



# UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS GUIDELINES FOR THE INDEPENDENT READING LIST

## For Students Entering in Fall 2019

The Independent Reading List is an essential component of the UNSC program. UNSC students are required to read select works from Antiquity to Modernity closely and carefully in furtherance of the liberal arts education central to Baylor University and the University Scholars Program. All of the works on the reading list demand attention and thought; they are not light reads, but assignments, and should be treated as such.

### GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE READING LIST

#### *The point system*

All texts approved for the reading list are assigned a point value (also known as *reading units* or RUs). The combined point values of the chosen texts must total **at least 45**. The texts chosen to meet this 45-point threshold must satisfy the following criteria:

- 1. The text must be on the approved reading list (no substitutions).**
- 2. The text cannot have been read previously in a college-level course.**

In addition to the 45 points chosen for the reading list, it is expected that students will be prepared to discuss texts from the UNSC sections of GTX 2301, 2302, and UNSC 3301. Students in both BIC and UNSC should be prepared to discuss texts from WC I-III. These texts should be indicated on the reading list separately from the chosen texts.

#### *Point distribution*

The approved texts for the reading list are divided chronologically into three groups: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern. The 45 points that compose your individual reading list must be distributed evenly according to the following schema:

- **15 points Ancient texts**
- **15 points Medieval texts**
- **15 points Modern texts**

#### *Style and Formatting*

Students should follow the standard format for the independent reading list as indicated by the Reading List Template. To be official, lists must be signed and dated by an advisor, and the points for each period must be totaled. If students wish to make subsequent changes, they must submit a new list with changes noted, and have it signed by an advisor.

## PRINCIPLES FOR CHOOSING TEXTS, AND STRATEGIES FOR READING

### *How to select your texts*

The individual reading list is designed to expand your knowledge and appreciation of a variety of great cultural works.

- **Choose a variety of texts.** You should choose works from an assortment of genres. Some overlap in genre is inevitable, and even encouraged, provided you do not give undue weight to a single type of text (i.e., plays, philosophical works, etc.). Excessively disproportionate reading lists will not be approved. For specific guidance on creating a balanced reading list, consult with a UNSC advisor.

- **Craft a meaningful list.** There are many possible reasons for putting a text on your reading list. You may wish to read a work due to longstanding curiosity or for the novelty of the experience. Pursuing such interests is encouraged, though curiosity should be balanced with intentionality. Consider how at least some of the texts you choose might relate to each other and read them with careful attention to how a theme or idea develops or changes across the works.

- **Know what you are reading.** The number of approved texts is extensive, and you will likely be unfamiliar with many of them. Do not choose texts at random! Before adding unfamiliar works to your list, you should take a few minutes to learn generally what the work is about, whether it likely suits your interests, and how it might complement other texts you have chosen.

### *How to read for your exit interview*

Ideally you will find your readings enjoyable, but they serve an academic purpose. Consider the following recommendations as you read.

- **Take notes.** You will be expected to recall characters, plot points, major themes, and other important aspects of the text. Judicious note-taking will help you prepare for the exit interview.

- **Know what you are getting into, at least in part.** Before you begin reading you should have some idea of what the text is about, especially the major themes explored in the work. This information can often be found in the introduction provided in most modern editions of a text.

- **Historical context is important.** You should know roughly when and where the author wrote the work. You should know, too, if it was in response to a major historical event (imagine reading the Declaration of Independence in complete ignorance of American Colonialism and the Revolutionary War).

- **Do not neglect GTX texts.** Be sure to give it proper attention to your texts from GTX 2301, 2302, and UNSC 3301. This means giving careful thought to how the texts illuminate other works on your list and pursuing points that may not have been covered in class. Be sure to have your own understanding of the work; you must be able to explain and justify your views with examples from the texts.