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Great Books Seminar: Time

This seminar uses shared inquiry methods of analysis for approaching the Great Books and great ideas. Students learn to use critical reading and thinking skills to understand and enjoy stories, novels, plays, essays, and poems. They are encouraged to grasp the insights into human nature and the important social and philosophical questions that these materials provide. Through discussion, assignments, and exercises, the students learn to articulate verbally and on paper the perennial relevance of themes raised in texts as they pertain to living a well-examined life.

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Introduction

The Great Books seminar is a unique community college course presented here in the hope that it might become a commonly offered one. This is because, while it meets the conventional requirements of a community college literature class concerning term papers and a steady reading load, its primary emphasis is on dialogue and discussion. In contrast to other community college courses, its mission is not to use texts to illustrate literary tools such as point of view, identification of symbols, the disentanglement of theme from plot, and so forth. Its focus is not to train students and enable them to understand literature. Instead, its focus is to provide books as a setting where students can enjoy learning how to read texts closely; explore and analyze their ideas; discover their shortcomings as well as their strengths; make connections between abstract ideas and the world and one's own inner life; and be exposed to insights one has never had before and would not otherwise be aware of—ideas that can enlarge and deepen one's understanding of oneself and life.

As such, the Great Books seminar is offered differently than other courses at Wright Community College. First, the course was not offered in a classroom, but in a room which would enable everyone

to sit at one conference or seminar table. Second, the text assigned is the three-volume *Adult Great Books Program Series*. Third, class discussion used as its anchor the three categories of questions formulated in the Great Books Reading and Discussion Program Reader Aid that came with the series. Fourth, to the degree practicable, the shared inquiry method was employed, with its stress on the students themselves carrying the predominant responsibility for conducting and participating in meaningful dialogue and discussion.

The first time the Great Books seminar was offered, it produced one of the most memorable classes this professor had taught in twenty-five years of community college work, the sort of class that comes to mind with maybe two or three others when one looks back upon the entirety of one's career. Students en masse attended a Great Books Curriculum-sponsored event at the Chicago Humanities Festival. A group of students also began independently meeting on their own after class at a neighborhood coffeehouse to continue the class discussions. They also met in pairs and small groups prior to class, again independently, to better prepare themselves for the upcoming discussion. After only a few weeks the classroom discussions themselves were carried forward with only nominal direction from the professor. Even more wonderful, the student discussions were based squarely on the texts themselves, and they incorporated the examination and raising of major ideas at a level one would expect to find at a far more exclusive college. At the class's conclusion, the students spontaneously insisted upon having and personally catering an in-class farewell party. As a topper, when the class was offered the following semester, over half the class re-enrolled.

It would be pleasant to report that a formula exists which will guarantee that all Great Books seminar classes will produce such results, but if there is one, this professor eagerly hopes to come in contact with it soon. One possible factor within a faculty member's control that could heighten the chances of reproducing such a learning environment for students is the constant reiteration of the value and the difficulty of what the students are attempting. During this class, this professor seized every possible opportunity to inform students that they were engaged in serious and important academic work, an endeavor that was introducing them to a canon of great works that is sublime and inspiring, to habits of intellectual discovery and inner discourse that could nourish a lifetime and enable a person to transcend the prison yard of one's limitations of income level, social status, job, and era. When students had difficulties with understanding the texts, the professor made it a point to candidly explain out that the texts were not written with the plainness of a newspaper article, and that the language did take some practice, but that in time mastery would occur, and this would be a precious achievement which would serve to open the doors of meaning to other texts the students would discover years after the class was over.

In short, doing everything possible to get students to see that what they were studying was to their credit and their honor, that it was highly meaningful, and that they deserved to take pride in what they were attempting, may have contributed importantly to their involvement in the course and the satisfactions they took in it.

Of course, there was no doubt a critical mass of students who were predisposed to enjoy these texts, and that probably played an even greater role, as it does in most classes that are successful.

A successful class, in this author's view, should not be measured by the incisiveness of the papers written for the course. The course as taught by this author requires a four-page paper roughly every four weeks which is graded, plus brief preparations in advance of every new reading, the latter being graded only on the basis of whether the work was done and on time.

