

***LITERATURE OF THE  
MEDIEVAL ERA***

**STUDENT WORKBOOK**

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**The Puritans' Home School Curriculum**

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## ASSIGNMENT # 1 (COVERING CHAPTERS 1-5)

1. What were the chief genres of literature produced by early Christian society?
2. The literature chiefly produced by a society reflects that society's culture and beliefs. What does the literature chiefly produced by early Christian society indicate about its culture and beliefs?
3. Compare and contrast the literature generally produced by earlier Christian society with the ancient pagan Greek and Roman literature you have read.
4. Compare and contrast the literature generally produced by earlier Christian society with most modern literature.
5. What is a 'creed'?
6. How does the Nicene Creed teach the doctrine of the Trinity?
7. In the Nicene Creed, what is said to be the relation of the Holy Ghost to the Father and the Son?
8. The *Apostolic Constitutions* open a window for us to witness Christian Church life in many of the churches of the second and third centuries. What does it say about Christian Church life then?
9. The tone of the *Apostolic Constitutions* is solemn and didactic. What does 'didactic' mean?
10. What appears to be the theology of the *Apostolic Constitutions* concerning the Ten Commandments and their role for the Christian church?
11. The issue of canonicity involves which books we should regard as divinely inspired and infallible. What appears to be the theology of the *Apostolic Constitutions* concerning the canon of Old Testament scripture?
12. What appears to be the theology of the *Apostolic Constitutions* concerning the hymns we are to sing?
13. What appears to be the theology of the *Apostolic Constitutions* concerning the reading of the Bible by lay persons?
14. According to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which day of the week is called "the Lord's day"?
15. How does the *Apostolic Constitutions* use the term 'presbyter' different from the term 'bishop'?
16. What is 'canon law'?
17. The first written mandate on record requiring church ministers to be chaste came as a canon of the Council of Elvira. A short time later, in 325, the Council of Nicea, convened by Constantine, rejected a ban on priests marrying requested by Spanish clerics. The Western (Roman Catholic) Church as a whole did not adopt the celibacy requirement until centuries later. Which canon of the Council of Elvira required celibacy of church ministers?
18. How does the issue of ministerial celibacy vindicate the Protestant position that we should look to the Bible alone as our foundation of religious belief and practice, instead of Church tradition?
19. What do the canons of the Council of Elvira indicate was the policy of the Spanish churches concerning pictures in the churches?
20. What does Eusebius indicate were the reasons why he wrote his *History of the Church*?

21. How did his reasons for writing his book influence Eusebius' selection of a genre and tone of his book?
22. How do Eusebius' statements concerning the marital estate of the Apostles in his *History of the Church* bear upon the issue of the celibacy of church ministers (including the Pope)?
23. Basil of Caesarea's work *On the Holy Ghost* is polemical. What does 'polemical' mean?
24. In polemical works, it is generally possible to deduce some of the positions of the writer's philosophical opponent. What did the opponents of Basil of Caesarea's view of the Holy Ghost evidently believe and assert?
25. Basil of Caesarea employs what metaphor in paragraph 25 of Chapter X of his work *On the Holy Ghost*?
26. How does Basil employ imagery to support his metaphor?

## ASSIGNMENT # 2 (COVERING CHAPTERS 6-10)

1. What does the literary term 'tone' mean?
2. Which of these describes the tone of Jerome's "Against Jovianus": somber, solemn, ironic, formal or informal, playful, detached, condescending, or intimate?
3. What similarities are there between John Chrysostom's instructions concerning attire to the catechumens, and the instructions concerning attire in the *Apostolic Constitutions*?
4. We read about catechumens in both John Chrysostom's instructions and the canons of the Council of Elvira. What are 'catechumens'?
5. Based upon your read of John Chrysostom's homily on Matthew 5:17, how would you characterize his understanding of the relation of the Old Testament to the New Testament and their laws?
6. What is a 'homily'?
7. In his homily on Matthew 5:17, John Chrysostom interprets Jesus Christ as using the figure of speech of understatement in the phrase "least in the kingdom of heaven". How so?
8. How is Matthew 5:29 an example of hyperbole?
9. The theme of the Nicene Creed is the Trinity of God. What is the theme of the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon?
10. Over church history, one great impetus for the writing of creeds and confessions has been to counteract various heresies and errors that have arisen against Biblical teaching. The Definition of the Council of Chalcedon, for instance, was written to address the Nestorian heresy. What is the Nestorian heresy?
11. In his polemic *Against Jovianus*, Jerome alludes to this parable or allegory of Jesus: "And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow...But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold." How did Jerome interpret this allegory, relating it to the issue of marriage and virginity?
12. Is there a problem with Jerome's method of interpreting the parable? Why or why not?
13. What is an 'allegory'?
14. Based upon Ambrose's Epistle XVII, what was Ambrose's view of idolatrous worship services?
15. What was Ambrose's view of the duty of the magistrate concerning idolatrous worship services?

### ASSIGNMENT # 3 (COVERING CHAPTERS 11-16)

1. The *Confessions* of Augustine is an auto-biography. What is an 'auto-biography'?
2. At the beginning of Book III of *Confessions* Augustine employs the metaphor of famine. Literally speaking, what is a famine?
3. But in this metaphor, what was Augustine starving for?
4. Yet was Augustine at the time hungry for what he lacked?
5. What was he instead hungry for, though it would not totally feed his soul, and what defiled him as a result of it?
6. What else in Book III does Augustine say drew him away from the love he truly needed?
7. Which book of Cicero had a profound effect on Augustine, turning him to seek divine wisdom?
8. In Book IV Augustine tells about the affair he had out of wedlock. How does Augustine there contrast lawful marriage versus an illicit affair?
9. While Augustine was a Manichee, who had the Manichees told him could answer his quandaries concerning Manicheism?
10. What assertion of the Manichees concerning the New Testament did Augustine begin to question?
11. How does Augustine describe his mother in Book IV?
12. Under what bishop of Milan did Augustine become a catechumen in the Catholic Church?
13. Why does Augustine say Christianity was more honest and unassuming than Manicheism?
14. We read in Book VII of Augustine's being born again. To whom did he then embrace?
15. In his "Treatise on the Merits & Forgiveness of Sins and Baptism of Infants", what does Augustine teach concerning Original Sin?
16. In "On Marriage and Concupiscence", what does Augustine state in chapter 1 is the purpose of his treatise?
17. In "A Treatise on the Predestination of the Saints", how does Augustine refute the objection that if faith is effectively given by God only to some, then He ought to give it to all?
18. In "A Treatise Concerning the Correction of the Donatist", how does Augustine employ the case of Nebuchadnezzar in his argument that magistrates should enforce the moral laws of God?
19. In his "City of God", Augustine contrasts the heavenly city of God with the earthly city. How does he define the earthly city?

## ASSIGNMENT # 4 (COVERING CHAPTERS 17-20)

1. How does the style of Patrick's autobiography contrast with the style of Augustine's?
2. What can we infer about the different education of Patrick and Augustine from the different styles of their autobiographies?
3. How do we know Patrick was conversant with scripture, from reading his "Confessio"?
4. What prominent features of Celtic Christianity can we discern from Patrick's "Confessio" and "Morning Prayer"?
5. What is the theme of Patrick's "Morning Prayer"?
6. What is the effect of repeating the opening words of the poem at the end?
7. Based upon his "Confessio" and "Morning Prayer", does it appear Mariolatry was part of Patrick's religion?
8. Boethius' "Consolation of Philosophy" is quite in contrast to the writings of Christians such as Patrick and Augustine. What pagan elements are displayed in it?
9. What similarities are there between Boethius' "Consolation of Philosophy" and the book of Job in the Bible?
10. In what form did Philosophy come to console Boethius?
11. In his letter to an iconoclast bishop, what did Gregory commend and what rebuke in the bishop?
12. Gregory wrote: "...from the forum of speech to the senate house of the heart..." How did this metaphorical description draw upon the experience of his readers?
13. In the conclusion of his *Moralia*, what does Gregory ask of his readers?

## **ASSIGNMENT # 5 (COVERING CHAPTER 21)**

1. In the opening of the Koran, who is called the “Master of the Day of Judgment”?
2. The chapter in the Koran entitled “The Cow” says much about fighting. When does it say fighting may desist with the enemy of Allah?
3. According to the chapter “The Women”, what is the Islamic doctrine concerning Jesus’ crucifixion?
4. The Jews and the Christians, according to the Koran, are regarded as they who have been given the Book. How are these to acknowledge the superiority of Islam and be in subjection to it, according to the chapter entitled The Immunity?
5. What can we deduce about the culture of Mohammed simply from the chapter titles of the Koran?
6. In the chapter “Abraham”, who is there said to be the 2 sons of Abraham?
7. According to the Koran, did all men descend from one man (Adam) and one woman?
8. In the chapter entitled Marium, who is Yahya, and what was his Biblical name?
9. How does the birth of Jesus in the Koran differ from that in the Bible?
10. Was Mary a virgin when she conceived, according to the Koran?



## ASSIGNMENT # 6 (COVERING CHAPTERS 22-26)

1. Why does John of Damascus believe that no image of God was allowed in the Old Testament?
2. John of Damascus believed images of God are allowed in the New Testament. Why?
3. In Gottschalk's Longer Confession, is he arguing for or against semi-Pelagianism?
4. Would this statement be true or false: Gottschalk believed Pope Gregory the Great believed in double predestination?
5. In the quote of Paschas Radbertus from his *De Corpore Et Sanguine Domini*, Christ becoming flesh in His incarnation in the womb of Mary is compared to what?
6. Of the 6 Medieval songs or poems, which one celebrates the dawn of spring and the passing of winter?
7. The third song features 2 impudent students drinking together before they part, pledging to be true brothers to one another, with a refrain imitating a bugle call. What is the refrain of this poem?
8. How does the refrain affect the mood of the third poem?
9. What is a 'refrain' in a song or poem?
10. Who does the poem say bade them to be brothers true?
11. The first poem of the Medieval Students' Songs is a tenth century piece, consisting of an invitation of a young man to his mistress, bidding her to supper at his home. How does he describe his home to make it enticing?
12. The second song is a begging petition, in which the speaker supplicated the resident of some place he was temporarily staying for alms. What is the occupation of the speaker?
13. For what purpose does he say he needs alms?
14. What is the rhyme scheme?
15. How do we know the speaker is just passing through town?
16. We should not be gullible. This second poem is in the form of a sing-song doggerel. What about this verse, including its form, should make the resident wary of the worthiness of giving alms to this supplicant?
17. In the excerpt from Avicenna's "On Medicine", Avicenna analyzes the causes of sickness and health according to which ancient Greek philosopher's categories of causation?

## ASSIGNMENT # 7 (COVERING CHAPTERS 27-29)

1. Dialectic is an exchange of propositions (theses) and counter-propositions (antitheses) resulting in a synthesis of the opposing assertions, or at least a qualitative transformation in the direction of the dialogue. It is one of the three original liberal arts or trivium (the other members are rhetoric and grammar) in Western culture. In ancient and medieval times, both rhetoric and dialectic were understood to aim at being persuasive (through dialogue). The aim of the dialectical method, often known as *dialectic* or *dialectics*, is to try to resolve the disagreement through rational discussion. How did Anselm, founder of Scholasticism, employ dialectic in his work *Cur Deus Homo*?
2. One form of Dialectic is the Socratic method. The Socratic method shows the falsehood of a contrary proposition, so as to prove the proposition itself. How does Anselm employ the Socratic method, by proving the falsehood of this proposition: 'God could have justly cancelled the debt of human sin by compassion alone'?
3. One flaw of Scholasticism is that it can tend to exaggerate man's ability to reason, unaided by scripture, and in light of the Fall. How does this flaw manifest itself in Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*?
4. How does a scholar's morality influence his scholarship?
5. In Abelard's autobiography, Abelard acknowledges he was given over to sensuality. Was Abelard qualified as a teacher under such circumstances?
6. How did Heloise employ the arguments of Jerome found in Jerome's *Against Jovianus* to show the complications of marriage (like its taking away from studies), to try to show Abelard why he should not marry Heloise?
7. After Abelard was castrated by Heloise's uncle, Abelard became a monk in an abbey. What was life like in the abbey?
8. To what authority did Abelard turn to support the proposition that nothing can beget itself?
9. In his Sentences, how many sacraments did Peter Lombard indicate exist? 7
10. How did Peter Lombard define 'sacrament'?
11. How does Lombard's definition and description of 'sacrament' differ from the reformed definition?
12. Given the Roman Catholic doctrine of baptism, why does Peter Lombard feel compelled to explain why circumcision was commanded to be delayed to the 8<sup>th</sup> day?

