

AP LITERATURE & COMPOSITION: GREAT BOOKS (W234434)

This course uses major texts from mostly the Western tradition in order to examine the question: What is the meaning of life? Each quarter focuses on a different perspective: first quarter considers answers from philosophy; second from political philosophy; and third from religious and atheistic thinkers. During the fourth quarter, students engage in the topic of love and present an exhibition of their own meaning of life.

This course is built upon both the Great Books Methodology, and Mortimer Adler's method for reading books critically. The Great Books method teaches students to construct thoughtful and engaging discussion questions for assigned texts and asks them to lead their peers in discussion concerning the author's ideas and their relevance to our modern world. Most of class time is structured around student-led discussions and all instruction is centered around the core skills of writing questions, effectively leading peers, developing critical reading skills, and practicing civil discourse. Note: class participation accounts for 25% of a student's grade in this class. Students with patterns of absences should not register for this class.

Core texts: *The Sense of an Ending* (Barnes) *How to Read a Book* (Adler), *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle), *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Freud), *Man's Search for Meaning* (Frankl), *Kim-Jiyong, Born 1982* (Nam-Joo), *Five Dialogues* (Plato), *Remains of the Day* (Ishiguro)

Students can expect to annotate and write using Adler's method, as well as produce critical, reflective, expository, and narrative pieces in order to deepen their understanding of what they read and what they personally believe. *Student will be prepared to take the AP English Literature and Composition exam in the spring.*

SUMMER READING: *The Sense of an Ending* (Barnes)

I. FIRST SEMESTER: Focus on Epistemology and Ethics

A. Non-Fiction

Core texts:

How to Read a Book (Adler)

The Euthyphro & The Apology (Plato)

The Handbook (Epictetus) or *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle)

"What's it Like to be a Bat" (Nagel)

Civilization and Its Discontents (Freud)

B. Short Story

"Death of Ivan Ilyich" (Tolstoy)

"Understand" (Chang)

C. Poetry

"The Diver," Schiller

"The Hollow Men" & "The Love Song J. Alfred Prufrock" (Eliot)

D. Drama

An Enemy of the People (Ibsen) or

Oedipus the King & Antigone (Sophocles) or

Hamlet or *Othello* (Shakespeare) & (TBA – per Chicago Theater season)

E. Novel

To the Lighthouse (Woolf) or

The Plague (Camus)

AP LITERATURE & COMPOSITION: GREAT BOOKS (W234434)

II. SECOND SEMESTER: Focus on Theology and Love

A. Non-Fiction

Core texts:

“Proofs of the Existence of God” (Aquinas)
“Why I’m Not a Christian” (Russell)
Man’s Search for Meaning (Frankl)
Pensees (selections) (Pascal)
The Genealogy of Morality (selections) (Nietzsche)
“Possibilianism” (video) (Eagleman)
“Abolish the Classics” (transcript/podcast) (Padilla Peralta)
The Communist Manifesto (Marx & Engels)
The Second Sex (selected chapters) (de Beauvoir)
Meditations (excerpts) (Aurelius)

B. Short Story

“A Jury of Her Peers” (Glaspell)

C. Poetry

“Song of Myself” (Whitman)
Tao Te Ching (Lao Tsu)
“Marriage of Heaven and Hell” (Blake)
“Charge of the Light Brigade” (Tennyson)
“Ani Maamin” (Wiesel)

D. Drama

Man and Superman (Shaw)
The Symposium (Plato)

E. Novel

The Remains of the Day (Ishiguro)
Waiting for the Barbarians (Coetzee)
Moby Dick (Melville)
Kim Ji-Young, Born 1982 (Nam-Joo)
Brothers Karamazov (Dostoevsky)