Gratifyingly, this author found that there were no complaints about this writing load. It has invariably been accepted as reasonable and expected in a course like this.

In this author's experience, the most interesting essays students compose—by far—are personal narratives about aspects of their own lives which have no connection whatsoever to any formal or abstract thought. The reason for this, however, has nothing to do with a Great Books seminar in itself.

As any decently read, reasonably introspective academic is aware, practically all students, from community college freshmen to Harvard juniors and seniors—as well as most faculty members themselves when they were undergraduates—have had little or nothing to add of originality or striking individuality to the most fundamental of questions about human nature and civilization. Any perusal of daily newspapers, for that matter, demonstrates that striking insights into current events by journalists and columnists are almost equally rare.

With rare exceptions, students today are simply not conversant enough with the basic concepts of psychology, moral philosophy, and symbolic interpretation. Nor are they sufficiently familiar with historical events and the behavior of major figures in history. Being unfamiliar with these areas, they self-evidently have not had the opportunity to meditate deeply or long upon materials of which they are unaware. Hence they do not bring the intellectual experience to the analysis of Great Books texts that would produce a term paper of originality or striking individuality. Consequently, reading their papers is often an experience which requires patience and perseverance.

But from an educational point of view this is besides the point, because the *purpose* of going to college is to *gain* the intellectual tools, the factual information, and the time and the intellectual companionship that are necessary to initiate people into how to think with informed individuality on these topics.

The excitement of a Great Books seminar and the measure of its success, therefore, lies in exposing students to great traditions and depths of thought whose existence they never suspected and watching them learn how to scrutinize the thought itself, drawing justifiable inferences, raising justifiable objections and qualifications, and making these intellectual skills a permanent part of their existence.

But it should be stressed that even at a community college, there is without doubt a percentage of the student population who are hungry for a stimulating intellectual experience that is challenging and which feeds a hunger for exploring the meaning of life. Indeed, the Great Books seminar was developed at the request of the president of Wright College, who was responding to demands for a course that would accommodate working adults who were less interested in pursuing an academic degree than in discussing the Great Ideas in a college setting for personal enrichment.

This is instructive for those contemplating the creation of a Great Books curriculum. For it points up the real possibility of there being an untapped demand—and audience—for Great Books pedagogy.

In the interests of accuracy, however, potential practitioners of a community college Great Books seminar should be forewarned that a community college system is not set up for a Great Books seminar class. This course is classified as a literature class, for example, and as such has an enrollment limit of thirty-five. There is no way around this, since enrolling the highest possible permissible number in each and every class offered is as inviolable a law of the community college world as the law of gravity is in the physical one. This meant that in the case of the Great Books seminar, for example, the “seminar table” consisted of eight folding banquet tables arranged in two parallel rows and taking up an entire room, so that a person sitting at one end of the “table” had to almost shout to make herself heard by students at the other end. The distance from one end of the table to the other put one in mind of the famous scene in *Citizen Kane* at the grotesquely elongated breakfast table which symbolized the distancing of husband and wife.

In offering a Great Books seminar, it is highly recommended that a practitioner consider employing the Adult Great Books Reading and Discussion Program published by the Great Books Foundation. Although these volumes were conceived for informal adult discussion groups unconnected to college or college credits, the sets have several advantages. One is that the selections are substantial in length, unlike those available in the college textbook market. Second, the selections are unadulterated, and the reading list is uncompromisingly drawn from the Great Books canon, which unfortunately makes it literally unique. The selections are also uncompromising in presenting authors of the first rank, regardless of how challenging students and sometimes faculty might find their complex

ideas or prose. These selections challenge students to learn and grow and are in no way dumbed down or diluted in their author lists. Lastly, the Readers Aid which comes with every set is an invaluable tool in providing study questions, term paper topics, and discussion questions. Moreover, there are four different sets of three volumes each. Each set contains enough readings to have students working diligently and continuously throughout a typical sixteen-week semester.

