

## **How Revolutionary Ideas about Justice Have Shaped the American Experience: A Look at the Literature**

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### **Raison d' Etre**

Somewhere, once upon a time, I learned that the value of a liberal education is that it gives you the ability to examine the programs of life against larger questions and purposes. This requires that you read broadly and expose yourself to great minds. What I'd like to do for my students is to give them tools for thinking and open their minds, or at least bring them to the "threshold of their own understanding" (1). The alternative to this is to experience a narrow education, which creates an inability to evaluate the underlying assumptions of one's own beliefs.

### **The Class and Advanced Placement (AP) Course Requirements**

The philosophical questions about the nature of justice would be an appropriate starting point for my instruction on the *Revolutionary Period in American Literary History*, where students examine how our search for truth about human rights, God and the role of government in our lives all intertwine. This is where I begin the rhetorical analysis course with my junior-level Advanced Placement Language and Composition class. The AP curriculum for AP English requires both analytical writing, (where the student examines the persuasive devices used by non-fiction writers and is able to write with clarity and precision), and critical reading and writing about poetry and fiction. In order to achieve this, students must be exposed to a macrocosmic view of the history and cultural milieu in which these authors wrote, and receive background about what prior knowledge and philosophical tenets shaped them. The crucial part of this course for the teacher is in teaching the student "how to read." This requires that they be able to discuss subject, occasion, audience, and purpose for each text they encounter and to explain the effects of word choice, metaphor, imagery and syntax upon theme and tone. The stronger students will also begin to make connections to deeper meaning through an examination of the writer's allusions. These are the minimum requirements for reading proficiency. Once they can read critically, they must be able to write with fluency. Clearly, students must bring to the course certain basic skills in grammar, usage and mechanics and well as the ability to read at the twelfth grade level or higher.

The district-adopted text for American Literature, called *The Language of Literature*, is a very useful tool to begin with because it does offer a superficial historical background, but does not address some of the specific issues in enough depth to allow its users to come away with solid knowledge of at least three or four issues in the literature and history. That is not its purpose; it is a survey. As a survey, it will be useful for the supplemental readings that I will not have to duplicate. The district-adopted AP text, *The Bedford Reader*, introduces essays written in several different modes and devotes entire

chapters to description, or classification, or cause-effect analysis, and of course, persuasion, and it also gives a synopsis of the writers' backgrounds at the beginning of each essay.

These are my tools. I suspect that many of the additional readings I will use to supplement this course, which has become a survey of the ideas of Plato, Aquinas, Hobbes, and Machievelli will come from these texts. Since this is a literature class, my plan is not to go into extraordinary depth about the foundations of government, but rather to examine some of the persistent themes which men have asked about the soul, about justice, about living in societies, about what is right and what is wrong. These are themes that have particularly haunted the American psyche, and since we are a relatively young country and these are young people, whose inheritance has not been the more worldly, yet negative aspects of philosophers like Hobbes and Machievelli, I would like to provide some sort of counterbalance to the often tired, overly simplistic, idealism often taught in public high schools. Students, on the other hand, do understand guile, and while they cannot always attach a name to a condition, nonetheless, they can point out examples from Shakespeare, in particular, where leaders rarely act in good conscience. Macbeth and Hamlet are two great characters to use to make the point that we do need to know more about some of the more jaded aspects of political philosophy if we are to understand governments, as well as the fellow who signs our paychecks.

What I would like to bring to this discussion, based on my own knowledge as a high school teacher, are the very profound thoughts of some of the western philosophers. It is not possible within the scope of this unit to cover everything; therefore, I would like to focus on the texts, which I believe would help students understand the past, its ethics, and its issues. Before these college bound, mostly science- and mathematics-oriented students leave high school, I would like to ignite a spark that will help them distinguish between shadow and substance, and sort through some of the presumptions they have internalized from the media and popular culture, which are in some cases propaganda, brainwashing, or just plain misguided. I will build this unit so that the students I teach as juniors will be able to move into my senior level AP British Literature class with at least a few names to which to attach certain ideas. I expect this unit, apart from the writing and skills portion of the course, to take at least a full fall semester.

### **The Advantage and the Problem**

Students at DeBakey High School for Health Professions are diverse. This is a good thing, but it can be daunting for a teacher unless she has the skills to address the widely dichotomous ideas about the world, which are voiced among this highly gifted group of young people. They are different from many other students with respect to their innate talent, but also very similar because they too have been brought up in a society which emphasizes immediate gratification and a relativistic, exclusively secular world view, which may be a good thing from some perspectives, but often leaves young people with the feeling that nothing means anything. My goal as an educator is *not* to insist upon what

they *should* think (although my own biases will be obvious), but to lead them to an understanding of some of the revolutionary ideas which have shaped western thought. Another goal of the course is to convey to students an understanding of what our concepts of GOD and eternal justice, and identity mean within the context of the American, and to a lesser extent the Western experience. Naturally, these selections and this focus will help students arrive at an idea of our vision as a people based on where we came from, where we are now, nationally and internationally, and where we are headed. It is my belief that my students are able to handle these rather difficult issues and absolutely must, if they are to secure and inherit some of the valuable traditions and lessons of our past.

### **Day One: The Initial Plan and Focus with a Student Orientation**

We will begin with the ideas of Plato, and his beliefs will be the basis for the background discussion and a reference point as we proceed through the literature of the first semester. This unit will also cover some of the tangential beliefs of Aquinas, Augustine, Hobbes, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Henry David Thoreau. The basic course information will focus in some depth on Plato and to a lesser extent on Augustine and Aquinas. As previously stated, I think it is best to begin with Plato's *Republic*, Books I - III, and with the following specific theories of Plato. I will provide students with a general background on the opposing beliefs of Heraclitus and Parmenides and their relationship to moral relativism and moral absolutism. That will be followed by a discussion of the historical period in which Plato and Socrates lived – Athens, circa 435 B.C. and the issues surrounding the Peloponnesian War. It is then that I will introduce Plato's ideas on justice, the Socratic method and dialectic, the theory of the divided line, the allegory of the cave, the theory of the tripartite soul and the analogy of the charioteer drawing two horses in different directions (from Phaedrus). Other details I would like to include are the story of Plato's Academy and his ideas of who should lead the state: the educated elite and the philosopher-kings; the magical Ring of Gyges from Book II; and The Myth of Er, which is found in Book X of *The Republic*.

