

9th Grade Classical Literature

Course Description and Expectations Sheet

Mr. Smith

Materials:

A quality 3 ring binder with at least a 1½ spine (you may share this binder with other classes but must have dividers. I may collect this binder at some point.)
Writing utensils
Copies of texts will be supplied – please bring your copy each day.

Course Description:

The Greek Literature course will offer in-depth readings of the most important Classical works. We will read Homer's *Iliad*; three Greek tragedies: *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus, *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles, and *Medea* by Euripides; and selections from Plato's *Republic*. In the second semester, we will read Vergil's *Aeneid*, selections from the poetry of Horace and Catullus, and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

The *Iliad* is the first text in the Western literary tradition and has lost nothing of its relevance since singers first performed it 2800 years ago; in a way, it inaugurated our literary tradition as a poem that everyone in the ancient world knew. The three tragedies will lead us from the world of the epic poet onto the stage – the first time stories were enacted in theater. The *Agamemnon* provides a satisfying account of what happens to the great king after Troy; the story of Oedipus and his investigation into his own identity has been regarded as the most compelling piece of Greek literature; Medea might be regarded as the original psycho-girlfriend from Hades. In the *Republic*, Plato critiques Homer and the tragedians and shifts our understanding of humanity and the gods away from Homeric view and towards Socratic ethics. It is no exaggeration to say that these texts have established the traditions within which Westerners have thought about life and what it means to be human. Poets and writers are still moved by Homer's muse, philosophers still engage in debate with Plato.

This class will engage these texts through dialogue and discussion: you, me, Homer, Sophocles, and Plato will confront such questions as who is in charge of our lives, what is the role of the gods and fate, is it better to seek glory in war or to lead a quiet domestic life, is it possible to avoid suffering, what is the nature of justice and revenge, what does it mean to be alive? The texts and discussions in this class will provide the groundwork for the continuous discussion of the Great Conversation throughout your years at Ridgeview.

Procedures:

Each week, you will receive a schedule of the readings, discussions and assignments. A typical class will be spent in discussion of the texts. Each night, you will read assignments of approximately 10-15 pages and you are expected to underline or highlight important sections and use the margins for notes. In addition, you will receive study questions to guide your reading as you delve into Greek thought. You should answer each study question in paragraph form or with well-organized phrases of your thoughts on the questions. During class discussion, you can add to your responses as new ideas occur to

you, so be sure to leave room for additional notes. Your responses to the questions will provide the matter for class discussion and will aid you in preparing essays and papers. Keep these responses, notes, handouts, and graded papers in your binder. You will use this binder throughout your career at Ridgeview and at graduation you will have a compendium of your accumulated notes on all the great texts surveyed in the literature courses. On request, I am able to email the study questions to you.

Grading:

Your ideas and ability to articulate them in discussions and essays will be the principle factors in determining your grade. Daily participation in the class discussions and distinguishing yourself as an interested student will have a large impact on your score. You are required to contribute something to the discussion each day and I will track the frequency and quality of your contributions in a grade book. You will also be assigned presentations in which you will offer to the class your ideas for your essay. I will periodically collect your binders to grade your nightly work and attentiveness to lectures and discussion. There will be frequent writing assignments based on the study questions which will culminate in a final paper at the end of each text. If you have problems at any time in the semester, please don't hesitate to bring them to my attention: it is my job and the intent of this course to help you become a better reader, writer, and thinker.

Syllabus for 2007-2008:

Week 1: 9/4-7	Odyssey viii, ix, xix
Week 2: 9/10-14	Odyssey xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii. Begin Iliad I
Week 3: 9/17-21	Iliad I-III. In-class essay
Week 4: 9/24-28	Iliad III-VI
Week 5: 10/1-5	Iliad VII-IX
Week 6: 10/8-12	In-class essay prep; Iliad IX-XII
Week 7: 10/15-19 END 1 st QUARTER	3 page essay on Iliad VI or IX due; Iliad XII-XIV
Week 8: 10/22-26	Iliad XV-XVII
Week 9: 10/29-11/2	Iliad XVII-XIX
Week 10: 11/5-9	Iliad XX-XXI
Week 11: 11/12-16	Iliad XXII-XXIII
Week 12: 11/19-20 THANKSGIVING	Iliad XXIV (finish reading the Iliad over break if you haven't yet)
Week 13: 11/26-30	Iliad: final discussions, individual conferences, essay preparation
Week 14: 12/3-7	Aeschylus' Agamemnon First draft of final Iliad essay due
Week 15: 12/10-14	Euripides' Medea
Week 16: 12/17-20	6-7 page Iliad essay due 12/17

END 2 nd QUARTER	
Week 17: 1/7-11	Sophocles' Oedipus Rex
Week 18: 1/14-18	Oedipus Rex
Week 19: 1/21-25	Plato's Republic
Week 20: 1/28-2/1	4-5 page Oedipus essay due 1/28 Vergil's Aeneid Book I
Week 21: 2/4-8	Aeneid II
Week 22: 2/11-15	Aeneid II-III 2-3 page essay on Aeneid II
Week 23: 2/19-22	Aeneid IV
Week 24: 2/25-29	Aeneid IV-V 2-3 page essay on Aeneid IV
Week 25: 3/3-7	Aeneid VI
Week 26: 3/10-14 SPRING BREAK	CSAPs; Aeneid VI
Week 27: 3/25-28	Aeneid VII-VII
Week 28: 3/31-4/4	Aeneid IX-X
Week 29: 4/7-11	Aeneid XI
Week 30: 4/14-18	Aeneid XII
Week 31: 4/21-24 SPRING BREAK	Final discussions of Aeneid Aeneid paper presentations
Week 32: 4/29-5/2	Horace: Satires and Odes 5-7 page Aeneid essay due 5/5
Week 33: 5/5-9	Shakespeare: Antony and Cleopatra
Week 34: 5/12-16	Antony and Cleopatra
Week 35: 5/19-23	Antony and Cleopatra

Student signature:

Parent/guardian signature: