Shakespeare Course Description

A Word about Course Objectives
We believe that the ultimate aim of a complete education is to help each student to flourish, namely, to rightly order his or her soul and body through acquisition of skills and information, growth in discernment and mental acuity, establishment of justified true beliefs, formation of Godly sentiments and habits, and growth in understanding of God, one’s self, humankind, and the rest of God’s creation so that he or she can grow deeper in the love and knowledge of God, becoming more like Christ through the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Torrey Academy can by no means encompass the entirety of such an education in its scope. Hence, while keeping the larger vision in view, we focus on the following essential objectives in the three core classes:

(1) Development of crucial skills—As the basis for true understanding and discernment, the following skills are paramount: critical thinking and reasoning, reading comprehension and biblical hermeneutics, written and oral communication.

(2) Formation of crucial sentiments and habits—As models for students to imitate, tutors and staff will help students value the life of the mind, reverence the Bible as is its due, love and desire God, love one another, value integrated learning across the disciplines, develop humility and self-discipline, cultivate a teachable attitude, defer to others, respect authority, desire holiness, be zealous for Truth and true doctrine, oppose anti-Christian ideologies (specifically: materialism, naturalism, scientism, skepticism, relativism), work diligently, follow through, practice study as an act of worship and service to God.

(3) Establishment of justified true beliefs—While not taught explicitly by the tutors, the following beliefs are assumed as the foundation for all Torrey learning, are modeled by the tutors, and are articulated in many of the texts, especially by the authors in The Inklings curriculum: belief in metaphysical and epistemic realism; that faith and reason work together and are not antithetical; that the various fields of study inform one another and are rightly informed by knowledge of Christ; that religious, aesthetic, and ethical beliefs can be justified and true (or unjustified or false) and therefore are to be considered fields of knowledge; that the Christian cultural and intellectual heritage is rich, beautiful, good, and true and makes the most sense out of reality; that God’s design for human flourishing is holistic, encompassing the intellect, the volition, the affections, and the body; that knowledge of God rightly informs school, vocation, relationships, lifestyle, hobbies, play, and all of life.

Shakespeare
A perfect complement to Faith of our Fathers, this course explores in depth one of the most influential authors of the Western canon of great literature and provides students with an opportunity to experience his works in a Readers Theatre setting. Students study Shakespeare’s plays in an intense discussion-based environment, and learn to take the written words of plays and incarnate them in the manner intended by Shakespeare. The
The reading list is comprised of eleven of Shakespeare’s plays, as well as Aristotle’s *Poetics*. Students will explore the nature of story and narrative, and will be deeply immersed in the study of the culture, history, and politics of Elizabethan England. The class reinforces critical thinking and rhetorical skills and places more emphasis on repeated reading of the text, discussion, and rhetoric, which more closely matches the methodology of the Torrey Honors Institute. This course fulfills ten units of high school fine arts credit and supplements the world literature studied in other Torrey Academy classes.

Specific Course Objectives:

Students will develop an understanding of drama in both written and spoken form. They will be able to
- identify the organizing elements of Shakespearean drama, using Aristotle’s *Poetics* as a framework
- identify, explicate, and respond to key themes and elements in Shakespearean drama, as presented in both written and spoken form

Students will develop rhetorical skills and understand the connection between written and spoken word. They will be able to
- explicate the relationship between written and spoken word in the context of drama
- interpret a written play and actively choose how to verbally and physically present the character and content
- identify and implement various methods of elocution and rhetoric
- prepare for and perform selections from Shakespearean plays in a Readers Theatre format

Students will develop an understanding of Elizabethan culture and its influence on the West both creatively and philosophically. They will be able to
- research and present the background, historical context, and authorial information for a specific Shakespearean text
- explicate the effect that drama has on the understanding of ideas and the ethos of a culture, specifically Shakespeare’s effect on the whole of the West

Course objectives will be realized through intensive reading, writing, discussion, and performance required of the students. The discussion and the writing assignments (in the form of Pull Questions modeled after THI’s format) will serve as the evaluative tools to assess the student’s progress toward the set objectives. Student notebooks serve as a catalog of the student’s progress through the course of the academic year, and the performance and related writing assignment is equivalent to a final exam.