### **Other Requirements**

Other requirements of the course include teaching Aristotelian logic, specifically inductive and deductive reasoning and some of the more common logical fallacies. Here I plan to use *Elements of Argument, A Text and Reader* by Annette T. Rottenburg. Chapter Seven offers a succinct review of logical reasoning and provides useful examples. Other sources might also be used for this since such materials may appear as resources and are common to AP handbooks, yet I also like Rottenburg's selection of essays for analysis, and am considering including several of these as options for use with this unit.

## Day Two: An Overview of the Questions in American Literature

What does it mean to be an American? What does America mean? To Hector Michel St. John de Crevoceur, America was a melting pot for all the nations of Europe, but his notions only included white people, and all others were excluded, until the last half of the twentieth century when American consciousness took legal steps to align civil law with moral law. In reaction to this compromise of ethnic distinctions, sociologists derived a concept different from the melting pot, which they called the salad bowl, the purpose of which was to help people maintain their distinct identities and simultaneously assimilate American values. But this has not proven tenable either except among those whom it most affects – minorities trying to obtain access to the boardrooms. Even there, however, there is much bitterness, because the history and effects of discrimination are still very much a part of our lives. So much of this is a direct effect of what much of our history has wrought. The treatment of the dispossessed, the disinherited, and the colonized and the enslaved has become an American albatross, an embarrassment, especially in retrospect. Yet this is a central concern when examining the American experience because our rhetoric, at least, has always implied that we do have an understanding of natural law and its connection to civil law, but this has been rhetoric and not reality until very recently in our history, and any review of the *Declaration of Independence*, The Revolutionary War, and the *Articles of Confederation*, would be empty without examining the central ironies in the rhetoric versus the reality. This is rarely lost on students, who are likely to insist that America is/was a “white” country because there is rarely justice for anyone else. So I begin with a guiding question: What is justice? Thomas Jefferson said, "I fear for my country if God is just."

Jefferson certainly understood the idea of recollection, which goes back to Plato, who believed we are born with a moral conscience and all we need to know, but that we forget it when we are born. He also had a sense, if we are to believe this quote, that there would be retribution in the afterlife for injustices committed in this life. Part of Jefferson’s quote suggests that a God exacts penalties in the future, and his underlying assumption is that we might want to consider this otherworldly justice since both he and (possibly Plato) believe we are “endowed by our creator with rights and a knowledge of right and wrong.” This echoes Wordsworth, who said in *Ode to Intimations of Immortality*, that “our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting...the star that rises with us, hath elsewhere its setting, and cometh from afar.”

Plato’s Theory of Recollection also supports the idea that we will pay for the wrongs we commit since it basically posits that we are born knowing all we need to know to function morally in the world. This information will be revisited as we work through Plato and I introduce the “Myth of Er” later in the course. Students, especially, juniors and seniors, are concerned with their personal identities. I tell them that this is an American preoccupation that goes all the way back to our founding by Puritans, who were constantly examining their lives for signs of grace. Their “wondering” would

become the diaries, the autobiographies, the early poetry of Anne Bradstreet and Benjamin Franklin. In the Socratic tradition, I will ask them another guiding question early in the semester as they begin to read *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Crucible*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Death of a Salesman*. Again, as we begin to analyze the themes in these novels, I plan to supplement their reading with Plato, Aquinas, Machiavelli and Hobbes.

My question to these new juniors will be: What is the relationship of self reflection (Augustine), individualism (Plato), and identity (Jefferson and Franklin) to the development of the whole person as we conceive it from our uniquely American view of the world, and how does one begin to address identity in a post-modern world which posits that man is just a great cosmic joke, one of the unstated beliefs and often argued premises of modern times: "Nothing means anything, anyway?"

My second guiding question for students will have to do with the purpose of law in our history and when it becomes necessary to disobey the law as opposed to blindly supporting a system that denies man his rights. The question is: What do economics and free enterprise have to do with self-preservation, a limited look at our history and experience in the West? To answer this question, students will read and analyze excerpts from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, particularly chapters thirteen and fourteen. A review of *The Ring of Gyges* in *The Republic*, Book II, and an explanation of its significance to Western ideas about justice should illuminate our discussion about the nature of man and his relationship to natural law, and what the consequences might be of having an exclusively natural law as opposed to civil laws. Such a discussion should send my students to their dictionaries and thesauruses, and to their parents and friends, as they reenact, unconsciously at first, exactly what Socrates did when he went about the seashore of Thebes questioning others about the definition of justice.

## **THE BEGINNING — FALL SEMESTER**

### **Text A: The Narrative**

A thematic story of useful themes in Plato integrated with some of the required readings.

This should take the form of lectures by the teacher, and research, discussion, and writing by the students. It would be useful to ask them to locate and elaborate on each of these theories.

### **Lecture One: Plato**

“Plato is the most celebrated, honored and revered of all the philosophers of the Western world. He lived in Athens twenty-four centuries ago, in the fourth century before Christ, and throughout history since then the praise of Plato has been expressed in figures of speech, which compete with one another in their eloquence. He is said to be the greatest of the philosophers which Western civilization has produced; he is said to be the father of

Western philosophy, the son of the god Apollo; a sublime dramatist and poet with a vision of beauty which enhances all human life; a mystic who, before Christ and Saint Paul, beheld a transcendent realm of goodness, love and beauty; he is said to be the greatest of the moralists and social philosophers of all time. The British philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead said of him that the history of Western philosophy is only a series of footnotes to Plato. And the American philosopher and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said of him, 'Plato is Philosophy, and Philosophy, Plato,' and also, 'Out of Plato come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought'" (Lavine, 9-10).

With this quote from author T.Z. Lavine in *From Socrates to Sartre*, I will introduce my students to the philosopher Plato. Lavine is my primary secondary source on this philosopher and I will depend on him plus the original texts to illuminate my students about the philosophy and his beliefs. This is how I intend to begin the course. I will proceed with my lecture as follows:

"The philosopher Plato, who learned from Socrates, for the most part, tells through his essays the story of the life of Socrates, but we must keep in mind, that we are studying Socratic philosophy through a particular Platonic lens. What is essential that we know about Plato? First he was a Greek aristocrat, an elitist, who tried to establish a coup in Greece to put a stop to the perpetrators of the Peloponnesian War. His side, supported by various relatives, particularly his uncle, Charmides, and his cousin Critias lost the struggle, and this led to the death of his mentor, friend and teacher, Socrates. The problem was that the Reign of the Thirty, the aristocrats who tried to overthrow the Spartans, failed and set the stage for the trial and subsequent death of Socrates. Plato was about twenty-nine years old when Socrates died, and for the most part, he had spent his life observing this great leader and recording his wanderings among the people of Greece and the surrounding countryside. Essentially, all we know of Socrates and his life and death is through Plato, since only one other version of his death survives. But this is what Plato said about the world and what he said about Socrates.

