montaigne (selections)
Macbeth – Shakespeare
Meditations on First Philosophy - Descartes
Reason in History – Hegel
Selected Writings – Marx
The Brothers Karamazov – Dostoevsky

NOTE: It is required that you have the same books with the same translators and ISBN numbers as your teacher and classmates. Please see the Scottsdale Prep consumable list for the most current list of books and ISBN numbers.

Personal Copy of Text

It is important that every student brings *their* copy of the text to class each day. Each student will clearly mark the outside of their texts with their name. Because each student is responsible for their own annotations, thoughts, and conversation with the text, borrowing and using someone else's book is not allowed. Attempting to use another's text during an annotation check is a form of academic dishonesty. Further, if a student does not have *their* copy of the text with them, they will not be able to participate in that day's seminar.

The list of required texts and the correct ISBN numbers is currently posted online, please order all the books, this prevents any last-minute worries. Amazon shipping delays are not acceptable reasons for not having the required text.

Other Materials

A reading journal, a notebook, a black/blue pen, and a red pen to be used for grading quizzes.

Course Expectations

Homework: To facilitate seminar discussions and our learning how to read, there will be daily reading assignments. The assignment varies depending on the literature type, complexity, and novelty. On average each class of Humane Letters requires 50 minutes of homework time. If you do not bring your text or demonstrate that you have read in good faith by passing annotation checks and quizzes, then you will not be able to participate in seminar for the day, and it will result in a non-passing grade.

Class Participation: All those involved in seminar, teacher and student, agree to the following: "As my contribution to the common inquiry of our Humane Letters seminar…"

- **I will read in *good faith* every night.**
  - *Reading carefully, thoroughly, and in advance (avoiding Lyceum reading) with written notes/annotations (not simply underlines) in a journal and/or text for easy reference during discussion*
- **I will humbly and completely engage in each conversation to aid the communal search for truth.**
  - *Exhibiting the utmost courtesy, mercy, humility, appropriate levity, and magnanimity in conversation, especially encouraging others to enter the conversation or to clarify or expand upon their ideas, challenging each other without turning the conversation into a debate*
- **I will, without prejudice, defer to the quietest contributor of the seminar, the author of the text.**
  - *Supporting comments by offering textual evidence while evaluating an author's or peer's position carefully and respectfully*

- **I will use my language as precisely as possible to be better understood by my peers, teacher, and myself.**
  - *Making one's best effort to clearly, cogently, concisely, and precisely speak my thoughts, acknowledging error and the limitations of one's understanding gracefully*
- **By these means, I hope to be a free learner.**

About Religion: One cannot be a great student without understanding the impact that religion has made, therefore, we will learn about religion in class. However, any teaching on religion will be taught in the historical or literary 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 the student. Personal beliefs will not be focused on, rather simply seeking to understand how these religions affected people's lives.

About sensitive topics: 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.

Course Grading

Course Work	Percentage
Seminar Participation	55%
Seminar Preparation	15%
Content Mastery	10%
Formal Writing Assignments & Tests	20%
TOTAL	**100%**

Assignments and Assessments

Seminar Participation

Daily participation is essential for your intellectual growth, inheritance of wisdom and truth, wonder at the great works, and enjoyment of class dynamics. We understand this may be a challenge to some, so know that you are free to speak with your teacher about potential support.

Seminar Preparation (Reading Quizzes, Annotations/Journals, Mini-Discussions, etc.)

Preparation assessments related to the homework will happen regularly.

Content Mastery

In addition to preparation, having a sufficient understanding of the fundamental content of the text is critical to deeply engaging with the text. Major Quizzes will be given to ensure content mastery.

Formal Essays & Written Assignments

Usually, essays will be written at the pace of two per quarter at increasing lengths. All essays must be submitted in both *electronic* and *paper format* and must be free of grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors. Those papers containing more than *2.25 errors* per page may be returned for correction and will NOT be issued a grade until resubmitted. Upon resubmission, the reduced grade will be recorded. You are expected to read the comments written on your essays, discuss them with the teacher, and show improvement in style, depth, and quality of your thesis argument with each subsequent essay. Letter grades will not be written on the essay, but

may be discussed with you in person. It is recommended each student meet with their teacher at least once during the writing process.

Turning in Assignments

By 11:59 pm on the night before the submission of the paper copy, an *electronic version* of the essay must be submitted in *turnitin.com* (this electronic copy must be identical to the paper copy). If extenuating circumstances arise, you must inform your teacher as far in advance as possible. At the teacher's discretion, the due date may be extended. An essay will be considered late, and subject to a 10% penalty, if electronically submitted after this deadline (12am-7am). Any submissions after 7am will be subject to a 50% grade penalty. Essays submitted beyond one day late will receive a Zero.

Absent/Missing Work Policy

Regardless of an excused or unexcused absence, students have the same amount of days missed to turn in missed assignments for full credit. For any absence, students are responsible for getting notes or assignments that were missed via a conversation with the teacher or the class website. When missing a seminar, the next day you will complete the reading during the first hour of class and then write a one-page response to the opening question pertaining to that reading during the second hour of class. If a student has missing work due to incompletion, they can turn it in the following day for 50% credit. Two days post assignment if the work is still not turned in, a zero will be issued in the gradebook.

Academic Policies and Institutional Resources

Academic Policies and Procedures:
All student work will be returned within one week of submission, with minor exceptions. Essays will be returned within two weeks of submission. Please refer to Scottsdale Prep's Family Handbook pp. 26-38 for more information on the academy's policies.