

Omnibus V 2020-21
MIDDLE AGES/RENAISSANCE 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 fifth 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 is a Paideia discussion (used in the Great Books program), which is based on close reading of literature and historical accounts. The goals of the Paideia approach are to build skills of inductive and deductive thinking through careful analysis of the text. Readings will be analyzed for themes, structure and style; the interrelation between history, literature and culture will be emphasized. The four major writing assignments will include two major essays (two theses) and two expressive writings (a sonnet and an imitation of style).

Summer Reading: Irving Stone *The Agony and the Ecstasy*

Anticipated In person/Online schedule noted...

Unit One

September 17 *In person at Bethel* — *The Agony and the Ecstasy* -- the Italian Quattrocento and the Renaissance

September 24 *Online* - Petrarch -- courtly love and the Italian sonnet
writing an Italian sonnet

October 1 *In person at Bethel* — *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* -- Middle English
Arthurian legend in alliterative, verse Fitts 1-2

October 8 Classical enrichment (class will not meet)

October 15 *In person at Bethel* — *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Fitts 3-4

Unit Three

October 22 *Online* - *Utopia* -- the political romance pp 5 - 64

October 29 *In person at Bethel* — *Utopia* pp 64 - 126

Unit Four

November 5 *Online* - *The Prince* -- the political treatise; power and the character of
government chapters 1-12

November 12 *In person at Bethel* — *The Prince* chapters 13-26

Writing Assignment: thesis on political writings

Unit Five

November 19 *Online* — *Faerie Queene* -- an allegorical epic of Elizabethan England
November 26 Thanksgiving
December 3 *In person at Bethel* — *Faerie Queene* — excerpts
December 10 Classical enrichment (class will not meet)

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

Unit Six

January 7 *Le Morte D'Arthur* -- the tragic romance and the heroic quest pp 21- 169
January 14 Classical enrichment (class will not meet)
January 21 *Le Morte D'Arthur* pp 170 - 358
January 28 *Le Morte D'Arthur* pp 359 - 507
Writing Assignment: imitation of style

Unit Seven

February 4 *Doctor Faustus* -- blank verse and Elizabethan drama
February 11 Classical enrichment (class will not meet)
February 18 *Doctor Faustus* — moral drama about the soul's yearning for the infinite
February 25 Spenserian & Shakespearean Sonnets XVIII, XXIV

Unit Eight

March 4 **Shakespearean Sonnets** XXIX, XCI
March 11 Classical enrichment (class will not meet)
March 18 **Shakespearean Sonnets** LXXIII, CXVI
Writing Assignment: sonnet analysis essay

Unit Nine

March 25 *Richard III* -- historical drama acts 1-2
April 1 Easter break
April 8 **Richard III** -- acts 3-5
April 15 Classical enrichment (class will not meet)
April 22 *Macbeth the nature of love and vanity* acts 1-2 troupe meeting -- organize, choose characters & scenes
April 29 *Macbeth* -- acts 3-5 troupe meeting
May 6 *Merchant of Venice* -- a comedy of morals acts 1-2
May 13 Classical enrichment (class will not meet)
May 20 *Merchant of Venice* act 3 troupe meeting
May 27 *Merchant of Venice* acts 4 -5 all performances