

Catechism* Questions for World Literature

- Why is there suffering in the world and is there a proper way to face personal as well as empathic suffering?
- What does it mean to be and to have a friend?
- Can evil and sin exist within an individual as well as within the larger world? Is there a proper way to face sin and evil within yourself and within the world you inhabit?
- What are the products of temptation? Are they necessary for human existence?
- What constitutes wisdom? Is it a superior goal for the individual to seek instead of knowledge?
- Does increase of knowledge lead to increase of pain?
- Are laws necessary and is there ever a time where they can be broken by the individual?
- What does it mean to be noble? Is it a worthwhile quest?
- How does time affect us?
- Why does man create?
- Is there a proper way to pursue the “good”?
- Why does belief in the divine persist and is there a cost as well as a benefit to belief? Is there a proper way for the individual and/or community to approach divinity?
- Is there truly a gender difference?
- Is individual responsibility necessary?
- Should we seek to be good and should we seek goodness in others?
- When is it correct to sacrifice yourself for an ideal?
- What possible value can be found in passing on or retelling your story?
- What does it mean to practice wisdom? Is there a cost to do so? A benefit in doing so?
- Is equality possible?
- Is criticism necessary?
- How do values shape the human experience?
- Is Ecclesiastes correct about human vanity?

* **catechism**: series of fixed questions, answers, or precepts used for instruction in other situations.

An Evaluation Model for World Literature

Using the list of “Catechism Questions for World Literature” you will respond to the various works we cover throughout the semester. Each unit of study will contain several works from large pieces to small ones. Your task is to choose two questions from the list to address for each unit evaluation. You will use the studied readings for the unit to formulate your response to the questions. These may be handled individually or jointly*.

You should choose the questions carefully because once you tackle a question you are not allowed to use it in future evaluations. Use the questions to guide your reading and study of the pieces of literature we encounter. Since you know ahead of time what your evaluation will be you can begin to prepare early and often for the task. However, it is probably best to understand the works since some answer certain questions better than others.

Your response should have and will be evaluated upon the five following criteria.

1. Through what method is this particular question being addressed in this particular work or set of works?
2. What appears to be the response of the work(s) to this particular question?
3. What makes this response from this particular reading(s) correct in your view? In other words does it represent a possible or proper or usable modern view or approach to the question?
4. How can this response from this particular text(s) be viewed as in error or as incorrect?
5. What else (ideas/concepts/truths) did you find relevant or necessary in this unit of reading?

Evaluation Criteria

- Validity of response (is your reading correct)
- Support through textual evidence
- Explanation of your thinking
- Organization

* WRITTEN, VIDEO, AUDIO: You may format this as an individual essay or a Socratic discussion held within a small group (no more than 4 peers). You are required in at least two (2) evaluations to do this as an individual essay