"Before Plato and Socrates, there were other philosophers in Greece who argued about the nature of reality. There was Heraclitus, who in modern terminology would be considered a relativist. He was also a Sophist. This is where we get the word sophisticated. Heraclitus had traveled outside of Greece and had come to the realization that different people had divergent customs and perceptions about what was true and important. Because of this observation, Heraclitus compared reality to someone standing in a river with a swirling current that was constantly changing, thus, his conclusion was that all reality was change, all truth, relative.

"Opposing him was Parmenides, who insisted that nothing changed at all. For him reality was absolute, as was truth. Apparently there was an ongoing argument between these two until Plato entered the picture with a rather complex assessment which suggests superficially, at least, that both arguments are true."

What Plato argued, based on his Theory of the Divided Line, was that on a sensate or perceptual level, all reality is relative. After all, the seasons change, our bodies, change, and little in the affairs of men on earth remains constant. But remember, Plato saw the things that changed as perceptual, and those things that are constant and unchanging, he placed above the divided line in a category he delineated as the intelligible level – things like truth and beauty. Clearly, Plato laid the groundwork for many of the philosophers who would come after him, particularly Kant and Hegel. (Generally, before the semester ends I introduce these philosophers as well). I want students to recognize that Plato synthesized the theories of flux and permanence, and showed that Heraclitus and Parmenides were both wrong, that reality is not monistic, or characterized by one single quality (Lavine). Reality was dualistic for Plato: both the flux and change of Heraclitus, and the permanent truths of geometry-science, of concepts, of universal truths, which Plato believed, are knowable by reason. Once we have worked through Plato, I introduce a word, metaphysics, which will serve as the category into which we place the foundational thoughts of the American Founders, like Jefferson, Franklin and Paine. Professor Lavine's definition of metaphysics is employed: "Metaphysics is the name for that branch of philosophy which reflects on fundamental reality, and asks, what are its characteristics, what is the nature of reality?"

This synthesis of what things are relative and what things are absolute were philosophical breakthroughs necessary to critical thinking about many of the current issues in America today. Understanding the issues of relativism versus absolutism becomes crucial as students begin to think critically about their world, about American history, its literature, and the modern ethical issues brought about by new medical breakthroughs in science and technology. At this point in our discussion, I find it useful to ask students to list what issues in their lives and in the world in general fall into these categories. Some of the answers I get are the obvious ones. People age, seasons change, opinions change are a few of their responses. Sometimes they tell me more profound things like the fact that we live and die is a constant, but they most often insist that there are no other constants in our relativistic post-modern world. I usually take this opportunity to point out to them that there are civil laws in every society which prohibit killing, but every society also makes exceptions to these laws, as in the case of war, self-defense, and in some cases of abortion. I then ask what, if anything, is *always* wrong? This usually leads to a rather exciting and heated discussion, which often has students changing sides of the room and aligning themselves according to their suppositions based on beliefs they have, but often students do not have a clue as to where they came from.

This then becomes a serendipitous moment. Clearly some of this has already been tested in the classroom. As I have learned in the seminars, I have passed that learning along to students, and have had to opportunity to see what works. In questioning what is right and wrong and why, students generally cite their primary sources: parents, peers, the media, and less often the bible, the Quran, the Torah. Occasionally, someone can cite a chapter and verse to prove a point. Most have heard of the Ten Commandments, fewer know the story behind them. At this juncture, after what is usually a rather noisy session

on the issues of right and wrong, absolutism versus relativism, students will often go home and ask their parents, or visit the library. At this point I've primed the pump. I'm always energized by their willingness to side with Heraclitus or Parmenides, to tout either relativism or absolutism. Many of the more Americanized students, who consider themselves thoroughly modern, are unwilling to take an absolutist stand about anything, and are prone to associate absolutism with fanatical fundamentalism. Most often they will tell me that right and wrong are situational. At this juncture, I will introduce an article by John Leo called "Absolutophobia," and another by Meg Greenfield called "Why Nothing Is Wrong Anymore."

Absolutophobia is an article by journalist Leo, who decries the modern era's tendency to say that nothing is wrong really; it just depends on who calls it wrong. Following his logic, to certain seemingly sound-minded citizens, Aztec sacrifices of virgins to the Gods were right because it was their culture, and so was the Nazi annihilation of Jews because Germans believed they were doing the right thing. Followers of this line of thinking insist that even slavery in America was not too bad since slavery had also occurred in other human civilizations since ancient times. Leo points out that very few proponents of this faulty logic ever examine the basis for their underlying beliefs, but have instead concluded, that in the name of tolerance and political correctness, it is poor form to decry the wrongs of other cultures, or to assume our own value system and way of life could actually be a step up on the ladder of social evolution. In "Why Nothing is Wrong Anymore," author Meg Greenfield makes a similar claim as she shows how our politicians and government leaders simply rename their mistakes, poor judgment and immorality with labels which obfuscate truth. These articles are useful in teaching media literary and critical thinking skills as students learn that many times what looks like sound reasoning and political savvy are simply covers for unscrupulous behaviors.

As we move into some of the texts students read in the course, I ask students to write a short paper explaining their views on Leo and Greenfield's articles. I ask them again to list what things are always right and what things are always wrong. This may appear to be a rather simplistic question, but many adults in our society cannot answer it either or they give you a rote response like the ones found in the old Baltimore catechism and are still unable to make connections to modern issues. My students, on the other hand, are very engaged as they grapple with these ideas, and are often eager to put some teeth behind what they say they believe. So I ask them to write.

The first paper is an exploratory-reflective piece on absolutism versus relativism and their rightful places in one's thinking. It is also a paper requiring them to search their minds, their hearts, the media, and other texts to make sense of the questions. What follows is my sample paper based on Leo and Greenfield's short articles. I will give this to students after they have written their papers as sort of a teacher-made, opinion-editorial review. It will let them know for the first time where I stand on the issue and provide an opening for them further to explore, defend, and evaluate what they have already written and have turned in for a grade. After reading the review below, I will have students read



Machiavelli's *The Prince* and chapters thirteen and fourteen of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* before we return to Plato.

In my review based on "Why Nothing Is Wrong Anymore" and "Absolutophobia" (to be copied for student use), I will ask them to refute, defend, or qualify the statements made below using what they have learned about logical argumentation. I'm sure this paper is not perfect and they will be able to take issue with many of these assertions.