## ASSIGNMENT # 8 (COVERING CHAPTERS 30-34)

1. What does the Nolla Leycon of the Waldenses teach concerning the Trinity?
2. What does the Nolla Leycon imply about the identity of the Anti-Christ?
3. What sacraments did the Nolla Leycon recognize as being scriptural?
4. In what metric form was “Lancelot”, written by Chretien De Troyes, written?
5. Queen Guinevere was known as the wife of King Arthur. What immorality of the storied Queen Guinevere is sensationalized by Chretien De Troyes in his work?
6. In the excerpts of “Lancelot” presented in the textbook, what techniques did the author employ to romanticize and sensationalize the immorality?
7. From his “On the Harmony of Religions”, what can we deduce about the attitude of Averroes regarding the Koran?
8. Which argument did Averroes consider to be the best for proving the existence of God as well as the creation of the universe?
9. What did Averroes believe concerning predestination?
10. Who compiled the “Thirteen Articles of [Judaistic] Faith”?
11. What do the “Thirteen Articles of [Judaistic] Faith” say about the Messiah?
12. Do the “Thirteen Article of [Judaistic] Faith” affirm or deny the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead?
13. Which Roman Catholic Council first declared transubstantiation to be the official church position?

## ASSIGNMENT # 9 (COVERING CHAPTERS 35-38)

1. Which text in Job is cited by John Bonaventure and Peter Lombard to allegedly prove Aristotle's fourfold analysis of causation?
2. How would you describe the nature of the argument by John Bonaventure in support of his opinion that the passage in Job teaches Aristotle's fourfold analysis of causation?
3. In "The Mind's Road to God", who does Bonaventure look to intercede to God the Father?
4. What vision does Bonaventure say he saw on Mount Alverna, and what did he believe it signified?
5. To whom does Bonaventure pray and long for in his "Prayer After Communion"?
6. To what purpose did Thomas Aquinas write *Summa Theologiae*?
7. In Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, what did he assert concerning the question of whether theology is worthier than the other branches of science?
8. In Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, how does he assert theology uses human reason?
9. Did Thomas Aquinas believe God's existence is demonstrable through argument?

## **ASSIGNMENT # 10 (COVERING CHAPTERS 39-41)**

1. In what respects did Roger Bacon's views on experimental science anticipate views which would come to dominate centuries later?
2. To what extent did Duns Scotus rely on clear scriptural teaching to arrive at the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception?
3. What was the gist of Duns Scotus' argument for the Immaculate Conception?
4. What are flaws in Duns Scotus' argument for the Immaculate Conception?
5. Why did Dante call his "Divine Comedy" a comedy?
6. What are the alleged 3 kingdoms of afterlife which Dante visited in his "Divine Comedy"?
7. What was the metrical scheme of "Divine Comedy"?
8. In Canto I, what description do we have of the appearance of Virgil when he first meets the narrator?
9. Why did the narrator, in Canto I, not proceed immediately to Paradise?
10. Why does Virgil say he could not guide the narrator into Paradise?

## ASSIGNMENT # 11 (COVERING CHAPTERS 42-44)

1. In the Prologue of “Piers Plowman” we survey a spectrum of English society as it appeared in the High Middle Ages, in what is said to be the dream of Piers the Plowman. Langland offers us impressions of various occupations. How did he present the pardoner?
2. How did he present the friars?
3. How did he present the “serjeants” that “practiced at Bar” (i.e., lawyers)?
4. Who instructs Piers the Plowman in Passus I of “Piers Plowman”?
5. What did she tell Piers the Plowman is the best of all treasures?
6. In “A Hymn to the Virgin”, what imagery is employed at the beginning of the poem to depict the wonders of the Virgin Mary?
7. Near the end of the poem Mary is called “queen of paradys”. How does that compare with the religion described in Jeremiah ?
8. According to the Unam Sanctam, what is to be the relation between the nations of the world and the Roman Catholic Church?
9. What does the Unam Sanctam say is absolutely necessary for salvation?
10. Which two swords does the Unam Sanctam say the Roman Catholic Church has been given by God?

