

OMNIBUS II: MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE
2020-21 SYLLABUS

"The tradition of the West is embodied in the Great Conversation that began in the dawn of history and that continues to the present day. Whatever the merits of other civilizations in other respects, no civilization is like that of the West in this respect. No other civilization can claim that its defining characteristic is a dialogue of this sort. No dialogue in any other civilization can compare with that of the West in the number of great works of the mind that have contributed to this dialogue."

- Robert M. Hutchins

Course Description:

This Omnibus is the second in a six year series addressing the literature, history and culture of major Western civilizations in chronological order in two three year cycles. The course format will be a Paideia discussion (used in the Great Books program), which is based on close reading of literature and historical accounts.

Required Summer Reading: *Famous Men of the Middle Ages*. For those joining us this second year as well as for those who'd like a refresher, it's recommended that you read Bulfinch's *Age of Fable* (part of your Bulfinch text) to be sure that you have a good grounding in classical mythology.

Anticipated In person/Online schedule noted...

Unit One -- Introduction to the Paideia method, Medieval drama

September 17 *In person at Bethel*-- *Famous Men of the Middle Ages*

September 24 **ONLINE** -- *Everyman* -- a Medieval Morality Play

Unit Two -- **Age of Charlemagne** -- the *Song of Roland*-- introduction to the Middle Ages: the rise of education, European culture

October 1 *In person at Bethel* -- Chapters 1 - 8 The Peers, The Tournament, The Siege of Albracca, Adventures of Rinaldo and Orlando, The Invasion of France, Bradamante and Rogero

October 8 -- Classical enrichment week (class will not meet)

October 15 *In person at Bethel* — Chapters 9 - 17 Astolpho and the Enchantress, The Orc, Isabella, Medoro, Orlando Mad, Zerbino, Astolpho, Rogero and Bradamante

October 22 **ONLINE**-- Chapters 18 - 26 The Battle of Roncesvalles, Death of Rinaldo, Huon of Bordeaux, Ogier, the Dane

Writing Assignment: Encomium on a character from the *Age of Charlemagne*

Unit Three -- *Beowulf* -- Anglo-Saxon England, Old English, the heroic epic continued, the Dark Ages

October 29 *In person at Bethel* -- pages 3 - 71

November 5 **ONLINE** -- pages 71 - 149

November 12 *In person at Bethel* -- pages 149 - 213

Writing Assignment: Descriptive narrative based on *Beowulf*

Unit Four-- **The Age of Chivalry** -- the heroic quest, the Crusades, Saxon England continued, Norman England, Chretien de Troyes

November 19 ONLINE --Chapters 1 - 8 The Mythical History of England, Merlin, Arthur, Sir Gawain, Caradoc Briefbras, Launcelot of the Lake

December 3 In person at Bethel -- Chapters 9 - 15 The Adventure of the Cart, The Lady of Shalott, Queen Guenever's Peril, Tristram and Isoude, Sir Tristram's Battle with Sir Launcelot, The Round Table

December 10 — Classical enrichment week (class will not meet)

In person/Online weeks to be determined only if necessary...

January 7 -- Chapters 16 - 23 Sir Palamedes, Sir Tristram, Perceval, The Holy Graal
Sir Agrivain's Treason, Morte d'Arthur

January 14 — Classical enrichment (class will not meet)

Unit Five -- **Dante's *Divine Comedy*** -- feudal Italy, the beginnings of the Renaissance, classical allusions, courtly love continued

January 21— St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas -- influences on Dante's life; Medieval cosmology, the structure of Dante's verse; ***The Inferno*** Canto 1-5

January 28 -- Canto 6 - 18

February 4 --Canto 19 - 34

February 11 — Classical enrichment (class will not meet)

February 18 -- ***Purgatory*** Canto 1 - 17

February 25 — ***Purgatory*** Canto 18 - 33

March 4 — ***Paradise*** Canto 1 - 15

March 11 -- Classical enrichment (class will not meet)

March 18 -- ***Paradise*** Canto 18 - 33

Writing Assignment: Thesis on a theme from Dante

Unit Six -- **Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*** -- the triumph of Middle English, the tumultuous 14th century, William Caxton brings the printing press in England, the pilgrimage, the romance, classical allusions, Medieval drama

March 25 — The Prologue

April 1 — **Easter break**

April 8 — The Knight's Tale

April 15 -- Classical enrichment (class will not meet)

April 22 — The Friar's Tale Introduction to Shakespeare packets distributed

Unit Seven -- **Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*** -- early Modern English, blank verse, iambic pentameter, rhymed couplets, Pyramus and Thisbe, Elizabethan drama

April 29 -- Act I

May 6 — Act II (should have read the play to the end)

May 13 — Classical enrichment (class will not meet)

May 20 — Act III, IV

May 27 — Act V Performances

Writing Assignment: Speech in Character for a character from *Romeo and Juliet*