Overview of the Course

The Great Books seminar is a reading and discussion class. Class work will consist of discussion, analysis, and interpretation of assigned readings. When necessary, the professor will present summaries, historical background, and other such information that will render the works assigned more intelligible to students. The goals of this course are:

- to increase critical thinking skills
- to increase cultural literacy
- to train a student to gain increased proficiency in articulating and interpreting complex ideas and to thereby logically compare and synthesize conflicting views
- to think by combining knowledge and intellectual independence
- to be exposed to the most important questions concerning the human condition and to become familiar with, and stimulated by, what the greatest minds have had to say about them
- to grow comfortable forever afterward in approaching the most complex and challenging texts

To accomplish these goals, great emphasis is therefore placed upon preparing adequately for the reading assigned to be discussed in every class. An equal emphasis will be placed upon a student being fully and regularly involved in every class discussion. To do this the following will be required:

1. Every reading assignment will be accompanied by the assignment of several “study questions.” These will be taken from the far longer list of discussion questions supplied with the anthology. The student response to each question must be typed and a minimum of 250 words. The student responses will also be used to initiate class discussions on the assigned texts.
2. Every four weeks a student will be required to hand in a four-page typed paper that responds to a point or points a student wants to make by way of analysis and interpretation of one or more of the texts. Conscientiousness, depth of insight, and proficiency in written language as well as possible factors such as research and presentation will be the major considerations in evaluating student work. To qualify for an “A” every written assignment *must be turned in on time. Meeting a deadline is an integral part of every assignment. Five points will be deducted for each late class period. No assignment will be accepted more than two weeks after it has been assigned.*

Summary: Every reading assignment must contain highlighting and a page of analysis and reflection on the date it is due in order for a student to receive credit for it. Students will be expected to participate regularly and in depth in the class discussions. Students will also turn in a four-page discussion of one of the works discussed in class four times during the semester for evaluation and feedback. These materials, in conjunction with students’ in-class participation, will be the basis of their grades. By course’s end students will have done approximately 4,000 words in writing.

Texts

All of the texts read in this seminar (and listed below) are contained in the *Great Books Anthology: Third Series*, published by the Great Books Foundation.

Mill, *On Liberty* (portions)

Homer, *The Iliad* (portions)

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (excerpts)

Clausewitz, "What Is War?" (from *On War*)

Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Montesquieu, "Principles of Government" (from *Spirit of the Laws*)

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Schopenhauer, "Wisdom of Life"

Gospel of St. Mark

Tolstoy, "The Death of Ivan Ilych"

Chekhov, *Uncle Vanya*

Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* (selections)

Course Objectives

:By the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

- Use critical reading and critical thinking to understand and enjoy stories, novels, plays, essays, poems.
- Grasp the insights into human nature and important social and philosophical questions these materials provide.
- Articulate verbally and on paper the perennial relevance of themes raised in texts to living a well examined life.

Class Rules, Guidelines, and Grades

Numerical grades will be assigned to the written projects for the sake of convenience and clarity. Points may be awarded or subtracted at the professor's discretion for particularly strong or weak content. However, since students often demonstrate increased proficiency as they learn the skills being taught during the semester, a student's later work may be given extra weight by the instructor if in his judgment it is more indicative of the student's true skill level. These materials, in conjunction with students' reading preparation and class participation, will be the basis of their grades.

The scale is as follows:

A = 100–90

B = 89–80

C = 79–70

D = 69–60

F = 59–0

Course Rules

1. To qualify for a passing grade in the course, students must hand in all assigned papers.
2. No paper will be accepted more than two weeks beyond its due date.
3. To receive a passing grade, a paper must meet assigned minimum length requirements.
4. Plagiarism is not permitted. Students who plagiarize will receive an automatic "0" which, when averaged in with other grades, will result in an F for the course.
5. All written assignments submitted for grades must be typed. No exceptions will be permitted.

The Four Rules of Shared Inquiry Discussion

(These rules have been excerpted from *An Introduction to Shared Inquiry*, published by the Great Books Foundation.)