Learning to know right from wrong is a daunting task to teach to children in what seems like a very complicated world. In an ideal world, it becomes the job of adults engaged in childrearing; and for young people, it is the culminating task of growing up, of becoming a person, of building a foundation with the help of parents, teachers, schools, culture and religious institutions. But what happens when the very institutions and individuals upon whom we depend for moral guidance do not understand morality anymore or are caught up in a kind of moral relativism that insists that morality *always depends on the situation*? Well perhaps it does under certain circumstances. But not when you're fifteen with a 22-gage Smith and Wesson rifle in your hand perched on a rooftop and you're filled with teenage angst and alienation. Perhaps then a simple commandment like "thou shalt not kill" reverberating with the echo of Daddy's (God's) voice might be sufficient to stop the hand on the trigger. Instinctly knowing right from wrong is as extinct as a tail on humans is, and maybe that was never an instinct at all. What we can say is this: many people are just confused about the difference between right and wrong.

Meg Greenfield bases her assertions on us calling wrong by a different name. Namely by calling wrong – right and stupid or right and insane, she insists that this is mostly a tool of a long line of politicians who engage in the logical fallacy of renaming the problem in order to avoid dealing with it. This tactic, according to Greenfield is a deliberate obfuscation of issues designed to allow its perpetrators to get away with their misdeeds. Although Greenfield does not go into much detail here, there are a number of examples in our daily newspapers that include everything from public fraud to embezzlement to lying under oath – all called right and not necessarily unconstitutional. What is wrong with this picture is that it gives a false message to private citizens, poor people, and especially children, all of whom are not 'empowered' to get away with wrongdoing so easily. But what is beneath the surface is that too many people have stopped recognizing anything as absolutely wrong. (Note the prevalence of shoplifting and cheating that goes on in stores and schools, which is perpetrated by teens who do it because they 'can get away with it,' and do not avoid these crimes on the basis of having knowledge and the will to do what both natural and civil law deems right behavior). Here I mean right as in good judgment, sound actions and legal decree, as opposed to their opposites. True, a few might be troubled by conscience, while others will insist that they simply did not understand why stealing or cheating was wrong when 'everybody does it.' Perhaps a lesson on the dangers of 'bandwagon logic' would be helpful or the adage of every mother worth her salt – the mother who says: 'just because everybody's doing it, doesn't make it right.' We do know that individual and societal wrong-doing like the

falsehood it perpetrates, becomes more complex with time and repetition, but does that also suggest that understanding *what* is wrong will also become more complex?

John Leo argues that young people hardly know how to say something is wrong anymore because of absolutophobia and he blames the often-misunderstood teaching of multiculturalism for part of the problem. Students often leave classes on tolerance and diversity with the false notion that respecting someone else's culture means that you do not pronounce something wrong in that culture even when the actions appear wrong. Leo gives examples of young people condoning the Holocaust, human sacrifice, and slavery out of respect for people in another time who believed a certain way. The problem here lies in not understanding fully that wrong is wrong across all boundaries. Human justice, morality and heroism can be recognized across all borders throughout time, can they not? Then, is it not also hazy thinking to call a wrong, right, for any reason? It is true, as young people love to point out, that people may interpret things differently, but consider this: We would have no freedom, society, or culture at all unless we could agree on some common basis for our laws and our rights. Before civil law, there is moral law. And before moral law, or without moral law, is it safe to say that there are barbarians?

So what kind of common ground is there? Religion and philosophy around the world, while different, all uphold certain things like maintaining truth, beauty, and respect for life, property, and the earth itself as moral obligations of the human race. And it is also true, as any situational analysis will tell you, that sometimes, what is right is hard to determine – but what is not said is that this is part, if not all, of our task on earth – the challenge to learn goodness and righteousness and do it. That requires dependence on an authority higher than ourselves, does it not? And does not everything else lend itself to both the false notions of complexity and confusion?" (Espre).

Step Two: By now students have read *The Prince* and excerpts from *Leviathan*. They are beginning to understand the complexity of the justice question in a world of politics. Before they write the second paper, we will discuss these texts. Machievelli is known the world over for his ideas on how to conduct the affairs of state so that the ruler, the more powerful, will manipulate and triumph over his enemies. The term "Machievellian machinations" has the negative connotation of being associated with a person who manipulates outcomes to his own advantage with no concern for moral implications or the well being of others, but the question remains: Was Machievelli truly corrupt or are those of us who read him thus essentially naïve? Students will address these questions in class discussions as they finish *The Prince* and begin to outline the following notes on Hobbes' *Leviathan*, chapter thirteen, which focuses on the nature of man in his will to power, peace, and justice. The notes which follow can be placed on the overhead projector, but should only be used as notes and discussion topics after students have attempted a close reading of the text.

Hobbes draws the following conclusions:

1. Differences between men are minimal, and where there is a difference in physical strength, man is able to compensate. The weak can over take the strong and often do.
2. Men are more equal in mental abilities except for verbal acuity and science, which are limited to a few.
3. “Prudence is experience. Time bestows on all men that which they equally apply themselves to” (Hobbes). He also says that this only seems incredible because we are conceited and think we know more than everyone else does, especially the Vulgar. “Our wit is close to us; others’ wit is distant.” He says that we are equal in that perspective.
4. Hobbes says the greatest sign of equal distribution is that every man is content with his share, which is a rarity. He concludes that equality of ability leads to equality of hope in attaining Ends, but when people desire the same things, which they cannot enjoy, they become Enemies and on the way to self-preservation they try to destroy each other. He contends that if a man has power, he should expect others to come with forces prepared to dispossess and deprive him not only of the fruit of his labor, but also life and liberty. Then the cycle repeats itself and the invader becomes the invaded. Man, he says, tries to master other men by anticipating their intents to master and overpower him. He notes that there are men who try to conquer others beyond what their security requires and they find pleasure in acts of conquest. This is satisfactory he says as long as others are satisfied with modest bounds.
5. Hobbes, in discussing how war comes about and laws are necessary, begins by noting that men take no pleasure in keeping company with weaker men because every man wants his companion to value him and he wants to be valued. To the extent man is able to dominate those who hold him in contempt, he stops others by the example of his dominance. Sounding like Machievelli, he concludes that such a man will know how to make his enemies destroy each other. The principal causes of quarrel in the nature of man according to Hobbes are competition, diffidence, and glory. He says that without a common power to keep them in awe, men are at war – every man against every man. So in war, power does not consist of the actual fighting, but in the known disposition to fight. This, he says, makes for peace. He says that experience teaches us that in war there is no place for industry, culture, navigation, knowledge, arts, letters or society. When we protect ourselves, we are suggesting that we are capable of war.
6. Hobbes continues in this vein, reasoning that when man cannot find peace, “as far as he has hopes of attaining it; and when he cannot attain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of war.” Hobbes continues: “That a man be willing, when others are so to, as for Peace, to lay down his right to all things, and be contented with

so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself. He says the first and fundamental Law of Nature is to seek peace and follow it. The second Right of Nature is to defend ourselves “by all the means we can.”

