

Great Books Curriculum

Dedicated to the best that has been thought and said.



Spring 2000

Volume 3 Number 1

Great Books Curriculum Earns National Attention

After only its second year of operation, the Wright College Great Books Curriculum was the subject of an in-depth article in the "Wall Street Journal" of college and university publications, the nationally distributed *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The three page article discussed the national renaissance of Great Books programs.

Citing the program's size, philosophy and variety of activities, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article has brought calls from national educational associations and media.

Especially noteworthy was the Wright College Great Books Curriculum student, Keith Morgan, who was interviewed for the article, and who gave perhaps the most significant and profound quote in the



Professor Bruce Gans addressing Professor Lee's Humanities class in a guest lecture on "the Marriage Group" of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a GBC cross curricular activity cited in a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* article.

article. Asked about the value of the Great Books to community college students, Morgan said he saw in them universal themes in the material that went beyond color. In reading "*The Great Gatsby*," Morgan said, "what inner city child can't relate to looking across the tracks and seeing things they want to become, and

wonder if they're willing to compromise who they are to be who they think they want to be? I think if these books, if they are taught the right way, can relate to everyone."

According to Great Books Curriculum Coordinator Bruce Gans, the chief beneficiary of the national attention will "hopefully be Wright students. The best possible outcome would be that the prestige and attention will help our surrounding community realize Wright has a very special and valuable program available at no extra cost, one which can change their lives by exposing them to the best that has been thought and said, and which can also give students an opportunity to go to a four year institution that will appreciate their accomplishments in a

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New Great Books Curriculum Scholarly Journal Written by Wright Students Expected Out by Year's End

The following has been adapted from the preface to the first issue of Symposium:

Expected out by the end of the year will be the first issue of perhaps the first scholarly journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences composed entirely by students in the history of the City Colleges of Chicago: *Symposium*. The focus of *Symposium* is to publish annually student inquiry into the authors who collectively compose the canon, the Great Books. As such, this journal may well be the *only* scholarly journal published by any community college in the country.

But the much more significant meaning of this new journal exists on several other levels. *Symposium* meets several vital needs for students and even faculty.

It is the embodiment of the profound truth; that community college students can write about the best that has been thought and said in Western Culture with proficiency, insight, intellectual excitement and with frequent originality.

The scholarly papers being published in the first issue range in topics from Thucydides and the *Peloponnesian War* to *Beowulf* to Alexander Pope's "Essay on Man" to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

The papers were written under the guidance of professors in different Great Books classes. Almost all the student authors earned public recognition in the form of two academic awards for scholarly work established by the Great Books Curriculum—the Matthew Arnold Prize and the Socrates Prize for which students were nominated by various Great

Books curriculum faculty.

In addition to providing Wright students with a forum for in-depth intellectual inquiry, *Symposium* also aims to forever lay to rest objections raised by faculty and students themselves that real enduring works of the mind are either beyond the abilities of community college students or inconsequential to their interests or intellectual and personal needs.

Symposium contains scholarly papers produced, in some cases by people who have always been indifferent to writing and were unaware of the canon or who had avoided it. With the guidance of their professors, however, all of them were intellectually broadened and stimulated by what they read and in the end gained a pride in their own capacity for intellectual and compositional mastery that will be of use to them in their other classes. It will also enable them to cultivate a richer mental life than they otherwise would have had at their disposal for the rest of their lives. In the process, their insights often opened up new perceptions to the faculty who were to that degree taught by their own students.

In the future, the Great Books Curriculum plans to publish student scholarly work that centers around the semester long theme around which reading lists are currently organized. Great Books Curriculum professors are in the process of asking students who have produced exceptional research papers and essays on Great Books authors to submit hard copies and another one on a 3.5 inch floppy for consideration for the second issue.

Great Books Curriculum Announces Spring Theme: Individual and Society

The Great Books Curriculum, following up on the enthusiastic student response to its fall theme The Quest for Identity, has announced plans to offer this Spring 2000 the theme Individual and Society. As was the case in the fall semester, The Individual and Society will be investigated within and outside the classroom from a variety of angles through lectures, discussions, events and activities. Students will have an opportunity to work out with the greatest minds in history such questions as: "How do institutions and society influence, injure, enhance or even destroy who I am?" "To What Degree Am I What Society Says I Am?

According to Dean of Instruction Don Barshis, The Individual and Society was chosen because it is something many Wright students are deeply concerned about the relationships in their own lives and it is expected people who explore these questions by studying the great authors will be especially stimulated and enlightened.

Dean Barshis, added, "Being able to enroll in several classes that investigate a common question will make studies more coherent and meaningful."