1. Only those who have read the selection may take part in the discussion. Participants who have *not* read the selection cannot support their opinions with evidence from the text or make *sound* judgments about what others *say about* the work.
2. Discussion is restricted to the selection that everyone has read. This rule gives everyone an equal chance to contribute because it limits discussion to selections that all participants are familiar with and have before them. When the selection is the focus of discussion, everyone can determine whether facts are accurately recalled or opinions are adequately supported. Talking at length about students' personal experiences or values, or their opinions about other books or movies, is not relevant to the interpretation of the text and may exclude other students from the discussion.
3. All opinions should be supported with evidence from the selection. In shared inquiry discussion, participants are asked to give support for their answers. Making sure that students support their ideas with evidence from the text encourages them to think for themselves and promotes careful reading.
4. Leaders may only ask questions, not answer them. Your job as leader is to help yourself and your participants understand a selection by asking questions that prompt thoughtful inquiry. If students get the impression that you have "the" correct answer, they will look for you to supply it instead of developing their *own* interpretations.

Guidelines for Group Discussion

Remember: This is a cooperative endeavor, so:

1. Stay calm.
2. Stay polite.
3. Stay respectful.
4. Don't raise your voice in anger or be dismissive.

5. Remember that you may misunderstand what a person is saying.
6. The goal is to work together to establish meaning, not compete against one another.
7. No one answer will be right for everyone.
8. There is no such thing in these discussions as *the one right answer*, aside from a matter of fact such as who did what in an assigned story.
9. The goal of the class discussion is not to have a student guess the right answer, but to participate meaningfully in a thorough *discussion* of all sides of the meaning or the truth or falsity of a text. *Disagreement therefore serves to make for lively discussion and is not to be feared as long as it is done with mutual respect and centers on the ideas themselves.*
10. Group discussion is like a shoot-around in a gym by a professional basketball team. No professional basketball player will ever be able to have the courage to take a shot if he is too worried that he will be humiliated publicly if he misses it. Students therefore should not be overly concerned whether classmates agree with one's personal views or contributions to the discussion. As long as you are addressing the topic under discussion and contributing sincerely, there is no such thing as a wrong or unwelcome comment.
11. Ask for clarification from the leader and the student if you are not following what is being discussed.
12. As part of a lively discussion, it is normal, customary, and even expected to ask—and be asked—by other participants during a discussion to:
 1. clarify your statement by rephrasing it
 2. provide an example to make your view more clear
 3. define your terms
 4. respond to a logical problem your comment may pose

In-Class Requirements

1. Bring your text, a notebook, and pen.
2. Take notes about the discussion.
3. Bring a dictionary.

Homework

Homework will be given regularly. Because it is the policy in this classroom to ingrain in all students the study habits that "A" students follow naturally, homework will normally be checked by the professor when class begins. Students will be marked on a pass or fail basis. Students will be marked solely on whether they have completed the entire assignment on time. Homework is for in-class work, and for that reason the student's percentage of correct answers is of secondary importance here. All reading assignments without exception must be thoroughly underlined in order to qualify a student to receive credit for it. Students who do all of the work on time will receive a P and those who do not complete the entire assignment will receive an F. For every four assignments receiving an F, the student's final grade will be lowered by one full grade.

Students are responsible for finding out about and doing all the homework assignments even if they are not in class on that day. Students, therefore, will be given time during the first day of class to write down the names and phone numbers of two others whom they will be responsible for contacting for assignments if they are absent.

A few simple rules to remember with regard to homework are:

1. Answer the assigned textual analysis

2. Answer the assigned interpretive question
3. Answer the assigned evaluative question
4. Point out something you did not understand in the text or that you especially enjoyed.
5. Underline the text for the class and identify one key word, symbol, or concept

Preparedness

All students are required to buy all of the required textbooks. No exceptions will be permitted, and this includes abject poverty, the inability to get to the bookstore, or the visceral need to economize. It is an obligation equal to that of paying tuition. If the course isn't important enough to you to purchase and use all the assigned texts, you do not belong in the class because you do not bring to it the minimum commitment necessary to pass it. Virtually every class period will be based on a close examination of one or more of the assigned texts. To be able to do the work and to learn and follow class discussions, students must have the texts before their eyes. Therefore, after the third week of the semester all students are expected to bring all their texts to every class. Students who do not do so after this period will receive an F which will serve as the equivalent of one uncompleted homework assignment penalty.