7. Finally Hobbes makes an argument for Law by asserting that where there is no common power, there is no law, and where there is no law, no justice. He reminds us that force and fraud in war are the two cardinal virtues, and that justice and injustice are not faculties of the mind. They are instead qualities that relate to men in society, not in war. He says that we have to give up some of our rights to maintain peace and insure justice.

The second paper has already begun to form in their minds as I again ask them the question: What is Justice? This paper will be written in several drafts. The second time they write, I want them to address the question based on what they have seen in the world; this is an experiential and reflective piece. They will also have a chance to refute or defend Hobbes and Machievelli. Once I have read and graded these drafts, I will begin the lecture on “Plato’s Ideas on Justice.”

## **Lecture Two: Socrates and Justice (Books 1-3)**

Socrates traveled around the countryside to festivals. He had a wife and children at home, about whom he showed very little concern. He appeared to have made his living by talking to people and getting them to question their own beliefs. At the time of his death, he admitted as much before he drank the hemlock by calling himself a fly that buzzed around the heads of state to pester them. He saw this ‘instigating’ as his purpose, and perhaps himself as a gift to them from the Gods. Nonetheless, one of Socrates’ most famous questions (and one that has frustrated many students and thinkers alike since his time) is the question of justice. Part of what I want students to understand here is that there is more than one valid answer to a question – that the key to evaluating the answer to a question may have as much to do with who is doing the answering as anything else. For this reason, I show them the characters in Socrates. The first man Socrates asks about justice is an elderly businessman who ultimately does not want to be bothered with the question. He states that justice is when you practice fair business and do not deceive others, and when you pay your debts. “Justice,” says Cephalus, “is speaking the truth and paying one’s debts.”

Cephalus’s statement represents a simple version of the creed of the businessman, to speak the truth about your merchandise to your customers and pay your debts to your suppliers. Socrates demolishes this definition by the use of counterexample, an example in which the offered definition does not fit. He asks: would it be just to pay your debt to a madman if you owed him a weapon, which he gave you when he was sane. Cephalus is shown to be far down the ladder of knowledge from knowledge of the highest form of justice. He is on the level of belief, of common sense, of the babble in the cave. Further along in Plato’s Book 3, Socrates asks Polemarchus what justice is. He says that justice is

to be a friend to your friends and an enemy to your enemies. Socrates counters this argument by saying that a truly just man would still not harm his enemies. This opens the way for Thrasymachus, the Sophist, who insists that only the strong have laws and the power to make them. He denies that the laws of the state and morality of individual persons have anything to do with justice. What the strong wish for, he says, becomes law. As for the laws of the state, their justice is actually nothing but the interests of the stronger. Polemarchus believes that might makes right; he replies that it depends on who has the power, and that the powerful are the only ones who get justice because they are the only ones who can afford it. Clearly his answer sounds like everything from Marxism to modern politics.

### **Lecture Three: Socrates' Response to Thrasymachus and Thoughts on Justice**

Using Lavine, as my primary source at this point, with copies for the students of passages from Book One of *The Republic*, I will question students to ascertain their comprehension of the text.

I will ask them to write a summary of Socrates' response to the Sophist Thrasymachus, and will then discuss his refutation point by point as follows: Point One: Socrates refutes Thrasymachus' argument that laws serve the strong, or that conforming to the laws is the morality of the weak. He calls the idea that "might makes right" a kind of ethical relativism which says that what is right depends on who is powerful in any situation (Lavine). Socrates insists that the ruler is hardly infallible and sometimes is able to do what is right for the common man, but even that does not make him just. He also argues that a good ruler will do good things for his subjects, not by accident, but because it is just good sense, and in his own best interest to do so. Socrates says that self interest is a secondary interest of a just ruler, and that the interests of the people are primary, but since Thrasymachus is still not satisfied, Socrates attempts to defend justice as the arena of the wise man.

This is where he ends Book I, but I want to point out to my students his use of the ironic reversal, or turnabout as he returns in Book Four (IV) to indicate that Polemarchus' assertion that justice is giving every man his due is the most sound and reasonable answer to the question of what is justice. Plato shows that it is by remaining true to one's nature and functioning in accordance with the laws of nature, every man finds justice. What Socrates renamed for Polemarchus was the idea of evil. His insistence that the wise man will act in the best interests of others, but will do evil to no man is the crux of his argument. This will raise questions for students, who are not likely to be satisfied with the idea of "giving every man his due," so I will at this point, introduce Plato's Theory of Forms (the idea that all things in a natural state, whether animal, mineral, or man, must act according to their natures), and give them copies of the excerpt on "The Tripartite Soul" found in Lavine, especially since for Plato, ultimate justice is closely tied to justice in the soul.

## **Lecture Four: Plato's "The Tripartite Soul" and "The Ideal State"**

I will begin this session by giving students the following quote, which they will respond to in their Reading Journals, an activity I introduce every year with great flourish as an activity in creative living and something that is not just the activity of artists. Today's quote will come from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and will be used to introduce our work on justice in the soul. The following quote will tie the ancient to the modern as we continue to look at Plato, and begin our initial explorations into the American experience.

Cowardice asks the question – is it safe? Expediency asks the question – is it politic? Vanity asks the question – is it popular? But conscience asks the question – is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular; but one must take it because it is right. (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

### **"The Tripartite Soul" and "The Ideal State"**

For human beings, justice comes from acting in accordance with an essence, which Plato postulated existed in three distinct hierarchical structures, the lowest of which are the bodily appetites and the highest is reason. Lavine says that Plato goes beyond Socrates here. Socrates says that virtue is knowledge and that those who truly know the good will act in accordance with it. Plato, the psychologist, insists that although a person in his reasoning mind may know the good, his ability to do good runs into conflict with his bodily appetites. Plato also says that for humans to achieve their greatest good, their highest goal cannot be pleasure because that is the goal of satisfying the bodily appetites. Instead, he insists that well being and happiness can only come from satisfying all three elements of what it takes to be a whole person.

