

The Inklings: English and Critical Thinking Course Objectives

This course provides a foundation in critical thinking, academic writing, Christian thought, and biblical hermeneutics. Students explore the works of the twentieth-century group of Christian writers and thinkers known as the Inklings, as well as authors who influenced or were influenced by their writing. Readings include works from C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton, Dorothy L. Sayers, T.S. Eliot, Sheldon Vanauken, J.R.R. Tolkien, and others. The Gospel of John and hermeneutic materials will also be discussed and studied. We recommend that parents and independent study programs count this class as meeting the requirements for 20 high school academic credits: English Composition and Literature (ten credits) and Critical Thinking (ten credits).

Students will analyze and interpret the texts of the Inklings in collaboration with others.

Students will begin to

- identify and analyze the structure of fiction, non-fiction, and Biblical texts
- identify and summarize major arguments of non-fiction and Biblical texts
- summarize fictional plots
- identify and analyze major themes in fiction and Biblical texts
- compose and support compelling argumentative thesis statements
 - support a thesis with a well-organized written argument of 5-6 pages
 - apply textual and historical context in interpreting textual passages
 - support interpretations of a text with textual citations
 - visualize an intended audience and articulate opposition to a thesis

Students will apply knowledge gained from a synthesis of multiple texts and discussions.

Students will begin to

- identify major elements of Christian theology
- evaluate ideas based on the Bible as the ultimate authority on Truth
- synthesize the relationship between Christian faith, the life of the mind, and daily living
- demonstrate a willingness to change beliefs and behaviors due to the insight of others
- apply Christian thinking to their own lives by pursuing challenging application questions

Students will contribute in intellectual discussion confidently, critically, and charitably.

Students will begin to

- ask relevant, critical questions about texts and ideas
- distinguish between good and bad arguments
- articulate significant ideas in their own words using outline and paragraph forms
- format written work and citations according to an academic standard (MLA)
- assert opinions and beliefs with courteous and reasonable arguments
- respond to opposition to opinions and beliefs with courteous and reasonable rebuttals

Course objectives will be realized through the intensive reading, writing, and discussion required of the students. The discussion and the 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.