## ASSIGNMENT # 12 (COVERING CHAPTERS 45-46)

1. Briefly summarize the evolution of drama during the Middle Ages.
2. What is a 'miracle play'?
3. What is a 'morality play'?
4. In what genre is "Everyman"?
5. What is the theme of "Everyman"?
6. How do 'the seven deadly sins' of the medieval Roman Catholic Church figure in "Everyman"?
7. What should we think of an actor playing God in drama?
8. Death is personified in "Everyman". How is his character depicted?
9. What is the tone of "Everyman"?
10. How does Everyman in "Everyman" relate to the Virgin Mary?
11. Is Everyman's salvation ultimately dependent on Everyman and his good deeds?
12. What is the metrical scheme of "The Marriage of Sir Gawain"?
13. How does Queen Guinevere in "The Marriage of Sir Gawain" compare with how she is presented in "Lancelot" by Chretien De Troyes?
14. In "The Marriage of Sir Gawain" we read of how King Arthur is accosted by a Baron, who will only let him go on one condition. What is that condition?
15. King Arthur was let go and later returns on New Year's Day to the Baron. On his way, he meets a lady. What is the lady like?
16. Loyalty to king and friend was very important in the culture of medieval knighthood. How is this demonstrated by Gawain towards King Arthur?
17. What choice is Gawain presented by his newlywed wife?
18. How does Gawain's answer reinforce what Arthur had earlier told the Baron?
19. How is Sir Kay different from Sir Gawain?
20. What are some of the un-Biblical aspects of "The Marriage of Sir Gawain"?

## ASSIGNMENT # 13 (COVERING CHAPTER 47)

1. What is the setting of “Troilus and Cressida”?
2. How are “Troilus and Cressida”, as well as “Lancelot” and “The Marriage of Sir Gawain”, examples of historical fiction?
3. In historical fiction, which goal seems paramount- historical accuracy or entertainment?
4. Is Troilus a tragic figure? Why or why not?
5. Often tragic figures have a flaw that proves their downfall. Did Troilus have such a flaw? If you think so, what was it?
6. Why does Chaucer have many allusions to ancient Greek and Roman deities in “Troilus and Cressida”?
7. Who is said in “Troilus and Cressida” to have taken vengeance on Troilus in causing him to fall in love with Cressida and why?
8. How does Fate play a role in this work, even as it frequently did in ancient Greek and Roman works?
9. What malady does Troilus confess to Pandarus?
10. What “sin” does Pandarus insist Troilus confess?
11. What was the relation of Pandarus to Cressida?
12. What is foolish about the way Troilus fell in love with Cressida?
13. Why is Cressida so reluctant at first to consider falling in love and merry-making?
14. Should Troilus have known before he married Cressida that she would later prove unfaithful?



## ASSIGNMENT # 14 (COVERING CHAPTER 48)

1. The characters presented in the Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales* represent a cross-section of medieval society. They represent a wide variety of medieval occupations, some of which are no longer common today. List the characters noted in the Prologue and define what each of the occupations means.
2. What is a character sketch?
3. The Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, along with the Wife of Bath's Prologue and tale, provides us with a character sketch of the Wife of Bath. Write a one-paragraph essay describing the Wife of Bath, including her physical features, personality, beliefs and religious philosophy.
4. What are some ways in which the prioress is satirized in the Prologue?
5. What does the description of the monk, friar, and pardoner suggest about the spiritual state of the Church of the time?
6. What does Chaucer's eulogy of the parson indicate about the attributes he admired?
7. What is a 'satire'?
8. In what ways is *The Canterbury Tales* a satire?
9. In the Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, how did the images Chaucer painted of the characters through words enhance his story of them?
10. In the Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, what do the Pardoner's relics suggest about the culture and religion of the times?
11. What game invented by the host of the Tabard Inn did the pilgrims on their way to Canterbury agree to?
12. In the Wife of Bath's Prologue, what does she say about the book "Against Jovinian", from which we had read earlier in this textbook?
13. In the Friar's Prologue, what role does the host try to play in the dispute between the summoner and friar?
14. In the Summoner's Tale, what does it suggest is the motive for the friar's preaching?
15. In the Summoner's Tale, why would the friar write people's names down who gave him food?
16. In the Summoner's Tale, the friar responds angrily to the summoner's statement about what friars told those who gave them food. What did the summoner say friars told those who gave them food?
17. In the Summoner's Tale, Thomas says to the friar that he has spent much money on friars to pray for his health, which is bad. How does Thomas say it has affected his health?
18. What did Thomas give the friar that made the friar so angry?
19. How does the Summoner's Tale demonstrate the crudeness and cynicism then widespread in the culture?