Interestingly enough, Plato, a non-Christian, sounds a whole lot like the Christian doctrines of the three-personed God. Here, Plato contends that man must use his reason to govern both the spirit and the bodily elements. He uses the analogy of two horses drawn by a chariot to show how reason at the helm has to control both the 'spirit horse' and the 'bodily appetite horse,' each of which moves in opposite directions. A Christian paradigm of this would place the spirit at the helm instead of reason. Plato insists that only in fulfilling all three needs can a person find justice in the soul, which is the ultimate justice for Plato.

"Morality, for Plato, consists in knowing and maintaining the harmony and balance between the rational and the irrational elements of the soul. This balance or harmony of the soul is the justice of the soul (Lavine, 50). For Plato, imbalance comes into the soul when reason comes into conflict with the other two. His idea of spirit contains emotions, and is able to mediate between reason and the body, but is capable of pulling the soul in either direction. This creates another conflict, which must be resolved through an understanding of what truly brings about harmony in the soul. Plato makes the same point

over and over again: that the pursuit of pleasure is not the highest good for humans, and that if you pursue pleasure as a moral end, it will destroy you. "The just man does not allow the several elements in his soul to usurp one another's functions...but rather he sets his house in order," meaning that the just or moral person seeks to find harmony by achieving both self-mastery and self-knowledge to satisfy all three elements of his nature.

The good life for Plato was balance, which was achieved by the dominance of reason over the spirit and body. Plato's ethics then are to question the nature of right and wrong, of good and evil and of what is just and unjust. Unlike later philosophers, he believes that the same kind of justice that could be applied to each individual also applied to the state. He affirms a highest good for man that is absolute, knowable and rational. Plato saw that man was social and that the state itself was natural to a social man; therefore, he believed that the state could be the source of an achievable balance and harmony among men. (Lavine, 56). His Tripartite State corresponded directly to the Tripartite Soul. He postulated three hierarchical classes: the guardians (reason), the military (spirited element), and the producers, who corresponded to the bodily appetites. He believed that guardians, would be pulled from among all classes and educated until the age of fifty when they would assume leadership positions in the state; the highly spirited military would protect the state; and the producers, who operated on the sensate level, would produce goods and services to satisfy the bodily needs. For Plato this would be the ideal state. At this point I will offer students a summary of the Allegory of the Cave and ask them to outline the darkness and light motifs to see whether they can discover the role of the just guardian of an ideal state based on their reading of the allegory. Here we will discuss in detail how the people in darkness who could not see the light and were blinded by it, could only believe in the reality of the shadows of the people walking outside the cave.

One question I will posit in lieu of a novel they have read, *Lesson Before Dying*, by Ernest Gaines, is this: What is the responsibility of those who ascend into the light toward those who only see the shadows? And what does one make of this in terms our history. After all, Socrates was convicted and drank the hemlock, we crucified Christ, and we excommunicated Martin Luther. What does this suggest to us about the risks involved in becoming a guardian and assuming a leadership role that requires a deliberate descent into the darkness, the shadow reality of the cave, in order to bring back the blind into the light of reality – a reality which those in the light might consider just as much of an illusion. "albeit," as Einstein said, " a very persistent one." Is this realistic? By now these students will have grappled with Dr. King's answer that the way to know justice is through an understanding of what is right. I will ask students to make connections between this and Plato's ideas about the nature of the soul and how to achieve harmony in the soul.

### **Third Paper, Second Draft**

Once students have read, researched and discussed Plato and Socrates, I will assign another draft of the “What is Justice Question,” and use this to begin in our reading and discussion of “The Ring of Gyges.” It is here that students will directly address some of the darker, less idealistic questions about the nature of justice and what is right. Many will have already drawn these conclusions from their observations, experiences, and readings, but still do not have the proper references with which to support their assertions. Gyges brings home the important point that “character is who we are in the dark,” as he wields his ring to achieve his own ends at the expense of others. The elements of theme and irony will not be lost on students as they discover the truth inherent in this tale. My question will then be rephrased in this way: Can someone expect every person to live according to his nature in relative peace, without conflict, or must there be some authority outside of man that wields the power of deciding what is truly just?

### **Lecture Five: A Synopsis of the Ring of Gyges in Book II of *The Republic***

In Book II of *The Republic*, Glaucon tells Socrates that he wants to hear justice praised in and of itself because many, he says in reaction to Thrasymachus, insist that to “do injustice, is by nature, good; to suffer injustice, evil, and so when men have both committed and suffered an injustice and have had experience of both, not being able to avoid the one and obtain the other, they think that they had better agree among themselves to have neither; hence there arise laws and mutual covenants” (*The Republic* II, 311).

This appears to be justice only because men, who are incapable of choosing good when no one is watching, will agree to laws to keep their errant natures in check, especially says Plato, when he has also been the victim of injustice. “This they affirm to be the origin and nature of justice,” according to Glaucon, who is trying to bait Socrates into another argument – “it is a mean or compromise between the best of all, which is to do injustice and not be punished, and the worst of all, which is to suffer injustice without the power of retaliation: and justice, being at a middle point between the two; is tolerated not as a good, but as the lesser evil, and honored by reason of the inability of men to do injustice” (311).

Here Plato has Socrates tell the story of the Shepherd Gyges who discovered a magical ring that allowed him to become invisible. The shepherd Gyges, the ancestor of Croesus the Lydian, discovered that by turning his ring inward, he would become invisible, and outward, he would be visible again. This came about as a result of an earthquake, when Gyges found himself in a hollow brazen horse with a long-dead man inside who had a golden ring, which he took for himself



Given the chance to do well, Gyges chose to enter the court of the king as a messenger, become invisible, seduce the queen and slay the king and take over the kingdom. Glaucon's point is to insist to Socrates that man is just, not willingly or because he thinks that justice is any good to him individually, but of necessity, for wherever anyone safely thinks he can be unjust, there he is unjust. The discussion continues with a discussion of the advantages of being entirely just versus giving the appearance that one is just. Socrates ultimately praises Glaucon, and Adeimantes, Plato's brothers, for posing such a powerful argument in favor of injustice that they did not believe in themselves. Socrates then goes on to show the relationship between justice in the individual and justice in the state. Again, I will emphasize to my students that the ideal state for Plato (Socrates) was a good thing, was worth achieving, and was not separate from natural law or the idea of justice in individual men.

I will ask students the meaning of this myth and then tell them the following details as a part of lecture number six.

