

Hello parents and student of Omnibus II,

Welcome to Omnibus III! I hope your summer is already providing a pleasant change of pace. That said, it's time to look ahead to the coming school year.

First, a note about summer reading and book pickups.

Because we use the Paideia (or Great Books) method, everyone will need to use the same edition of the books we study; that necessitates identical pagination for discussion purposes. The books for summer reading and for the school year have already been ordered. For logistical considerations, we will wait until they all arrive to alert everyone to the pickup arrangements. I estimate that will be no later than mid July and will send another email with details for pick up sites when the books are ready.

If it's at all possible, it would be advantageous for students to complete the summer assignment in late August/early September in order for the reading to be fresh in their memories for discussion. Of course, if that doesn't fit your schedule, just be sure to ask students to review prior to the start of school.

Please carefully read through the 4 sections below as they will provide essential information for the summer and for the school year ahead.

Thank you in advance for your help — I look forward to working with your student in the coming year. In the meantime, have a wonderful summer!

Cindy Leahy

**Below you will find:**

- I) Omnibus II course syllabus
- II) Omnibus II Book List (for your information — please do NOT try to order)
- III) summer reading assignment due September 21 (first day of class)
- IV) supplies to bring to class & general instructions for assignments

**SECTION I**  
**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.

**Unit One** -- Introduction to the Paidea method, Medieval drama

**September 17** -- *Famous Men of the Middle Ages*

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

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

**October 1**-- 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 (class will not meet)

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

**October 22** -- 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** -- pages 3 - 71

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

**November 12** -- 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** --Chapters 1 - 8 The Mythical History of England, Merlin, Arthur, Sir Gawain Caradoc Briefbras, Launcelot of the Lake

**December 3** -- 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 (class will not meet)

**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*

## **SECTION II**

**2020- 21 Omnibus II texts for this year** (other materials will be provided through handouts). Please do NOT attempt to order these texts as your materials fees have already purchased them.

*Famous Men of the Middle Ages* by John Haaren

*Bulfinch's Mythology* by Thomas Bulfinch

*Beowulf* translated by Seamus Heaney

*Dante's Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, translated by Mark Musa

*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

### **SECTION III**

Greetings Omnibus II students and their families,

Following is the **assignment, due the first day of class** (in our case, September 17th).

**Read the following directions very carefully.**

As you read set up a separate page for each featured famous person; you may use the back of a page in order to save paper.

Here is the format for each page:

- 1) Name
- 2) Country
- 3) Birth and Death Dates
- 4) Two complete sentences summarizing the main contributions of the famous person. Your question to ask as you read: what did this person do that was most important?

Please do all writing in pen with legible handwriting or use a typewritten format. Proofread carefully so that you know you have both complete sentences and proper punctuation. Thank you.

We'll have an open notes quiz on the first day of class, so be prepared with good notes!

Any questions? Just contact me at [tceleahy@visuallink.com](mailto:tceleahy@visuallink.com) or by phone at 837 1599.

Happy reading,

Mrs. Cindy Leahy

### **SECTION IV**

#### **SUPPLIES TO BRING TO CLASS EVERY WEEK**

- 1) 3 ring binder with standard looseleaf notebook paper for taking notes. I recommend pens for note taking.
- 2) Dividers for keeping the notebook organized. I suggest making labels that correspond with the units on the syllabus.
- 3) The text we're reading from.

## INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Please only use looseleaf paper and ink OR typewritten format for assignments. The frayed edged of spiral bound notebooks are a nuisance, both at school and at home. Pencil smears and is very difficult for my eyes to read.

Homework will vary slightly in length from week to week. Pacing is typically adjusting to allow more time at the beginning of an author's work so that students can adjust to the author's style.

Typical time for completion of weekly reading /research assignments is between two hours and three hours per week. The purpose of the questions is to have material that's easily accessible for class discussions.

For that reason, **I always ask that students have the following for each question.**

- 1) at least 3 potential answers (depending on the question, there may be more) succinctly stated.
- 2) for EACH potential answer, there MUST be a text reference, i.e., a page number or line number for ready access.
- 3) for each reference, highlight or otherwise mark in the text, again, for easy reference.

Following these instructions will greatly facilitate meaningful class discussions, as well as provide valuable material for essay assignments.

Writing assignments are given well in advance, so that students have the flexibility to plan and to gather material for the assignment. Please make every effort to support your child in developing good writing habits by having him start early. Papers begun late are rarely well done — and it's not the habit you want your child to develop for college!

Instructions for assignments are written so that they can be carefully fulfilled. Please help your child establish the habit of making sure all tasks are completed. It's a wonderful -- and essential -- student skill to develop!

There are no grades given in this class; rather, I give written comments on writing assignments with the goal being to help students learn the art and science of writing well. I comment on what is well done, as well as what needs improvement. In order to be of genuine use to the developing writer, these comments need to be specific and honest. Through this method, writers gradually learn to evaluate their own work effectively, which is our ultimate goal.

**If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.**