Great Books Curriculum Faculty

Meet Your



Don Barshis
Dean of Instruction



Prof. Buckley
English



Prof. Casals
Social Science



Prof. Gans
**Great Books
Coordinator**



Prof. Gariepy
English



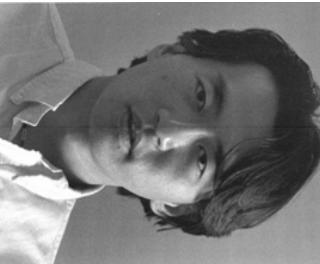
Prof. Hoover
Humanities



Prof. Jaskot-Incan
Speech



Prof. Komai-
Thompson
English



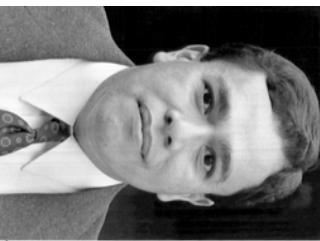
Professor Lee
Humanities



Prof. Maurer
Humanities



Prof. Rosenman
English

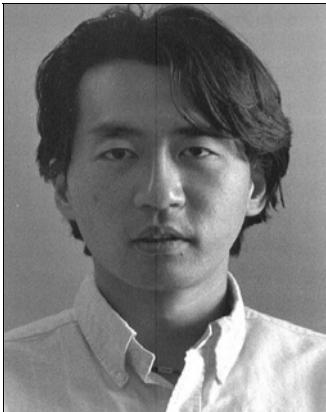


Prof. Virgen
English

Great Books Curriculum Spring 2000 Course Schedule

Professor Buckley	Literature 211 Intro to Shakespeare Section C9 Theme: Individual and Society	Plays and poetry by Shakespeare		
Professor Buckley	English 102 Section D9 Theme: Classic Elements of Argument	Aristotle Machiavelli	Plato Thoreau et. al.	
Professor Casals	History 142 Section D9 and O9 History of World Civilization Since 1500 Theme: Individual and Society	Voltaire: <i>English Letters</i> Rousseau: <i>Social Contract</i>		
Professor Gariepy	English 102 Section O9 Theme: Individual and Society	Cather: "Paul's Case" Ibsen: <i>Doll's House</i> Joyce: <i>Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i>		
Professor Gariepy	Lit 113: Intro to Fiction Section P9 Theme: Individual and Society	Various Great Books Authors		
Professor Komai-Thompson	English 102 Section E9 Theme: Individual and Society	Baldwin, Ellison, Wright		
Professor Perri	Literature 119 F9 Nineteenth Century British Literature	The Romantics and the Victorians		
Professor Rosenman	English 102 Section C9 Theme: Individual and Society	Homer: <i>The Odyssey</i> Sophocles: <i>Elektra</i>		
Professor Rosenman	Literature 110 Section D9 Theme: Individual and Society	Browning Conrad Faulkner	Hawthorne Hemingway Ibsen	Joyce Lawrence Shakespeare
Professor Virgen	English 102 Sections F9 and H9 Theme: Individual and Society	Shakespeare: <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>Merchant of Venice</i>		
Professor Hoover	Humanities 201 Sections F9, O9, Q9 Theme: Individual and Society	St. Augustine Chaucer De Troyes	Euripides Homer	Machiavelli Plato
Professor Lee	Humanities 201 Section G9 P9 R9 Theme: Individual and Society	St. Augustine Chaucer Machiavelli: <i>The Prince</i>	Plato: <i>Symposium</i> Sophocles: <i>Antigone</i>	
Professor Lee	Humanities 202 Section E9 Theme: Individual and Society	Bronte: <i>Wuthering Heights</i> Freud: <i>Civ. And Its Discontents</i> James "Beast in the Jungle"	Marx Nietzsche Proust	
Professor Maurer	Humanities 201 D9 M9	Aristotle St. Augustine Erasmus	Castigione Chaucer <i>Everyman</i>	
Professor Maurer	Humanities 202 Sections F9 O9	Chekhov Descartes	Freud Jefferson	Marx Sartre
Professor Upin	Philosophy 107 Sections F9 Q9	Aristotle Bentham	Kant Plato	

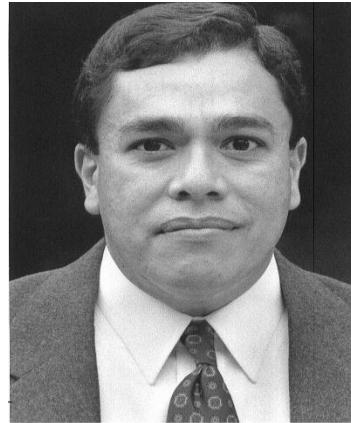
Great Books Curriculum and P.T.K Present First Annual Faculty Symposium in Combined Fall Themes: Quest for Identity in the New Millennium



Professor Lee



Professor Rosenman



Professor Virgen

The Great Books Curriculum presented its first annual all faculty symposium in conjunction with P.T.K. Tuesday, November 30th from 12:15 to 1:30 in the Events Theater. The three member panel, Professor Lee from Humanities, Professor Rosenman and Professor Virgen, the latter both from English, addressed a theme that concerned both organizations this fall: The Quest for Identity in the New Millennium. About half the symposium was devoted to audience participation.