Attendance

After the third week all students are expected to be in class within 15 minutes of its scheduled commencement. To receive a passing grade for the course, a student must attend enough classes so that no more than eight (8) absences are recorded. An exception may be made at the instructor's discretion if he has been notified in advance that a rare circumstance will be at work.

Students are required to attend the entire class and will not be permitted to leave the class early on a regular basis to catch an earlier train or bus or to ride or relieve a babysitter. Students who cannot attend the entire class will be encouraged to take the class at a different time or during a different semester.

Syllabus

Week One

Overview of course content, requirements, and rules

Discussion: Shared inquiry methods of analysis for approaching the Great Books and great ideas

Discussion: How to write a weekly response paper and four-page term paper

Homework: *On Liberty* by J. S. Mill. Vol. 1, pp. 17–44 (portions of chapters 1, 2, and 3)

Week Two

Discussion of how to write term paper, and review of MLA citation rules

Assignment of term paper topics

Discussion of *On Liberty* by J. S. Mill

Homework: *The Iliad* by Homer. Vol. 2, pp. 103–247 (portions of chapters 1–9, 11–12, 14, 16, 20, 22, 24)

Week Three

Discussion of *The Iliad* by Homer

Homework: *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus. Vol. 3, pp. 83–145

Week Four

Discussion of *The Iliad* by Homer

First term paper due

Week Five

Discussion of *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus

Discussion of first term papers and guidance in how to improve them

Homework: *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides. Vol. 1, pp. 197–255 (excerpts; no chapter information available)

Week Six

Discussion of *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides

Second term paper topics discussed

Homework: “What Is War?” by Clausewitz. (Portion from *On War*), pp. 1–24

Week Seven

Discussion of “What Is War?”

Homework: *The Prince* by Machiavelli. Vol. 3, pp. 201–237 (chapters 3, 6, 8, 9, 15–19, 21, 23)

Week Eight

Second term papers due

Discussion of *The Prince* by Machiavelli

Homework: “Principles of Government” by Montesquieu. Vol. 2, pp. 249–274 (portions of *Spirit of the Laws*; chapters 1, 3, 8)

Week Nine

Discussion of second term papers

Discussion of “Principles of Government” by Montesquieu

Homework: *Hamlet* by Shakespeare. Vol. 1, pp. 45–170

Week Ten

Video of *Hamlet* viewed

Discussion of *Hamlet*

Third term paper topics assigned

Week Eleven

Discussion of *Hamlet* by Shakespeare; “Wisdom of Life” by Schopenhauer

Homework: The Gospel of St. Mark. Vol. 1, pp. 173–194 (excerpts)

Week Twelve

Third term paper due.

Discussion of The Gospel of St. Mark

Homework: "The Death of Ivan Ilych" by Tolstoy

Week Thirteen

Discussion of "The Death of Ivan Ilych" by Tolstoy

Homework: *Uncle Vanya* by Chekhov. Vol. 2, pp. 28–81

Week Fourteen

Discussion of *Uncle Vanya* by Chekhov

Homework: *Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer. Selections; "General Prologue," "Wife of Bath Tale," "The Clerk's Tale," pp. 1–81

Week Fifteen

Discussion of *Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer

Week Sixteen

Discussion of *Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer

Final exam

Suggested Paper Topics

(*Very helpful hint.* Strongly consider using as secondary sources the authors in the *Synopticon*. Located at the Reserve Desk at the LRC. Look up topics like love, the individual, human nature, and so on.)

The Great Books themes this semester are *Time* and *Power and Passion*. You may receive five extra credit points on our final paper if you choose to write on one of these themes.

Define power. Be sure your definition includes some of the major forms of power—military, societal, ethical, emotional, and inner power, for example.

