

Boyce College – Spring 2009
HU 422: Great Books Seminar II
Section A, Monday 8:30 – 11:15
Section B, Monday 11:30 - 2:15
Section C, Tuesday 2:30 – 5:15
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. Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queen, Book 1* (Fierce Wars and Faithful Loves)
2. John Bunyan. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners.*
3. John Bunyan. *Pilgrims Progress.*
4. Herbert, George. *The Complete English Works.* (We will read only selected poems.)
5. Milton, John. *Paradise Lost.*
6. Broadus, John. *A Gentleman and a Scholar: A Memoir of James Petigru Boyce.*
7. Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death.*

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. Quizzes missed due to absence must be made up.
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. If your cell phone rings or vibrates in class, I will pause, gaze at you sadly, and shake my head in dismay.
2. Do not have your laptop computer open unless you are taking notes. If you use it for other purposes, your grade will be docked 1% per infraction.

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. 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.
6. 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.

- Christian thinkers and Christ-glorifiers have written much of the great books “canon,” and nearly all of the great books we will read are distinctly Christian. A century or two ago I could have assumed that by their third year of college virtually all students, not to say *Christian* students, would already have read Augustine, Dante, and Bunyan, but I would be foolish to assume that today. I believe acquaintance with these authors is highly enriching if not positively essential for those entering Christian ministry, and so I want to take advantage of my opportunity to have you read some of the great classics that are also distinctly *Christian*.

- Since you are theology students preparing for ministry, and I am a theology - loving teacher who has spent most of his life in local church ministry, it stands to reason that when we read books that are rich in theological ideas we will probably discuss those ideas and their implications for life and ministry. It also stands to reason that some of these ideas will be controversial and that opinions differing from one's own will be held and expressed by others in the class. May the Lord bless each of us that in essentials we may have unity, in non-essentials we may have liberty, and in all things we may have charity.

This class is text-centered.

- Our time is limited, so I want to read what is most important: the authors themselves and not what others have written about them.
- Hopefully this feature will help to dispel the notion that the classics are primarily for scholars. Throughout history persons of average education have read the great books.

Reading Schedule:

Each numeral represents one week.

1. Spencer, Edmund. *Faerie Queen Book One*, through canto six.
2. FQ to the end of book one
3. John Bunyan. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.
4. John Bunyan. *Pilgrim's Progress*, Part the First. (We will not read part two).
5. Herbert, George. *The Complete English Works*. (We will read only selected poems.)
6. Herbert continued.
7. Milton, John. *Paradise Lost* through book six.
8. PL to end.
9. Broadus, John. *A Gentleman and a Scholar*, through p. 182.
10. Broadus to the end.
11. Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death* part one.
12. Postman part two.

The day of the final exam we will meet and discuss Postman. We have also been known to have a yummy potluck on that day. We stay for the entire two hours on the day of the final.