Adeimantes, Plato's brother, attempts to understand and have Socrates resolve for them how it is that those who are unjust, but who appear just, always seem to prosper, while the truly just, who are rarely perceived as just, are often thrashed and humiliated. Socrates responds by turning to his idea of justice in the state. Using the analogy of how a nearsighted person needs magnification to read, Plato illustrates how justice in the larger view of the state best illustrates justice in the Soul. He points out that even unjust men give alms and make sacrifices to escape the vengeance of heaven. For Plato, the state is the extension of the social individual and ultimately must become answerable to God through its guardians. He discusses what would make a good guardian. He uses the analogy of a dog as a "true philosopher because he distinguishes the face of a friend and of an enemy only by the criterion of knowing and not knowing" (Book II, 320).

He then poses a rhetorical question by asking: "And must not an animal be a lover of learning who determines what he likes and dislikes by the test of knowledge and ignorance?" Since he is trying to achieve justice by educating philosopher kings, Socrates believes that young people should only be taught quality value tales until they are old enough to understand allegory and complicity, and ultimately, "that God is the source of all that is good." All else he considers "true lies" created by men. About this he says, "this ignorance of the soul of him who is deceived may be called the true lies because "the lie in words is only a kind of imitation and shadowy image of a previous affection of the soul, not pure and unadulterated falsehood" (323). Socrates says both men and Gods alike hate true lies, even though he goes on to say that lies are useful in dealing with enemies – something that both Machiavelli and Hobbes would agree with. He also says lies are useful when friends go mad.

By the end of Book II, Socrates insists that God is perfectly simple and true both in word and deed; "he changes not; he deceives not; either by sign or word, by dream or waking vision" (324). Resolving the matter of justice by describing the nature of

guardians, Plato echoing Socrates ends by concluding “that our guardians, as far as men can be, should be true worshippers of the Gods and be like them” (324).

At this point, through careful questioning, I ask students to consider Plato’s conclusions that despite appearances to the contrary, justice on earth can only be rendered by truly just men who both moral and God fearing, and that these men (and women) must be philosophers who are capable of discerning the nature of men – much like dogs do – and perhaps just as simply – through knowledge. These guardians must, like the God they worship, render justice while avoiding evil, guile, and deceit. Obviously, this is contrary to both Machievelli and Hobbes, and students will recognize and debate the contrary views verbally and in writing.

### **Assignment: The Myth of Er**

Students will receive a handout of the “Myth of Er” from *The Republic*, Book X, pp. 437. I will tell students in advance that the Myth of Er is a story by Socrates about a man who died (but did not) and his soul (the self) went on a journey to heaven and hell where he learns some things about the consequences of injustice in the lives of individuals who have gone into the afterlife. I will ask students to summarize this story, which contains everything Plato wants his audience to know about the nature of justice, good and evil, and how to achieve happiness and peace in this life and the next. It appears in Book X of the Republic on pages 437-439. It seems that this would be a good place to familiarize students with the story of Lazarus, who came back from death, particularly since students are expected to be able to identify biblical allusions since there are so many in Western literature. I will also give students the quote below from the “Myth of Er” and have them discuss its meaning before we read the story.

“He will then look at the nature of the soul, and the operation of them when conjoined; and from consideration of all these qualities he will be able to determine which is the better and which is the worse; and so he will choose, giving the name evil to the life which will make his soul more unjust, and good to the life which will make his soul more just; all else he will disregard. For we have seen and know that this is the best choice both in life and after death. A man must take with him into the world below an adamantine faith in truth and light, that there too he may be undazzled by the desire of wealth or the other allurements of evil, lest coming upon tyrannies and similar villainies, he do irremediable wrongs to others and suffer yet worse himself; but let him know how to choose the mean and avoid the extremes on either side, as far as possible, not only in this life, but in all that which is to come. For this is the way to happiness” (Plato 439).

Essentially Er travels to the heavens and witnesses others who have been just, who are allowed to choose their next lives while those who have been unjust are forced to suffer a thousand times the injuries they inflicted on others. He also witnesses how Ardiaeus the tyrant is forced by fierce wild men to stay in the underworld and to pay ten times for each misdeed he has committed. When Er visits the belt of heaven, he witnesses

how the wheels of Heaven are turned by Necessity, and Lachesis, the daughter of Necessity becomes the judge. All of the mortal souls, who were allowed to return to earth for another life, were told to make a choice: “Your genius will not be allotted you, but you will choose your genius; and let him who draws the first lot have the first choice, and the life which he chooses shall be his destiny. Virtue is free, and as a man honours or dishonours her he will have more or less of her; the responsibility is with the chooser – God is justified.” Socrates then goes on to explain how animals, women, and tyrants were all allotted life, lives of good and evil that co-mingled – for he considered this the “supreme peril of the human state.” Socrates’ conclusion is to suggest to Glaucon that each person should then make an effort to find someone who will help him discern between good and evil so that he will always choose the better life as he has opportunity (*The Republic X*, 439).

It is my intent that this discussion of justice in the soul and in the afterlife will lead us directly to Thomas Aquinas and Augustine following an examination of some critical issues in American literature and history. Using the quote from Plato’s *Republic* that “necessity is the mother of invention,” students will discuss how the conditions in society, particularly in the West, which was heavily influenced by Judeo-Christian beliefs, made it ripe for the American idea, the American way, and the foundations of our government. Supplemental readings here might include excerpts from Thomas Paine’s essays, *The Crisis I and II*, and excerpts from John Locke, and Rousseau.

### **Text B: Synopsis of the Selected Readings and Plans for Each**

Students will keep detailed journals of relevant quotes, their ideas, and reactions to these texts concurrently as they read.

The discussion of Jefferson will include his greatest achievement, the fundamental American essay, *The Declaration of Independence*. It is in this document that the leaders of our country became revolutionaries, conscientious objectors to what they perceived to be a form of slavery imposed by King George II of England. Given the socio-political philosophies of the early 1700s, and the feudalistic servitude which most colonists descended from, it becomes clear that this powerful work by Jefferson, and his assertion of God-given rights, “nature’s God” as opposed to the divine right of kings represents a fundamental change in the way men in the future would learn to relate to the state. This covenant commonwealth was not a new concept as students have seen as they read Hobbes in more depth, but the Declaration’s underlying assumptions were fundamentally different: equal rights for all men, the right to overthrow an unjust government, and the ability to command loyalty with the idea that the state itself should be moral were new ideas in Western politics, if not so new to the philosophy. This discussion can be supplemented with the Articles of Confederation as well as the Ten Commandments and Judges from the Bible. Following a discussion of Thomas Jefferson’s *Declaration of Independence*, I will then proceed as follows:

