Scottsdale Preparatory Academy

Humane Letters: Modern Europe

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**Office Hours:** By appointment

*“With how many things are we on the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries.”*Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Tenth Grade Humane Letters is devoted primarily to reading, discussing, and writing on twelve great books of the modern European tradition. A secondary, yet essential, part of the course is the study of European history from the Late Middle Ages to the end of World War II. Although the course presents a general overview of European life and thought, special emphasis is placed on political and societal change. Such change is explored through the study of history and of five works of political philosophy and reflected as well in the imaginative literature of the period. One particular change to which much attention is given is the historical development and theoretical justification of modern constitutional government. Attention is also given to questions of the basis of property rights, the transformation from subject to citizen, the birth and growth of modern ideologies in the 19th and 20th centuries, the causes and effects of revolution, the ever present conflict between individual and community, and the political understanding of what it means to be human. Additionally, the following questions we be revisited many times:

* What does a well-organized human society look like? Is it possible?
* What makes a good king? Can a good king be a good man?
* What makes a good law? Are the rights of many more important than the rights of one?
* What makes something natural? If something is denatured, is it ruined or improved?
* Are manners more important than honesty? Is pride good?
* If humans cease to act like humans, should they be treated like animals?
* What is a human being?
* What makes something good? Is it ever right to murder?

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

I. To develop habits of (1) intelligent, careful, critical reading;

(2) rational, precise, courteous discussion;

(3) logical, fluent, textually-supported writing.

II. To become familiar with the key people, events, dates, causes and effects in Modern European history.

III. To foster a sense of wonder, a love of learning, as well as the pursuit and attainment of truth.

COURSE TEXTS:

The texts we will read in this seminar can be divided into three classifications: (a) Works of Imaginative Literature, (b) Treatises of Political Philosophy, and (c) Reference Books.

A. Imaginative Literature:

1. William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

2. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

3. Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

4. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

5. Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

6. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

7. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*

8. Joseph Conrad, *The Heart of Darkness*

B. Political Philosophy:

1. Thomas More, *Utopia*

2. John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (in *Political Writings*)

3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*

4. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

C. Reference Books:

1. *The Making of the West (MW),* ed., L. Hunt *et al.* (Chapters 13-26)

2. *MLA Handbook, Eighth Edition*

STUDENT EVALUATION:

Student work is evaluated according to three major criteria: participation in classroom discussions, the writing of five-paragraph essays, and performance on history tests. A student’s first necessary task is to**read the assigned texts carefully, critically, completely, and on time**: attentive reading is an absolutely essential precondition of participation in classroom discussions and of writing intelligent essays. A key component to attentive reading is note taking, and annotations. Annotating the text is mandatory and book checks will frequently be used in lieu of reading quizzes. To ensure faithful completion of reading assignments short, unannounced quizzes are frequently given.

1. **Participation (35%):** Thoughtful, informed, and charitable participation is required for a successful seminar class. Students should strive for all of the following in seminar:
   1. Relying on the text to create ideas and to support them
   2. Responding directly and inferentially to peers’ comments
   3. Putting together ideas from multiple sources to answer the opening question
   4. Scholarly body language
   5. Asking questions from the text
   6. Consistent verbal engagement during the seminar

The participation grade is a fluid mixture of quantitative and qualitatively expressed ideas. There is no number of times a student must speak during one seminar to earn an excellent grade. Indeed, a student speaking 20 times during one hour can, in fact, say next to nothing. A student can speak once over the two- hour period, and because of the quality of their words, can earn a perfect grade.

Aim for a consistent demonstration of your sense of wonder. Strive, with your words and body language, to work towards a more perfect understanding of the text and question at hand everyday. This daily demonstration of genuine curiosity and inquiry leads to success in participation.

1. **5-paragraph essays (35%):** Twice per quarter students will brainstorm, draft, and polish a 5-paragraph essay directly answering a prompt from one of the texts of the course. As these are thesis driven essays that seek to better understand the book at hand, it is crucial that students check in frequently with their teacher to ensure that their work is sufficiently clear, profound, and on-topic. Time in class will be devoted to essay writing, however appointments during Lyceum and before and after school may also be necessary. Essays are analytic, not summative, in nature. Direct analysis of well chosen quotations are necessary for progress and success in essay writing. While a greater explanation of writing guidelines, criteria, and expectations will shortly be provided, be aware that essays must always contain the following:
   1. A critical and clear answer to the prompt with strong textual evidence
   2. Correct grammar
   3. Sound logic
   4. Persuasive rhetoric
   5. Perfect MLA citations

Per Great Hearts policy, grades are not written on essays. Students are requested to focus on the comments provided to them on their work for praise and for areas of improvement. Mr. Gilfillan, however, will be very happy to share your grade with you following a conversation about the strengths and weaknesses of your essay. These conversations are by appointment.

