

Boyce College – Spring 2009
HU 421: Great Books Seminar I
Tuesday, Wednesday 11:30 – 12:45
Dr. Jim Orrick
Carver 127

Contact information: My office is Carver 200A; phone: 897-4409

Course content: An introduction to the Great Books and writers of the western world. Through a seminar format, the student will be led to dialogue from a Christian worldview with seminal works and ideas that have shaped Western Civilization.

Required Text Books:

Students may use editions other than those in the campus bookstore, but references to the books in class will be based on the editions available from the bookstore.

1. Homer. *The Odyssey*. The translation by WHD Rouse is probably the easiest to read. It's inexpensive too. Published by Signet. ISBN 0451527364
2. Saint Augustine. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine, the first nine books*. The translation by Rex Warner is probably easiest to read. Published by Penguin. ISBN 0451527801
3. Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Get the one translated by Joel Relihan. It is a modern translation, and it retains several desirable features of the original. Published by Hackett. ISBN 0872205835
4. Chaucer. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: An Interlinear Translation. You will probably be sorry if you do not get this interlinear. Barrons. ISBN 0812000390
5. Luther, Martin. *The Bondage of the Will*. Since I require students to read the introduction, there is no alternative to the translation by J.I. Packer and O. R. Johnston. Revell/Baker. 0800753429.
6. Shakespeare. Hamlet. The one in the bookstore is part of a new critical series. Get this edition because I want you to read some of the critical material.

Course Goals:

1. To gain the ability to enjoy the great books of Western Civilization.
2. To understand the books chosen for this course, but also to gain skills for understanding and thinking critically about all writing.
3. To learn to think about and intelligently discuss the life issues that are treated in the great books.

Course Requirements:

1. Read the assigned sections by the day on which they are listed in the class schedule.
2. Complete a response paper for each week discussing the following:

- a. The author's main point, or one of his main points, and how he develops it. Please cite support for your view from the reading.
- b. Compare and contrast how the main point is developed in a work of art, fiction, music, television, film, science, laws If you would prefer to make this comparison/contrast with an issue other than the main point, feel free to do so.
- c. A passage or issue you would like to discuss in class and why.

Note: response papers must be typed and are due at the beginning of class. **No late response papers will be accepted. No papers will be accepted by email or in absentia.** You are required to turn in only ten response papers. There is no extra credit for writing more than ten. This assignment requires no title page.

Note: Aim to write around one page of double-spaced. I mainly want to see that you have put some thought into the reading.

3. Usually we will have a quiz over the reading material due to have been read for that week.
4. If a student misses a quiz due to absence, he or she may make up the missed quiz no later than the day of the following class period.
5. Actively participate in class discussions. As the student reads he should make note of favorite sections and quotations, how the author writes about particular life issues, as well as any questions about the text or that spring from the text.

Components of the final grade:

1. Reading assignments account for 80% of the final grade. Whether or not the student has read a particular assignment will usually be determined by her performance on the weekly quiz. Therefore the average of the student's quiz grades will determine how much credit she receives for having completed the reading assignments.
2. Class participation accounts for 20% of the grade. Here's how it is calculated:
 - a. Each response paper is worth 1 point, or 1% of your grade up to a total of 10%
 - b. The other 10% of the participation grade consists of my subjective opinion of how much you contributed to class discussions. At the end of the year I will evaluate each student's verbal participation by the following scale:
 - i. never talked – 0 points
 - ii. rarely talked – 2 points
 - iii. talked occasionally – 4 points
 - iv. talked fairly often – 6 points
 - v. talked every class – 8 points
 - vi. obviously prepared and consistently engaged – 10 points

Grading Scale:

94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
83-86: B
80-82: B-
77-79: C+
73-76: C
70-72: C-
67-69: D+
63-66: D
60-62: D-
59 and below: F

Boyce College Attendance Policy (see Boyce College catalog):

Class attendance is required for Boyce College students. Attendance will be checked at each class session. A student who misses more than 25% of class meetings will forfeit credit for the class and receive a failing grade. Students are also expected to be in class on time. If a student is late to class three times it will count the same as an absence.

If a student has a legitimate reason for missing class for an extended period of time (such as an illness or accident) it is the student's responsibility to notify the professor so that missed tests and assignments may be made up.

Important note: If you are in a class with a mid-class break, attendance may be checked after the break. Persons absent will be charged with half an absence. Note the following specifications of allowed absences for each respective section: Monday only or Tuesday only – 3.3; TW – 7; TWR – 10.3.

In this class you are permitted without penalty to accumulate your allotted number of absences for any reason whatsoever, no excuses necessary. But when you go over the limit, you automatically fail the course, no excuses accepted. Use your allowed absences discreetly.

For instructional purposes the professor may employ the use of film, readings, and outside guests. This use does not, however, constitute an endorsement by Boyce College of these sources.

Classroom Policies:

1. Please disable your cell phones before coming to class. It interrupts terribly to have a phone ring or vibrate.

2. There is no need for computers in this class. Please do not bring one.
3. There is a lot of discussion in this class, but there ought to be only one conversation going on at a time. Infractions may cost you.
4. If you snooze you lose. Stand up if you are fading.
5. No food or drinks are allowed in class, except water.
6. Guidelines for papers submitted in this course are found in the Southern Seminary Manual of Style available in the LifeWay Christian Bookstore located in the Honeycutt Center.
7. In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the professor at the beginning of the course.

Addendum to Great Books Seminar Syllabus

Four considerations that will clarify our approach to the great books:

This class is a *seminar* – “A small group of advanced students in a college or graduate school engaged in original research or intensive study under the guidance of a professor who meets regularly with them to discuss their reports and findings” (American Heritage Dictionary).

- It is not primarily a series of lectures. Class participation is essential to a successful seminar.

This class is not primarily a Literature Survey class, even though selections from most of the books we will read would traditionally appear on the reading lists of Literature Survey classes. Expecting this to be a survey class will set you up for disappointment and frustration because you will always be expecting me to get around to doing something that I have no intention of doing.

This class is unapologetically Christian and, consequently, inescapably theological.

This class is text-centered.

Reading Schedule:

Each numeral represents one week.

1. The Odyssey – the first 12 books
2. The Odyssey – to the end
3. Augustine's Confessions, the first nine books
4. The Consolation of Philosophy – the first three books
5. The Consolation of Philosophy – to the end
6. Chaucer – The Prologue and The Knight's Tale.
7. Chaucer –The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, and The Reeve's Prologue and Tale.
8. Bondage of the Will, through chapter 4 (p.189)
9. Bondage, to the end
10. Shakespeare - Hamlet
11. Final

We usually have a potluck on the day of the final. I have not yet decided whether or not we will have a final exam. We usually stay for the entire two hours on the day of the final.