

English II B 2011-2012

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English II is a level 3 class and the continuation of MCA's Great Books curriculum. We will read works that range from the Ancient Greece through the Roman Era and Middle Ages, with a couple of Shakespeare plays thrown in for good measure. We will also read *Fahrenheit 451*. As with any Great Books class the objective is to expose students to the Great Ideas of Western Civilization so that they can better understand our world and themselves. In addition to this, English II should also help students develop as readers, writers, listeners, thinkers and communicators.

Works that we will read include:

Aeneid

Introduction to Aristotle

Physics

Metaphysics

Nicomachean Ethics

Politics

Measure for Measure

King Lear

Confessions

On the Incarnation

Basic Writings

Proslogium

Fahrenheit 451

Canterbury Tales

Grading

Grades will fall into one of two weighted categories: **Project and Participation**. Project Grades will make up 70% of the students grade and will include Quizzes, Reading Questions, and Writing Assignments. Participation will make up 30% of the students grade. Papers will evaluate a student's writing ability as they work through, develop, and express their own thoughts and ideas. A few papers will be simple summaries of ideas found in the works. Weekly Quizzes or Reading Questions will evaluate a student's comprehension of the reading. Participation will evaluate a student's involvement in class. Being tardy or absent, *focused* listening, attitude, respectfulness to the tutor and peers, and expression of their own ideas, will all factor in.

Expectations

Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss and work through passages and difficulties from the text. Being fully prepared means that the entire assignment has been earnestly, diligently, and thoughtfully read. All forms of notes from **outside sources are NOT allowed**, as they inhibit a student's ability to think and articulate original thought. (This includes but is not limited to Spark notes and Cliff notes.) Students are however encouraged to make their own notes to be used in class discussion. They are expected to be willing to share their thoughts and opinions in an open discussion with humility and consideration for all viewpoints. Total comprehension is not always an achievable goal to have when reading a Great Book, especially for the first time, but **coming to class with an awareness of what one's confusions are is often the best place to begin a constructive**

dialog about a work.

Most students do not know *how* to read a book. Reading a book is more than turning pages and knowing a list of names. Reading a book is an interaction with the work in question and includes understanding the ideas it is communicating. The readings and the class discussions that follow ought to make all of us better readers.

Reading Quizzes

Reading quizzes will be made very difficult to pass by design. This is because most of us do not yet know *how* to read a book. The quizzes serve as an evaluation of how well a student has read. Naturally, since reading is a skill that is typically underdeveloped, the quizzes may reflect this deficiency. Quizzes will be worth 10 points. Two points can be revised by turning in a typed one page essay over a given topic before the next class begins. Up to six points can be revised each week. Some times Reading Questions will be given in lieu of a quiz. A variety of question types will be utilized such as fill in the blank, questions of fact, or short answers. When a question does not have a single correct answer the quality of the student's response will be taken into consideration.

Writing

Six to seven papers will be assigned over the readings during the year. These papers will fall into two categories: Summary and Persuasive. Summary papers will be around two pages and will explain in detail an aspect of a particular work (i.e. define a philosophical term; analyze a particular character; deal with a technical aspect of a plot or philosophical argument.) Summary papers will be worth less than Persuasive Papers.. Persuasive papers answer a particular question and center on a *thesis*. Students will need to defend their thesis in three paragraphs with clear language, using logic and passages from the reading. Certain structural elements will be evaluated as these papers are graded. A *Rough Draft* will be brought to writing lab one week before the Final copy is due for a 10 point grade and for peer editing to take place. The *Final Copy* will be worth 100 points.

All cellphones will be turned off and placed in a basket for the duration of class time in order to prevent disruptions.

Supplies

Paper and Writing Utensils

Contact Information

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The First Assignment is to read Books I-III in the *Aeneid* for Wednesday and there will be a Reading Quiz.