1. Thomas Aquinas' excerpts from *the Summa Theologia* will be compared to excerpts from Hobbes *Leviathan*. Given excerpts from each of these texts to read, I will have students summarize the main points of each and then compare and contrast them. Here my discussion will focus on several guiding questions for students as they read this excerpt from Part I-II, Vol. 20 pp. 226-239. I will introduce Aquinas posing the question, "what is the point of having human laws?" If law is to serve the common good, then what is the difference, Aquinas asks, between divine laws and man-made laws? He will answer that human laws are needed to bring man to virtue (he has Christian virtue in mind); he believes that because man is naturally depraved, then human laws function as pedagogy, a didactic tool needed for most, if not all men. Some, Aquinas says, will respond to divine intervention, but for others he writes: "[because] they are found to be depraved, and prone to vice, and not easily amenable to words, it was necessary for such to be restrained from evil by force and fear, in order that at least they might cease from evil-doing and leave others in peace, and that they themselves, by being accustomed this way, might be brought to do willingly what hitherto they did from fear, and thus become virtuous (227a). He says that this kind of training is the discipline of laws.
2. Next students will read excerpts from Hobbes' *Leviathan*, chapters 14, 15, and 26-28. In chapter fourteen and fifteen, Hobbes defines for the reader his theory of natural laws, and the necessity of the state. For Hobbes, "a law of nature is a precept, or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same, and to omit that by which he thinketh it may be best preserved" (89c). While clearly not as lofty as Aquinas or as idealistic, Hobbes goes on to show that if every man acts in his own self interest, there would be anarchy; therefore, to follow his line of reasoning, man must give up his natural rights for another imperative. He says that if the fundamental law of nature is to seek peace and the second law of nature is to defend ourselves if we cannot seek peace. Since this will not achieve peace, Hobbes' argument proceeds to state that man has to give up his natural rights to the commonwealth – an authority with whom we invest the right to determine which actions are just and which actions are unjust. For Hobbes, the concept of justice is meaningless, until the state with its covenant rights, defines it for us. Hobbes asserts, "that in a state of nature, no right has been transferred, and every man has a right to everything; and consequently, no action can be unjust" (91a). For Hobbes, justice comes into being when there are covenants: the definition of injustice is no other than the not performance of covenant. "And whatsoever is not unjust is just" (91a). I want the students to have some experience with Hobbes and Aquinas before I introduce Dr. Martin Luther King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* and Thoreau's *On Civil Disobedience*.
3. My next assignment will require students to read Martin Luther King's 1960s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* paired with Plato from *Crito* – this section includes Socrates' reasoning as to why he will not escape prison (and death) based on his definition of reason and virtue. I think that there is a way to parallel the lives of these two men,

especially given their histories as the conscience of their countries and the nature of their deaths. Students will be given a prompt to read after which they will analyze MLK's purpose, his rhetorical strategies, and then write meaningful commentary about the significance of this piece and its relevance to the American experience.

4. Students will read, analyze, and compare Henry David Thoreau's 1840s essay, *Civil Disobedience*, a discussion on how to, when to, and why fight injustice, to *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*.
5. Students will read, analyze and discuss "J.R.R. Tolkien's short story, "Leaf by Niggle," for a discussion of one man's vision of justice in the afterlife. This will lead to extended reading of both Augustine's "Confessions" and "City of God," and further examination of Thomas Aquinas for ideas on the nature of divine justice. These readings will also lay the foundation for a careful reading of Milton's poem *Paradise Lost* during students' senior year.
6. Finally, students will read *Sophie's World* by Jostein Gaarder, a novel about the History of Philosophy through the eyes of a fourteen-year-old girl named Sophie, who receives anonymous letters from a mysterious character, by the name of Alberto Knox. Midway through the novel, the worlds change, and the story is told through the eyes of Hilde, another mysterious character who is initially anonymous to Sophie.

## WORKS CITED

(1) Gibran, Kahlil. *The Prophet*. Random House, 1968.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Teacher Resources

“Aquinas, Thomas.” In *Encyclopedia Britannica, Great Books*. Vol. 19. Part 1. University of Chicago, 1989.

I like so much of this, but for the purposes of this unit, particularly in conjunction with American government as it relates to American literature, I will focus on part seven in volume one, which is his “Treatise on the Divine Government.” A thirteenth century Italian, Aquinas also studied liberal arts before deciding to join the religious order against the wishes of his mother.

“Augustine.” In *Encyclopedia Britannica, Great Books*. Vol.18. University of Chicago, 1989.

“The Confessions,” “The City of God,” and “On Christian Doctrine” by Saint Augustine. I will use parts of the Confessions because he begins with the story of his infancy through adolescence, and his early internal life resembles the haunting fears and guilt which many of my students have shared with me, although not with Augustine’s intensity. He was born about a hundred years after Plato died, in the Roman province of Numidia, which is now the eastern coast of Algeria. His first studies were in grammar and literature.

Hitler, Adolph. “On Nation and Race.” From *Mein Kampf*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. Houghton Mifflin, 1971. Found reprinted by permission in *Elements of Argument*. 2nd ed. St. Martin’s Press, 1988.

This is important to use as I teach students to recognize logical fallacies; I want to give them evidence of the kind of thinking which led to a very different form of government from what America has been and is, and to show them how close some Americans came to a similar belief system.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Penguin Books, 1968.

First published in 1651, this book will complement Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, excerpts of which I’d also like to use in the appropriate places. This would also be a great place to include the ideas of Locke and Rousseau.

Horton, Rod W. and Herbert W. Edwards. *Backgrounds of American Literary Thought*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

This book is an essential resource for a teacher and student of American Literature. It chronicles the trends and influences upon American literary thought from the one hundred years preceding and after “The Great Awakening” through the 1970s. It has

been a major source of lecture material and a close reading offers an inside glimpse into the minds and milieu of many of the American writers. This book contains a useful chart in the back, which traces all the “isms” from Aquinas to Literary Existentialism.

Lavine, T.Z. *From Socrates To Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*. Bantam Books, 1984. Written in easy to understand language by Elton Professor of Philosophy at George Washington University, this handy paperback has been a useful resource for many years. Students find it useful in understanding specific theories of Plato in particular. I also use him early in the year with the seniors as I outline and review existentialism.

Samway, Katherine Davies and Gail Whang. *Literature Circles in a Multicultural Classroom*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 1996. Much of the basic methodology that I currently use comes from texts like this one. I will include a few more of these with specific pages, which contain useful ideas.

Sophocles, *The Oedipus Cycle*. Brace and Company, 1977. English versions by Dudley Fitts & Robert Fitzgerald. Harcourt. Students are required to purchase this text for summer reading so I do not expect to reproduce anything. It is a book they use both their sophomore and senior years. I plan to use it in conjunction with the ideas of Plato. It would be useful for the teacher of this course to know the complete tale.