1. What does it mean to be powerful and powerless, and what examples of it do you see in the text?
2. Analyze a power struggle discussed in one or more texts. What form of power does each side have and what power does each side lack? What do they want to do with the “power” and why? What power do they use and what power do they fail to use?
3. How do one or more authors view power? As something good or bad or merely necessary? Who does the author think should have power and how much and why? Do you agree with the author or disagree? Explain.
4. How has the conflict for power discussed in one or more of the texts repeated itself over time?
5. What sorts of changes took place in the conflict through time to change and resolve it? In other words, what psychological and physical forces affect events through the passage of time?
6. What unchanging pattern of psychological needs of human beings of any era is revealed through the invention of these stories over time?
7. Evaluate the truth, the accuracy, or the value of the specific insights one or more of the authors presented.
8. What specific psychological analysis about human beings is the author offering?
9. What is the author saying about human nature? Select one or more characters or intellectual assertions of the author to make your point.
10. Compare the ideas presented by two or more of the assigned works. How are they similar and how different? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?

Sample Textual Analysis

Medea

The passage that begins on page 46 contains much greater psychological complexity than might appear at first glance. This is the passage where Medea discusses her plans for murdering her children and her

motives for doing so. Upon a first reading Medea comes across as simply repulsive. She discusses in great detail how she is going to deceive and manipulate Jason in order to murder his new wife and get away with the murder of her own children. Her discussion of the act she is planning to put on makes her sound like the worst sort of politician; entirely self seeking, without conscience, unambivalently stepping on anyone who gets in the way of what she wants.

Medea also seems to be a contemptible sadist as she describes the agony she is going to inflict on Jason's new bride and her father through the gift of a poisoned gown and diadem.

Finally Medea seems to cut off at the pass any possibility that her audience might see things from her point of view when she says frankly that she is acting out of crude "revenge." She is animated by "hate" These are not ennobling motives, they are debasing ones. Moreover, she is doing this to make her husband suffer for his abandonment of her and the exile that she consequently has been sentenced to which Jason will not lift a finger to stop. However, to any criminal justice system and to any human being that is not highly abnormal, you punish directly someone who has broken a civil or moral law. You put him in jail or you stab him with your bare hands, you do not punish him indirectly by inflicting the really serious injury on someone he cares about.

Moreover, Medea uses a justification which has literally been used by Don Corleone in *The Godfather* and by a famous Chicago alderman Vito Marzullo when she says, she is "one who knows how to hurt her enemies and help her friends." She is operating ethically at the level of a gangster or a ward boss.

Lastly, Medea says with her planned multiple murders are a great source of pride to her because she is disproving the stereotype that women in her society are frail, physically and emotionally, incapable of inspiring fear or making those who wrong them pay a dear penalty. There are however other ways to disprove a stereotype than to become a mass murderer (she kills four people in the play). There are far more constructive forms of being self reliant than the monstrous killing of her own children she submits as evidence of her "strength."

At first glance, then, this long speech of hers would seem to reveal Medea as a person as shallow as she is evil and emotionally abnormal, a person not only unsympathetic but uninteresting, a mere psychopath unworthy of being the subject of Greek tragedy.

But in rereading the passage many fine psychological insights of Euripides emerge. For the fact is that the slightest inquiry into the forces that are ignited in the human psyche at the discovery of sexual betrayal by a lover reveals that Medea in a lurid and exaggerated fashion, is expressing a state of mind that is universal. For a sexual betrayal by a lover hits a nerve so deep and of such immense crude violence that it is probably Oedipal in its origins. It is a fact that many societies in human history have made the murder of a wife caught in adultery a capital offense that has been carried out with legal sanction both by the state and by the outraged husband.

Indeed, Medea's entire speech is in a sense a strand by strand unraveling of the emotional devastation that people typically experience as a living nightmare of undifferentiable emotional pain. There is the deep overpowering sense of having been humiliated. There is the betrayal having the effect of having one's sense of personal attractiveness nullified. There is the feeling of being bested by one's betrayer who is triumphing in extraordinary happiness in the arms of another. The normal person who experiences this often responds by being unable to eat for months, by being unable to concentrate, by being tormented throughout the day by thoughts of the betrayer in the arms of the new lover. People also experience nightmares about the betrayer that make sleep all but impossible.

