

WINTER 2018

GREAT BOOKS STUDY GROUP

AFTERNOON

FEBRUARY 2ND TO MARCH 23RD, 2018

COURSE TITLE: *GREAT BOOKS ROUNDTABLE: RE-READING THE WESTERN CANON OF CLASSICS IN LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY*

COURSE TEXT: *Great Books Reading and Discussion Program, Series Two.* Three-volume anthology is the required text. \$33.95. Order directly from the Great Books Foundation at **1-800-222-5870**.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This eight-week study group is the sequel to the Fall 2017 class which read and discussed literary and philosophical texts from a three-volume anthology published by the Great Books Foundation in Chicago. The class is organized around the Socratic "shared inquiry" method of discussion to help participants interpret and evaluate the meanings and ideas of classic works from the Western "canon."

COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Patrick T. DeMarco pdemarco@tampabay.rr.com

READING LIST/SCHEDULE: All sessions meet on Friday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:30 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall of the First United Church of Tampa, 7308 East Fowler Avenue, Tampa. (Venue and meeting days may be subject to change.)

- 02/02/18: **Wealth of Nations** (Adam Smith)
- 02/09/18: **Antony and Cleopatra** (William Shakespeare) *
- 02/16/18: **The Knight of Faith** (Soren Kierkegaard)
- 02/23/18: **The Persian Wars** (Herodotus)
- 03/02/18: **Of Civil Government** (John Locke)
- 03/09/18: **Gulliver's Travels** (Jonathan Swift)
- 03/16/18: **Civil Disobedience** (Henry David Thoreau)*
- 03/23/18: **On Liberty** (John Stuart Mill) *

NOTE: Selections with an asterisk * are COMPLETE readings; the others are EXCERPTS from the complete work. Also, the last reading on 03/23/18 is NOT in the anthology but will be provided as a Dover Thrift Edition free of charge to class members.

**OPENING FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSIONS: AFTERNOON
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02/02/18: **Wealth of Nations** (Adam Smith; pp. 127-171, Volume 2)

Focus Question: Does Smith have a bias toward either labor or capital? Does he believe they are natural enemies?

02/09/18: **Antony and Cleopatra** (William Shakespeare; pp. 173-288, Volume 2)

Focus Question: Does Shakespeare glorify and justify the relationship between Antony and Cleopatra as noble, grand, and transcendent, or does he (like his source, Plutarch) imply a moral judgment against them?

02/16/18: **Knight of Faith** (Soren Kierkegaard; pp. 291-312, Volume 2)

Focus Question: Does Kierkegaard want us to believe that one is moved to faith by an act of will or by a surrender of reason?

02/23/18: **The Persian Wars** (Herodotus; pp. 1-126, Volume 3)

Focus Question: How do you evaluate Herodotus as an historian? Is he generally "objective" or do you discern a "bias" in his narrative?

03/02/18: **Of Civil Government** (John Locke; pp. 129-158, Volume 3)

Focus Question: Why does Locke believe that the principal aim and end of government, and the reason for the establishment of civil society, should be the "preservation of property"?

03/09/18: **Gulliver's Travels** (Jonathan Swift; pp. 161-238, Volume 3)

Focus Question: Does Swift want us to believe that the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms (pronounced HOO-ee-nims) represent human beings as they really are, as they might become, or what?

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03/16/18: **Civil Disobedience** (Henry David Thoreau; pp. 241-265, Volume 3)

Focus Question: Why does Thoreau believe that an individual's conscience should prevail over the laws and the needs of the state?

03/23/18: **On Liberty** (John Stuart Mill; special Dover Thrift Edition; complete text)

Focus Question: Does Mill believe that freedom of expression should be absolute and unqualified?