

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TOLKIEN'S MYTHOPOEIA

Liberty Common High School

Course Syllabus

Instructor: J. Tullius

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course builds on Liberty's content-based curriculum by offering a full intellectual and Socratic treatment to one of the best-loved trilogies of the 20th century. J.R.R. Tolkien's masterpiece allows for further investigation of narrative and philosophical themes in the western canon while providing particular opportunity for attention to the elements of myth-creation. Discussions and writing assignments will aim at a deeper understanding and appreciation of the literary, moral, and philological depth that *The Lord of the Rings* provides without depriving students of a chance to enjoy the plain genius of a good story.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS AND OBJECTIVES:

The point of the course is to deepen each student's understanding and love of Tolkien's works while fostering a more general appreciation for the importance of story/myth in making sense of human life and significance. If these objectives have any hope of being fulfilled, students must complete the nightly readings and engage wholeheartedly in all opportunities, written and verbal, for reflecting on and discussing the assigned texts and related concepts. Overly passive or disruptive students should expect a corresponding deficit in participation scores. All students are expected to conform to the behavioral and academic standards of Liberty Common High School. Students in the British Literature course are also required to abide by any and all specific class policies listed in additional handoutsⁱ

GRADING:

Participation:	15%
Journal entries:	35%
Assessments:	50%

PARTICIPATION:

Participation will be continually assessed based on student engagement, conduct, and respectful adherence to school and classroom policies.

JOURNALS:

All students must keep a journal or notebook. The primary purpose of this journal is to provide an organized place for written responses to reflection questions, short quiz responses or other tasks. Journals will be collected during block weeks and graded for quality of work as well as tidiness and organization. Students should strive to make their journals a beautiful record of the class, worthy of preserving and referencing in years to come.

ASSESSMENTS:

Assessments for completion, comprehension, and/or extrapolation will happen at various intervals throughout the semester and will take several forms. The best way to be prepared for the assessments is to do all the reading (on schedule) and listen attentively in class.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

The Silmarillion (J. R. R. Tolkien)

The Hobbit (J. R. R. Tolkien)

Tales from the Perilous Realm (J. R. R. Tolkien)

The Languages of Tolkien's Middle-earth (Ruth S. Noel)

COURSE OUTLINEⁱⁱ

Quarter One/Three

- Myth-creation, Story, Preliminary Texts
- Prologue: Concerning Hobbits
- LOTR: The Fellowship of the Ring (Books I and II)
- LOTR: The Two Towers (Book III)
- Midterm Assessment

Quarter Two/Four

- LOTR: The Two Towers (Book IV)
- LOTR: The Return of the King (Books V and VI)
- Annals of the Kings and Rulers (excerpts)
- Appendices (selections)
- Final Assessment/Project

NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism of any kind or degree will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarism means presenting the work (ideas, words, graphs, tables, images, etc.) of someone else as one's own. Ignorance or simple human error will not dismiss or mitigate the consequences for an instance of plagiarism. It is entirely the student's responsibility to have a thorough knowledge of what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it like the plague. *Anyone who is caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the assignment as well as face disciplinary action.*

ⁱ School policies can be found on the website for LCHS or in the parent/student handbook. Mr. Tullius's policies are available online or by request. <https://sites.google.com/a/libertycommon.org/tullius/home>

ⁱⁱ The exact schedule may be subject to change based on practical necessity or unforeseen conflicts. Nevertheless, the general outline will remain true in its content, scope, and sequence.