



## Great Ideas I Syllabus

**Term:** 2011-12

**Teacher:** Mr. Brent Beaumont  
brentbeaumont@gmail.com

### **Course Description**

Beginning with the ancient Greeks, we will investigate and explore the great ideas and thinkers that make up the Western tradition and have shaped the course of Western history. This course will be conducted primarily in a seminar format with heavy emphasis on reading and discussing primary sources. Students will read selections from Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and others. Covering the periods of antiquity and Christendom, the goal of this course is to understand the worldviews that shaped the West during those times and how these worldviews contribute to our understanding of the world and of ourselves.

### **Primary Texts**

Hesiod. *Theogony* and *Works and Days*

Plato. *Meno* and *Timaeus*

Aristotle. *Selected Works*, ed. by Hippocrates G. Apostle and Lloyd P. Gerson

*Holy Bible*

Augustine. *Confessions*

Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*

Anselm. *The Major Works*

Aquinas. *A Shorter Summa*, ed. by Peter Kreeft

Shakespeare. *Hamlet*

### **Evaluation**

Participation 40%

Essays/Exams 40%

Homework/Quizzes 20%

### **Participation**

The majority of class-time will be spent discussing the readings. Active participation in classroom discussions is vital not only for individual learning, but also for the learning of the class as a whole. The participation grade will be based on the frequency of the student's involvement as well as the quality of his contributions.

## Course Outline

### 1<sup>st</sup> Semester: Antiquity

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1	Introduction/Mythic Vision	Hesiod
2	Mythic Vision	Hesiod
3	Mythic Vision	Homer
4	Birth of Philosophy	Selected Pre-Socratics
5	Greek Enlightenment	Selected Pre-Socratics
6	Socrates & The Platonic Hero	<i>Meno</i>
7	Socrates & The Platonic Hero	<i>Meno</i>
8	The Philosopher's Quest	<i>Timaeus</i>
9	The Philosopher's Quest	<i>Timaeus</i>
10	Aristotle and the Greek Balance	<i>Categories</i>
11	Aristotle and the Greek Balance	<i>Physics</i>
12	Aristotle and the Greek Balance	<i>Metaphysics</i>
13	Aristotle and the Greek Balance	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
14	Astronomy and Mathematics	Selected readings
15	Neoplatonism	Selected readings
16	Rome	Selected readings
17	Review	
18	Exam	

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester: Christendom

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1	Judaic Monotheism	Selected Old Testament Readings
2	The Pauline Vision	Romans
3	The Pauline Vision	1 & 2 Corinthians
4	Christianity and Platonism	Selected Early Church Fathers
5	Conversion of the Pagan Mind	Church Fathers and <i>Confessions</i>
6	Augustinian Legacy	<i>Confessions</i>
7	Augustinian Legacy	<i>Confessions</i>
8	Boethius	<i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i>
9	Boethius	<i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i>
10	Scholastic Awakening	Anselm
11	Scholastic Awakening	Anselm
12	Quest of Thomas Aquinas	<i>Shorter Summa</i>
13	Quest of Thomas Aquinas	<i>Shorter Summa</i>
14	Rise of Secular Thought	<i>Hamlet</i>
15	Rebirth of Classical Humanism	<i>Hamlet</i>
16	At the Threshold	<i>Hamlet</i>
17	Review	
18	Exam	