Professor Rosenman drew upon her special expertise in Homer and James Joyce in discussing the quest for identity pursued by Odysseus in *The Odyssey* and Leopold Bloom in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Professor Rosenman regularly teaches Homer and has participated in great books conferences devoted to both Homer and Joyce. Professor Virgen, a Shakespearean scholar who regularly offers Shakespeare in his Greater Books classes, discussed the problems and insights reflected in the quest for identity undertaken by Hamlet.

According to Great Books Curriculum Coordinator Bruce Gans, "For months America has been inundated with spurious, commercialized blather about the significance of the new millennium. Part of the inanity of the blather is a function of businesses out to somehow make this date a stimulus to make extra profits. The rest is a function of media talking

heads who are expert at sounding portentous but not at careful thought. What students heard on November 30th was wisdom, deep reflection and solid knowledge by faculty who gained these things by studying and thinking about profound works of eternal value. The difference is dramatic and shows how the Great Books actually *better* prepare you for current events. It also is the difference between a head filled with useless clichés and a head full of an examined life worth living."

The event which is expected to be held annually, was the concept of Dean of Instruction Don Barshis who said such an event can contribute importantly to intellectual community in the school. The goal of the event is to provide a forum for Great Books students to directly experience impassioned inquiry with a high level of civility, to meet other students with similar interests and to enjoy a feeling of intellectual community.

The event reflects extraordinary work and initiative by P.T.K. officer Carol Guzman who worked on publicity, room arrangements and coordination with Great Books faculty. It takes its name from an account written by Plato of a dinner party held over two thousand years ago and attended by Socrates, Aristophanes and Alcibiades. The conversation concerned a supremely stimulating conversation about love and went far into the night and was a celebration of fellowship. Plato's account became known as *The Symposium* and the name has ever since been conferred on an event where people gather for the fun

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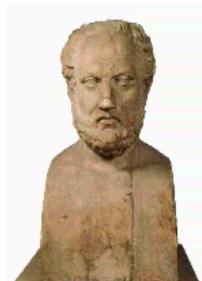
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Jane Austen

that only a tiny fraction of the books ever written inspire, intrigue people for centuries? Centuries has every well-educated expected to be acquainted with? The answer is because these are the most beautiful and profound

re is a new program at Wright where your professors will take actions to make sure you can and really enjoy the things in books that have made them so mankind. The Great Books Curriculum has been the subject of a front page in the New York Times and also articles in the Chicago Tribune and *Time for Higher Education*. And take advantage of it without one extra dime. There is no procedure to go through to be



Thucydides

Great Books courses are being offered in English, Humanities, Philosophy, Social Sciences, and Astronomy. Upon successful completion of 12 Great Books credit hours, you will earn graduation a special *Great Books Track* certification on your official college transcript. What does this apply to a four-year institution this evidence of your achievement and how serious a student you are. This can help impress admissions officers.



Miguel Cervantes

There are also several practical benefits for you. Great Books courses should help you develop your skills in reading, analytical thinking and cultural literacy. These are vital for success in advanced college courses, your job and your personal life. Work you do in a four year college will be based on the books in the Great Books Curriculum. These books can get you there better prepared, more confident and possessing the very deep knowledge that comes from mastering Great Books authors. Most importantly, you will be amazed at how your life will be expanded and enriched because you have entered into "conversations" with Great Books authors. The Great Books Curriculum will have you reading and discussing about the same books that people like Shakespeare and Einstein did when they were in your position. You will be shaped by these books just as they were.

But Wait--There's More!

Papers you write in Great Books Curriculum courses qualify for inclusion in the publication *Symposium* and nominated for citations for outstanding scholarship that will be presented to you at the annual student awards banquet. There will also be a modest amount of scholarship money available, field trips to classical drama productions, participation in annual all school and student symposia are also offered. Lastly, enrollment gives you an opportunity to meet other students in classes and outside discussions professors and other students who share your love of Great Books thereby opening up a new social milieu of intellectual fellowship.

For more information on how to open up new worlds call the Chairman of the Great Books Curriculum, Professor Bruce Gans, at 773-481-8014.

What Makes It A Great Books Course?

A Great Books Course devotes at least half its readings to books by specific authors. To enjoy the benefits, all you have to do is to look for the classes you would normally take in your class schedule. Then just sign up for the class on the list that has the special Great Books designation. That's all there is to it.

What Can I Get Out of It?