

Reading Questions & Debate Challenge for Thomas More's *Utopia*

Read all of this assignment carefully BEFORE you read the book. For each of the points, you MUST mark and label in your book passages that pertain. Finally, list the passage page numbers — AND a brief description of the point made, along with any thoughts you might have. In order to have room for that and to make your points, use a separate sheet for these debate notes.

Rather than have a more sedate approach to a book that, despite its seeming intractability, has served as an inspiration for political discourse for the past 500 years or so, we will proceed to invite an ordered chaos to our classroom. Those who work hard on this week's assignment can entertain the prospect of a *very* light week next week...

Using any material from More's book (only), prepare to formally represent your assigned viewpoint in a **debate Thursday, October 29** (our next in-person meeting date). The debate will be judged on: 1) the effectiveness of the ideas presented as well as 2) the thoroughness of the preparation of the participants. Certainly those participants who attempt to argue without grounding in the text will be seen as having been sloppy in their preliminaries, if not downright derelict in their responsibilities. **As with the sonnet composing exercise, it is necessary that all members of a faction contribute for the faction to prevail.**

Using material from the reading and the roster/character assignment list, prepare the major points your character would make in advancing or countering the following positions:

Proposed:

- 1) Western civilization is manifestly and hopelessly barbaric;
- 2) therefore, it is not worthwhile for a citizen of philosophical bent to attempt public service with the goal of reformation in mind.
- 3) Finally, the Utopian's system of law, justice, government, and statesmanship is far superior to that of England and, in general, Western European culture.

Nota Bene: In order to be advanced in the debate, all points MUST be cited with textual references.

For order's sake, be sure to proceed in the order in which the characters present them.

The judges for said discourse will be two honorable and worthy community members, along with your humble, if modestly esteemed, professor. All judgments will be altogether wise, final — and of public service.

Nota Bene: Any strife that occurs within families due to the predetermined factions for this assignment is limited to the purview of said families and simply not subject to recourse from this administration.

Reading Questions for Thomas More's *Utopia* Part Two
Due October 22nd

Read the entire book and answer the following questions (with textual references, of course)

1. Much as we saw in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, it can be difficult to determine the author's tone in *Utopia*. The reader's attempts to understand More's philosophy and purpose are complicated by More's use of himself as a character, his mixing of reality with fantasy and his use of humor. What examples of satirical humor and irony do you find in the description of *Utopia*? How does that affect your view?

2. Considering the fact that More was a devout Catholic, one whose strength of convictions led to his execution, what elements of *Utopia* might seem incompatible with Christian doctrine and therefore might support the view that More's book is really a satire rather than an idealized treatise?

3. What does *Utopia* help us see about human nature? Find 4 insights and explain.

Debate Assignment for Thursday, October 29

Morus & More

Orin Albertson

Katherine Bellingham

Sebastian Bise

Owen Frey

* Angelica Hatke

Elisabeth Heisler

Luke Inzeo

Anni Lung

Samuel Lynch

Edwin McClain

Erin Mills

Savannah Patterson

Anastasia Soutsos

Chiara Stocco

Patrick Uhlenkott

Hythloday

Benjamin Beaudoin

Josiah Bise

Aurelia Finch

Tristan Hasseman

Benedict Heisler

Maria Hofbauer

Benjamin Leeds

Kristen Lung

Drew Magro

* Catherine Maher

Owen McClain

Tess Schloemer

Paul Steele

Claudia Uhlenkott

Danielle Weiler

* will be participating online