



Course Syllabus

Humane Letters I

9th Grade

Instructor: Skyler Patton

Blog: <https://sites.google.com/scottsdaleprep.org/spa-spatton/>

Email: spatton@scottsdaleprep.org

(Please allow a 24 hour turnaround on business days)

Tutoring Hours: Tuesday & Thursday Lyceum

Course Overview

This course will investigate the evolution of American thought through primary texts of American authors, as well as selected commentaries on American life and government. By the end of this course, you will have cultivated a sophisticated appreciation of our cultural heritage as a democratic republic. This course centers on the unifying texts of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; the consequences of and responses to these documents echo throughout the two hundred years of history and literature that you will explore. As we investigate our democratic tradition and the pursuit of equality, you will continue to develop your own relationship to the ideas of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. Close reading of original texts will foster sincere dialogue and improve skills in seminar discussion, literary analysis, critical thinking, and analytical writing. Tutoring is available during Tuesday and Thursday lyceum and is strongly encouraged at the first sign of difficulty with a particular assignment or a general classroom practice.

Class Materials

The following items will be necessary for each class:

- A pencil, a blue or black pen, highlighter
- Ruled paper or notebook for note taking
- A separate binder or section of a binder specifically designated for this course
- *Land of Hope* (history textbook – will be given out in class)
- Current reading assignment texts
- Course Reader (will be given out in class)

Course Policies and Classroom Culture

On 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 another person's views or beliefs. We can have discussions on these topics, and we should, but they cannot be taken personally or used in attempts to attack other students. Any attempt to attack another student will result in disciplinary measures.

On Religion - A full understanding of history and literature requires an awareness of the role religion has played; 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 they should in no way be misconstrued that the teacher's beliefs are being pushed on a student. Personal beliefs will not be focused on, but we will seek to understand how religions affected people's lives in history.

Communication Expectations - Students are responsible for writing down assignments given in class, and also checking the course website daily for their assignments and other resources. They are also expected to communicate any questions or concerns preemptively to the teacher.

Academic Integrity - All work must be original and completed in accordance with school policies.

Course Objectives

Course Expectations and Evaluation – This course will be demanding and covers a great deal of material. You will be evaluated on the following:

- **Seminar Participation** (30%)

Participation begins by arriving in class every day prepared and with the appropriate materials (see above list). As Humane Letters is a seminar-style class, participation is vital. The ideal student is consistently focused, prepared, and thoughtfully engaged with both the text and the discussion each day. Additionally, the student strives to engage in true Socratic dialogue by responding to fellow students as well as the seminar leader and furthering the seminar by posing their own questions.

- **Quizzes/Annotation Checks** (15%)

Quizzes and annotation checks will occur at the beginning of class with frequency. Most will consist of a few questions that will be achievable if you are sufficiently prepared for class.

- **Tests** (25%)

Tests will cover multiple chapters from *Land of Hope* and will be interspersed throughout each quarter. Most tests will be returned with scores in a week. There will also be cumulative semester exams at the end of each semester; they are worth 10% of your semester grade.

- **Essays** (25%)

Two essays – one major, one timed – will be assigned per quarter. We will spend a significant amount of time on critical reading and writing to ensure that you are comfortable and proficient with formal academic writing. Essay writing will be done exclusively in class. Teacher and Writing Lab support are available to students in class and during Writing Lab hours throughout the process on major essays. Most essays will be returned with comments in two weeks.

- **Bellwork Journal** (5%)

Bellwork will be completed at the start of most class periods and may include grammar practice, short analytical writing, or reflection on course ideas. Bellwork is graded for thoughtful effort and is intended to build skills essential for seminar and essay writing.

Homework

Homework is essential to meeting the course expectations. The average student should plan for fifty minutes of homework each night. Homework will most often consist of careful reading and annotation of current texts and will prepare students for quizzes, annotation checks, seminar participation, and, ultimately, engaged and powerful writing.

Assignments, Absences and Late Assignments

If you do not bring your text or demonstrate that you have not read in good faith by passing annotation checks and quizzes, then you will not be able to participate in Seminar for the day, which will result in a non-passing grade for participation that day.

Upon your return from absences, you are expected to be caught up after the same number of days as your absence; all assignments are also due at that time. Use Google Sites to be up to date on class readings and prepared for the current quiz or annotation check on the day you return. If you miss a test or major quiz, you must arrange a make-up time with me as soon as you have returned.

Scottsdale Preparatory Academy
Humane Letters I
Syllabus Acknowledgement

Please fill out the information below and have it ready to turn in the next class day as your first assignment.

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read the class syllabus and understand the expectations, materials, and content important to success in this course.

Signature

Date

Parent's Signature

Date