

# GREAT BOOKS: THE TRUE, THE GOOD, AND THE BEAUTIFUL

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The Great Books: *The True, the Good, and the Beautiful* is a non-major academic program comprising courses that introduce students to the foundational ideas of Western Civilization: the true, the good, and the beautiful, principally through great works in literature, history, and political thought. The program uses a seminar method with two professors who lead Socratic discussion on the texts.

## Objectives

Upon finishing the program, students will gain:

1. Understanding of the liberal arts tradition of the West through its most outstanding authors.
2. The habit of reading and listening to what authors say on enduring questions, shown through
  - a. Cogent papers that base their arguments on the primary texts read.
  - b. Coherent verbal arguments based on those same texts.
3. The ability to enter into a text-based discussion in an attitude of respect and a common search for truth.

## Courses Involved

Code	Title	Hours
GNST-1750	Great Books: Ancient World	3
GNST-2750	Great Books: Medieval World	3
GNST-2850	Great Books: Renaissance World	3
GNST-3750	Great Books: Modern World	3

and writing a Capstone Paper

Ideally, the students would take these courses in chronological order, but it is not required. One can gain insight reading books later in the tradition and then learning the books that inspired them (e.g., reading a Shakespeare play and then reading *Plutarch* where some of its source material came from). Due to the particular difficulty of the moderns, one must have done at least one of the other courses in the program before taking GNST-3750 Great Books: Modern World.

## Acceptance and Continuance in the Program

It is permitted to take these courses without being part of the program. Entrance into the program takes place after students successfully complete one of the courses listed above and communicate their desire to enter the program officially to the Program Coordinator. To continue in the program, students must achieve a grade of C– or better in each of the courses. To complete the program, an average of C for the courses as a whole and a passing grade on the final capstone paper is required.

## Other Activities

In addition to the courses, other optional activities for students in the program include:

- Movie nights with films related to works read. (A past example includes Shakespeare's "Coriolanus.")
- Informal readings of works as a group.
- Students of Great Books courses have created Discovery Day Projects involving production of a classical play. (Past examples include Plautus' "Haunted House," Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex," Aeschylus' "Agamemnon" and "Eumenides.")
- Summer book discussions.