Like Medea, the normal person also inevitably wishes for revenge. Most people have fantasies of revenge whenever someone they know like a boss or a co worker or business competitor insults them. How much more intense is the conscious and unconscious desire to pay back a person who has inflicted one of the most violent emotional wounds it is possible to inflict?

In this light even Medea's pride in her ability to "hurt her enemies and help her friends" can be seen as an important psychological insight by Euripides. For there are some people who are so self

centered and so incapable of conceding the reality of anyone else's humanity that it is only fear that can restrain them from unrestrained cruelty. Jason is one of those people. Had he known that he would lose his children and his marriage as a result of divorcing Medea he would have thought twice. The same can now be said about wife beaters who now face criminal charges when in past years in past societies beating up one's wife was considered a husband's prerogative. Another obvious example is discrimination in our society. It only decreased dramatically when the United States passed unequivocal laws against it and began to enforce those laws everywhere.

Lastly, it might also be argued that the position of women in human societies prior to our own very recent one consisted of more or less second class citizenship and in most cases very much less. Women have also traditionally been raised to be dependent on men emotionally as well as financially and legally. This is now recognized as a falsification of the true nature of women, who are the equal and fellow human beings of men. The point is that any person, let alone any group of people, that have been bullied constantly throughout their lives must as a law of human nature build up a great deal of resentment and rage against such treatment. In this sense, though perverse and self-destructive, Medea's pride in finally taking revenge on a person for whom she sacrificed her family and homeland, upon whom she was rendered totally dependent, is depicted with great profundity and accuracy by Euripides.

Medea still does not elicit sympathy because she resolves her feelings by an unjustifiable murder of innocent children. On the other hand, in her speech Euripides does show with great and perhaps unparalleled skill, the individual forces at work on a soul tormented beyond its capacity to bear.

A Bonus List of Great Books You Might Enjoy after the Class Is Over

(These are typically available when in print at Amazon.com, and when out of print at abe.com.)

TITLE	AUTHOR	
<i>The Neon Wilderness</i>	Nelson	Algren
<i>Winesburg, Ohio</i>	Sherwood	Anderson
<i>Everyman</i>	Anonymous	
<i>Mansfield Park</i>	Jane	Austen
<i>Little Big Man</i>	Thomas	Berger
<i>Arthur Rex</i>	Thomas	Berger
<i>Orrie's Story</i>	Thomas	Berger
<i>Sneaky People</i>	Thomas	Berger
<i>Who Killed Teddy Villanova</i>	Thomas	Berger
<i>Nowhere</i>	Thomas	Berger
<i>This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen</i>	Tadeusz	Borowski
<i>Women</i>	Charles	Bukowski
<i>Post Office</i>	Charles	Bukowski
<i>The Path to Power</i>	Robert	Caro
<i>My Life</i>	Anton	Chekhov
<i>Mrs. Bridge</i>	Evan	Connell
<i>Mr. Bridge</i>	Evan	Connell
<i>Heart of Darkness</i>	Joseph	Conrad
<i>The Secret Agent</i>	Joseph	Conrad
<i>Bleak House</i>	Charles	Dickens
<i>Barnaby Rudge</i>	Charles	Dickens
<i>Sister Carrie</i>	Theodore	Dreiser

<i>The Financier</i>	Theodore	Dreiser
<i>Lost Christianities</i>	Bart	Ehrman
<i>The Mill on the Floss</i>	George	Elliott
<i>The Hamlet</i>	William	Faulkner
<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	F. Scott	Fitzgerald
<i>Madame Bovary</i>	Gustave	Flaubert
<i>New Grubb Street</i>	George	Gissing
<i>I Claudius</i>	Robert	Graves
<i>Claudius the God</i>	Robert	Graves
<i>Far from the Madding Crowd</i>	Thomas	Hardy
<i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>	Thomas	Hardy
<i>Good Solider Schweik</i>	Jaroslav	Hasek
<i>Catch 22</i>	Joseph	Heller
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