Faith of Our Fathers 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.

Faith of Our Fathers

This course culminates the critical thinking and writing skills of the first two courses and provides a rich foundation in medieval and Renaissance literature, Church history, and theology. Students study the letters, histories, poems, narratives, and theology produced by the Church and society from the New Testament through the Reformation. Authors include Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Eusebius, Athanasius, Augustine, Boethius, Bede, Thomas Aquinas, Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, Geoffrey Chaucer, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Edmund Spenser, and others. Selected
creeds, the Gospel of Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians will also be discussed and studied. We recommend that parents and independent study programs count this class as meeting the requirements for thirty high school academic units: World Literature (ten units), Bible/Theology (ten units), and World (or Church) History (ten units).

Specific Course Objectives:
Students will develop an understanding of medieval and Renaissance literature. They will be able to
• synopsize the major argument or theme of a written work in five sentences
• explicate the key themes of particular literary works
• support their interpretations of a text with textual citations
• research and present the background, historical context, and authorial information for a particular text
• identify and respond to key themes and ideas in medieval and Renaissance literature
• characterize the different genres of allegory, epic poem, essay, and homily
• compare and contrast the ideas and writing styles of the various authors studied
• trace the literary development of early medieval and Renaissance culture and identify key movements

Students will develop an understanding of world/Church history. They will be able to
• trace major historical developments of the medieval and Renaissance West as expressed in literature
• identify the ideas that shaped medieval and Renaissance culture and trace their evolution
• critique these historical and cultural ideas in light of Biblical Theology
• trace the historical development of the Christian Church from the time of Christ through the sixteenth century
• understand the interrelationship of the Christian Church and the medieval and Renaissance West
• support opinions and beliefs about history and culture of Western civilization with reasonable arguments
• respond to opposition to their opinions and beliefs with reasonable rebuttals
• articulate significant historical and cultural theses via formal outline and oral presentation

Students will become proficient in biblical hermeneutics and more competent in theology. They will be able to
• revere the books of the Bible as is due to God’s inspired and inerrant Word
• identify textual and historical context for a biblical passage
• identify and articulate the main theme or argument of a biblical book
• identify and articulate the structure of specific biblical books
• explicate both the meaning and the significance of a biblical passage and distinguish between the two
• understand the historical development of major doctrines of Christian theology
• appreciate the relationship between Christian faith, the life of the mind, and daily living
• apply a historical perspective to Christianity, Christian doctrine, and the contemporary church

Course objectives will be realized through the intensive reading, writing, discussion, research, and oral presentation required of the students. The oral presentations, discussion, and writing assignments 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 final term paper is equivalent to a final exam.