

**Great Books I
Syllabus
Fall 2008
Dr. Thompson**

Course Objectives:

This is a seminar course devoted to close reading and discussion of classical works of Western civilization. This section of the course also gives students extensive practice in critical and thoughtful writing. "The goal of the Great Books program is to instill in the student the habits of mind that characterize a self-reliant thinker, reader, and learner."¹

Reading List:

Euripides. Ten Plays. Trans. Paul Roche. Signet Classic.
Plato. The Republic. Trans. Richard Sterling and William Scott. Norton.
Aristotle. Ethics. Trans. J.A.K. Thomson. Penguin.
Virgil. The Aeneid. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. Vintage.
Homer. The Iliad. Trans. Robert Fagles. Penguin.

Recommended:

The website: <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLA.html> contains critical information on the citation of textual quotations. This is the MLA (Modern Language Association) standard.

Office:

My office location is PLC 108. I can be reached by telephone at 310.506.4831 and by e-mail at thompson@pepperdine.edu. My office hours are:

Monday	1:00-2:00
Tuesday	12:00-1:00
Wednesday	11:00-12:00
Thursday	1:00-2:00
Friday	11:00-12:00

and by appointment.

Mentor

Samantha Morrow (samorrow@pepperdine.edu) will serve as the class mentor. She is an invaluable resource for all aspects of your first semester at the university. Do not hesitate to seek her out.

Website:

My website is located at <http://dt.pepperdine.edu> Look there for the syllabus, reading prompts, and other class materials.

Essentials:

1. Three original papers. Each paper topic will be laid out in advance. The first paper will be six pages long and deal with the Trojan War. The second paper will

¹ An Introduction to Shared Inquiry. Third Edition. The Great Books Foundation. 1992. p. ix.

- be eight pages in length and deal with Platonic vs. Aristotelian justice and ethics. The third paper will be six pages long, focusing on the Greek aphorism: “Know Thyself” and our duty to the gods, as evidenced in Virgil’s Aeneid and Euripides’ Bacchae. All papers are to be double spaced in a 12 point Times New Roman font, using 1” margins.
2. Five short (2 pp. each) writing assignments will be given throughout the term. Each paper will focus on a subject we discuss in class.
 3. Attendance, preparedness, and participation.

Grading Criteria for writing:

An "A" paper should have the following qualities:

1. Clear, sophisticated thesis in answer to the assignment.
2. Well-organized paper with coherent, orderly paragraphs.
3. Assertions well-supported with logical reasoning and specifically described examples.
4. Precise and interesting language.
5. No major grammatical errors.
6. Careful proofreading.

All writing assignments are to be interpretive in content. Aim for a distinct thesis, a clear argument, and creative thought. Use text judiciously and with discrimination. Avoid using first person. Be sure to form a definite position that can be defended via the text. All of your writing should refer only to works that we have read in this course. Each paper should be a product of analytical thought and careful analysis presented in a creative form.

Each paper is graded via the following criteria:

- P (The point of your paper, 20 points),
- A (How well you argued your position, 20 points),
- T (Your use of text, 20 points),
- R (Risk-taking/creativity, 20 points),
- L (Effective Use of language, 10 points), and
- M (Mechanics, 10 points).

Standards for written work:

All papers must be prepared using word processing software (Microsoft Word is recommended.) Indent paragraphs, give page numbers at top right, and have a title. Proofread for errors. Read your paper aloud and most errors will jump out! Hand in on time. All work must be turned in on hard copy unless otherwise noted. No late papers will be accepted.

Grading:

All work is to be submitted anonymously, by affixing your college wide identification number, NOT your social security, to the back of the last page. Do not enter your name on any of the papers.

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Papers	25, 30, & 25%
Class Participation	15%*
Short Writing	5%

*Attendance and punctuality are part of this grade. Each absence beyond your second one will reduce this grade by 2%. If you are more than 5 minutes late, it counts as an absence.

Plagiarism:

May result in an automatic failure in the class. It is plagiarism if you (1) borrow a paper from another student, (2) turn in a paper written by any other person, (3) take material (pages, paragraphs, sentences, or ideas) from any printed source without giving credit. See <http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/academicintegrity>.

Help on writing:

Take advantage of my availability for help on writing your papers. I am your best resource. Samantha Morrow is also available for help with writing. You may bring in rough drafts in advance of the due date for any paper. You may also submit drafts in advance anonymously via e-mail attachment by setting up a generic account with a commercial e-mail provider. We also have an excellent writing center located in CAC 123, x4097. See <http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/writingcenter/>

Reading/Discussion Schedule

Iphigenia at Aulis – 3; Iliad – 6; Republic - 6; Ethics - 4; Aeneid – 6; Bacchae – 2

Paper Due Dates

Paper #1 – September 30; Paper #2 – November 11; Paper #3 – December 11