1. **History Exams (20%)**: Exams will cover 1-2 chapters from *The Making of the West.* Paragraph and essay writing within the tests will make up most of the exam, while multiple choice, identification, and matching will complete them. Writing on exams will focus on looking at historical data through the lens of figures we have studied and read from in class.
2. **Reading quizzes (5%):** Expect 2-3 a week, regardless of history, philosophy, or literature. These quizzes will cover basic concepts, important details, and the quality of reading completed (definitions of difficult terms). Notes, but not books, may be used.
3. **Homework (5%):** Notes taken from history readings will be submitted prior to examinations for assessment. Additionally, text notes will be periodically reviewed for analytic and discussion questions and reading annotation checks will fall under this category.

Attributes of Successful Students

Successful students develop and cultivate a serious and consistent curiosity, as well as a manifest passion for discovering truth. Other traits of high achieving students in this course are:

* Daily preparation for intelligent discussion of the assigned reading
* Asking questions and attempting answers
* Admitting ignorance, but pursuing knowledge of what is not known
* Textually supporting comments, questions, and insights during seminar
* Laughing (at the right times, of course)
* Falling in love with that which is Good, True, and Beautiful

The final semester grade will be calculated as such:

* 1st Quarter Final Grade 45%
* 2nd Quarter Final Grade 45%
* Final Exams 10%

ABSENCES AND MISSED WORK

In the event of an absence it is the student’s responsibility to acquire from a peer the content of the course from that day. Occasionally hand-outs are distributed. Please identify one peer that will collect paper and notes for you in the event of an absence.

Unless severe illness or other factors are involved, essay deadlines are not to be extended. If you are absent the day an essay is due, it is expected the first day of return. If other circumstances arise which makes this impossible, you must contact me as soon as you can to compromise on a due date. I am happy to be flexible when circumstances require it.

Exams are to be made up outside of school hours at the earliest opportunity. The Lyceum study hall time and the after school period will be the most likely opportunities for a student to make up an exam.

Without prior consultation with Mr. Minor, any late assignment is deducted 10% each day past the deadline.

A FINAL NOTE

Humane Letters 10 possesses within it an overflowing wealth and trove of knowledge. One can gain a great deal of information simply by passively reading and listening. However, to receive the inheritance of Western Civilization to which you are due by right of existence, tremendous effort, curiosity, willpower, and inquisition are necessary. In my personal experience I always find the journey worth the effort. Speak with students who you trust have put in the effort, and see what they say. Information is free, but wisdom is costly. I do promise it is worth the cost.

Humane Letters 10

Schedule of Readings

Quarter 1

All reading must be completed prior to the beginning of class. Assignments in [brackets] represent work to be done *in class*. Annotations are expected. Discussion questions are useful. Notes outside of books may be used on reading quizzes. Students are expected to have their book everyday in class. Welcome to the Great Books of the Western World!

*Week 1: August 8-11*

Tuesday: Introduction and Welcome. Selection from *Leviathon*

Wednesday: *Utopia* 15-31

Thursday: *Utopia 32-47*

Friday: *Utopia* 49-65

*Week 2: August 14-18*

Monday: *Utopia 66-81*

Tuesday: *Utopia 82-97*

Wednesday: *Utopia 98-113*

Thursday: *Making of the West* pp. 387-395 (Read only Contrasting Views on 395)

Friday: *MW* pp. 395-401

*Week 3: August 21-25*

Monday: *MW* pp. 401-415

Tuesday: Chapter Review, Study Guide

Wednesday: Chapter 13 **Test**

Thursday: *Henry V* Act I

Friday: *Henry V* Act II

*Week 4: August 28-September 1*

Monday: *Henry V* Act III

Tuesday: *Henry V* Act IV

Wednesday: *Henry V* Act V [Essay Topics, Writing Workshop]

Thursday: Writing Workshop

Friday: *MW,* pp. 419-434 [Early Release]

*Week 5: September 4-8*

Monday: NO SCHOOL, Labor Day

Tuesday: [*MW,* pp. 434-448] [Writing Workshop]

Wednesday: **Essay Due**, [*MW,* pp. 451-460]

Thursday: *MW, 460-471*

Friday: *MW,* pp. 471-480, Chapter Review, Study Guide

*Week 6: September 11-15*

Monday: Chapters 14, 15 **Test**

Tuesday: *Second Treatise* Chapters 1-2

Wednesday: *Second Treatise* Chapters 3-4

Thursday: *Second Treatise* Chapter 5

Friday: *Second Treatise* Chapter 6

*Week 7: September 18-22*

Monday: *Second Treatise* Chapter 7

Tuesday: *Second Treatise* Chapter 8

Wednesday: *Second Treatise* Chapter 9-11

Thursday: NO School, Fall Holiday

Friday: *Second Treatise*  Chapter 12-14 [Essay Review and in-class reading]

*Week 8: September 25-30*

Monday: *Second Treatise* Chapter 15-16 [Essay Review and in-class reading]

Tuesday: *Second Treatise* Chapter 17-18 [Essay Review and in-class reading]

Wednesday: *Second Treatise* Chapter 19 [Essay prompts]

Thursday: *MW* pp. 483-492 [Writing Workshop]

Friday: *MW* pp. 492-497, [European Map & Countries]

*Week 9: October 2-6*

Monday: *MW* pp. 497-508 [Writing Workshop]

Tuesday: *MW* pp. 508-516 [Study Guide]

Wednesday: **Essay Due**, Chapter Review

Thursday: Chapter exam

Friday: