

STEVENSON COLLEGE CORE COURSE



For more information about the core course, please contact Stevenson College at (831) 459-4930, or via email at stevensonadvising@ucsc.edu.

About the course: “Self & Society”

Welcome to Stevenson College, and welcome to the Stevenson Core Course. Stevenson’s two-quarter core course (STEV 1 & STEV 2) is required of all first- year students. The course engages students with some of the most challenging and influential texts of global and multicultural discourse. From our first quarter readings, including Plato, Sartre, the Bhagavad Gita and the Qur’an, to our second quarter readings, including Freud, Marx, Virginia Woolf, and Malcolm X, throughout the course we ask two fundamental questions: (1) How should thoughtful or enlightened individuals conduct their lives (i.e., what are the characteristics and goals of what might be called the “ideal self”)? (2) How do we work best to establish a good and just social

community (i.e., what are the conditions and purposes of the “ideal society”)? These questions reflect the deepest of human concerns: “Who am I, what am I living for, and what are my obligations to my community and the world-at-large?”

The Stevenson Core Course provides a unique and important educational experience:

1. It is interdisciplinary: The course integrates a range of academic disciplines, including philosophy, history, literature and politics.
2. It is team-taught: Faculty come from a range of academic disciplines, and the course reflects the creative energies of a diverse group of scholars and teachers.

3. It provides small seminar classes for Stevenson students. Classes of approximately 25 students meet two to three times a week.

4. Stevenson Core helps students develop their skills in reading, discussion and critical analysis.

5. The course creates a common intellectual experience unique to Stevenson, one shared not only with your fellow first year students, but also with all Stevensonians.

Students are required to enroll in the core course in fall (STEV 1) and winter (STEV 2).

You can begin to enroll in Stevenson Core Course via your student portal during your assigned enrollment appointment.



STEVENSON COLLEGE CORE COURSE
2020 – 2021
SUMMER ASSIGNMENT
(Provisional)

READING ASSIGNMENT:

Over the summer, please read 2 pieces:

- 1) Included in this packet is the excerpt “How to Mark a Book” by Mortimer Adler. Please read carefully, marking the pages as you go. Preferably, you print out the pdf and do the markings with a pencil as Adler suggests. You can also mark digitally, adapting his methods. If you go this route, be careful to go slowly and thoughtfully, as digital annotations are shown to be less effective if not done with extreme care. Have this copy with your markings with you at your first class meeting.
- 2) Please purchase the book *Basic Writings of Existentialism* edited by Gordon Marino (New York: Modern Library, 2004. ISBN: 0-375-75989-1). In this book, read pages 341-367: Jean-Paul Sartre’s essay, “Existentialism.” Annotate the book as you go, using Adler’s instructions. Have your book with you on the first day of class.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

Due on the first day of class.

Your summer assignment is to make complete, detailed, analytic, interpretive reading notes of the Sartre’s essay as you read it. We will call this exercise your “road map” of the text.

Directions for your road map:

- Capture all content to the best of your ability. Don’t let any ideas slip through the cracks. This probably means making notes on each paragraph you read. Write corresponding page numbers next to your notes so you can easily find passages later.
- Think of the roadmap as part receptive (you trying to engage and understand the essay) and part creative (you writing down your own ideas and questions).
- Notice your understanding as you go:
 - 00 If you think you understand a passage, paraphrase it and jot down your response. Generate a question, objection, or example.
 - 00 If you aren’t sure you understand a passage, imagine and write down a couple of different interpretations.
 - 00 If you are a bit lost, try to pinpoint why. Is there a word or reference you don’t understand? Is the sentence or paragraph particularly complex? Write down any questions, concerns or insights about why a part is tough to “get.”
- Ways to make your roadmap most valuable:
 - 00 Copy your favorite (and least favorite!) quotes.
 - 00 Remember connections between this essay and other texts you’ve read or topics you’ve studied. Note these connections in your road map.
 - 00 Let the text help you generate your own questions about “self and society.” Write down these queries, right in the middle of your road map.
 - 00 Draw, make diagrams, use arrows, or flowcharts to help you clarify content.

Be ready to discuss the piece at the first meeting of your Core Course section.

How to Mark a Book

By Mortimer J. Adler, Ph.D.

From *The Saturday Review of Literature*, July 6, 1941

You know you have to read "between the lines" to get the most out of anything. I want to persuade you to do something equally important in the course of your reading. I want to persuade you to write between the lines. Unless you do, you are not likely to do the most efficient kind of reading.

I contend, quite bluntly, that marking up a book is not an act of mutilation but of love. You shouldn't mark up a book which isn't yours.

Librarians (or your friends) who lend you books expect you to keep them clean, and you should. If you decide that I am right about the usefulness of marking books, you will have to buy them. Most of the world's great books are available today, in reprint editions.

There are two ways in which one can own a book. The first is the property right you establish by paying for it, just as you pay for clothes and furniture. But this act of purchase is only the prelude to possession. Full ownership comes only when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it is by writing in it. An illustration may make the point clear. You buy a beefsteak and transfer it from the butcher's icebox to your own. But you do not own the beefsteak in the most important sense until you consume it and get it into your bloodstream. I am arguing that books, too, must be absorbed in your blood stream to do you any good.

Confusion about what it means to "own" a book leads people to a false reverence for paper, binding, and type -- a respect for the physical thing -- the craft of the printer rather than the genius of the author. They forget that it is possible for a man to acquire the idea, to possess the beauty, which a great book contains, without staking his claim by pasting his bookplate inside the cover. Having a fine library doesn't prove that its owner has a mind enriched by books; it proves nothing more than that he, his father, or his wife, was rich enough to buy them.

There are three kinds of book owners. The first has all the standard sets and best sellers -- unread, untouched. (This deluded individual owns woodpulp and ink, not books.) The second has a great many books -- a few of them read through, most of them dipped into, but all of them as clean and shiny as the day they were bought. (This person would probably like to make books his own, but is restrained by a false respect for their physical appearance.) The third has a few books or many -- every one of them dog-eared and dilapidated, shaken and loosened by continual use, marked and scribbled in from front to back. (This man owns books.)

Is it false respect, you may ask, to preserve intact and unblemished a beautifully printed book, an elegantly bound edition? Of course not. I'd no more scribble all over a first

edition of 'Paradise Lost' than I'd give my baby a set of crayons and an original Rembrandt. I wouldn't mark up a painting or a statue. Its soul, so to speak, is inseparable from its body. And the beauty of a rare edition or of a richly manufactured volume is like that of a painting or a statue.

But the soul of a book "can" be separate from its body. A book is more like the score of a piece of music than it is like a painting. No great musician confuses a symphony with the printed sheets of music. Arturo Toscanini reveres Brahms, but Toscanini's score of the G minor Symphony is so thoroughly marked up that no one but the maestro himself can read it. The reason why a great conductor makes notations on his musical scores -- marks them up again and again each time he returns to study them--is the reason why you should mark your books. If your respect for magnificent binding or typography gets in the way, buy yourself a cheap edition and pay your respects to the author.

Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading? First, it keeps you awake. (And I don't mean merely conscious; I mean awake.) In the second place; reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The marked book is usually the thought-through book. Finally, writing helps you remember the thoughts you had, or the thoughts the author expressed. Let me develop these three points.

If reading is to accomplish anything more than passing time, it must be active. You can't let your eyes glide across the lines of a book and come up with an understanding of what you have read. Now an ordinary piece of light fiction, like, say, *Gone with the Wind*, doesn't require the most active kind of reading. The books you read for pleasure can be read in a state of relaxation, and nothing is lost. But a great book, rich in ideas and beauty, a book that raises and tries to answer great fundamental questions, demands the most active reading of which you are capable. You don't absorb the ideas of John Dewey the way you absorb the crooning of Mr. Vallee. You have to reach for them. That you cannot do while you're asleep.

If, when you've finished reading a book, the pages are filled with your notes, you know that you read actively. The most famous "active" reader of great books I know is President Hutchins, of the University of Chicago. He also has the hardest schedule of business activities of any man I know. He invariably reads with a pencil, and sometimes, when he picks up a book and pencil in the evening, he finds himself, instead of making intelligent notes, drawing what he calls 'caviar factories' on the margins. When that happens, he puts the book down. He knows he's too tired to read, and he's just wasting time.

But, you may ask, why is writing necessary? Well, the physical act of writing, with your own hand, brings words and sentences more sharply before your mind and preserves them better in your memory. To set down your reaction to important words and sentences you have read, and the questions they have raised in your mind, is to preserve those reactions and sharpen those questions.

the book, not page by page or point by point (I've already done that at the back), but as an integrated structure, with a basic unity and an order of parts. This outline is, to me, the measure of my understanding of the work.

If you're a die-hard anti-book-marker, you may object that the margins, the space between the lines, and the end-papers don't give you room enough. All right. How about using a scratch pad slightly smaller than the page-size of the book -- so that the edges of the sheets won't protrude? Make your index, outlines and even your notes on the pad, and then insert these sheets permanently inside the front and back covers of the book.

Or, you may say that this business of marking books is going to slow up your reading. It probably will. That's one of the reasons for doing it. Most of us have been taken in by the notion that speed of reading is a measure of our intelligence. There is no such thing as the right speed for intelligent reading. Some things should be read quickly and effortlessly and some should be read slowly and even laboriously. The sign of intelligence in reading is the ability to read different things differently according to their worth. In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through you -- how many you can make your own. A few friends are better than a thousand acquaintances. If this be your aim, as it should be, you will not be impatient if it takes more time and effort to read a great book than it does a newspaper.

You may have one final objection to marking books. You can't lend them to your friends because nobody else can read them without being distracted by your notes. Furthermore, you won't want to lend them because a marked copy is kind of an intellectual diary, and lending it is almost like giving your mind away.

If your friend wishes to read your *Plutarch's Lives*, *Shakespeare*, or *The Federalist Papers*, tell him gently but firmly, to buy a copy. You will lend him your car or your coat -- but your books are as much a part of you as your head or your heart.

Even if you wrote on a scratch pad, and threw the paper away when you had finished writing, your grasp of the book would be surer. But you don't have to throw the paper away. The margins (top as bottom, and well as side), the end-papers, the very space between the lines, are all available. They aren't sacred. And, best of all, your marks and notes become an integral part of the book and stay there forever. You can pick up the book the following week or year, and there are all your points of agreement, disagreement, doubt, and inquiry. It's like resuming an interrupted conversation with the advantage of being able to pick up where you left off.

And that is exactly what reading a book should be: a conversation between you and the author. Presumably he knows more about the subject than you do; naturally, you'll have the proper humility as you approach him. But don't let anybody tell you that a reader is supposed to be solely on the receiving end. Understanding is a two-way operation; learning doesn't consist in being an empty receptacle. The learner has to question himself and question the teacher. He even has to argue with the teacher, once he understands what the teacher is saying. And marking a book is literally an expression of differences, or agreements of opinion, with the author.

There are all kinds of devices for marking a book intelligently and fruitfully. Here's the way I do it:

- **Underlining (or highlighting):** of major points, of important or forceful statements.
- **Vertical lines at the margin:** to emphasize a statement already underlined.
- **Star, asterisk, or other doo-dad at the margin:** to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book. (You may want to fold the bottom corner of each page on which you use such marks. It won't hurt the sturdy paper on which most modern books are printed, and you will be able take the book off the shelf at any time and, by opening it at the folded-corner page, refresh your recollection of the book.)
- **Numbers in the margin:** to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.
- **Numbers of other pages in the margin:** to indicate where else in the book the author made points relevant to the point marked; to tie up the ideas in a book, which, though they may be separated by many pages, belong together.
- **Circling or highlighting of key words or phrases.**
- **Writing in the margin, or at the top or bottom of the page, for the sake of:** recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind; reducing a complicated discussion to a simple statement; recording the sequence of major points right through the books. I use the end-papers at the back of the book to make a personal index of the author's points in the order of their appearance.

The front end-papers are to me the most important. Some people reserve them for a fancy bookplate. I reserve them for fancy thinking. After I have finished reading the book and making my personal index on the back end-papers, I turn to the front and try to outline

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2020 – 2021
MAIN TEXTS

Fall

Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism” in *Basic Writings of Existentialism*, ed. Gordon Marino

Freud, selections from *Civilization & Its Discontents*

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Genesis, selections from Exodus

Matthew

Selections from The Qur’an

Friedrich Nietzsche, “Good and Evil, Good and Bad” from *On the Genealogy of Morals*

Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo, “Saint Manuel Bueno, Martyr”

The Tao Te Ching

The Bhagavad-Gita

Winter

Plato, “Apology” and “Crito”

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*

Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, *La Respuesta*

Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience”

Martin Luther King, Jr, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

Film: *The 13th*

Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

Viktor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*

BOOKLIST

Fall 2020

Please purchase actual hard copies of these specific editions of the following titles. We have put a lot of care into choosing particular translations.

It is imperative that we are literally all on the same page in seminar discussion and you will be lost if you are using a different translation, or a book with different page numbers.

You can order these books from our local independent bookstore, <https://www.bookshopsantacruz.com/> and have them shipped to you, or you can search your own local independent bookstore.

Order early! Sometimes distributors run out of copies. You cannot rely on last-minute ordering and shipping.

- ❑ Marino, Gordon ed. *Basic Writings of Existentialism*; Modern Library Classics
ISBN 0375759891
- ❑ Miller, Barbara Stoller trans. *The Bhagavad Gita*; Bantam Classics ISBN 0553213652
- ❑ Mitchell, Stephen. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*; Atria, ISBN 0743261690
- ❑ Tao Te Ching. trans. by Jane English and Gia Feng. Vintage, ISBN 0679724346

* These titles will be supplemented with articles and excerpts that will be available online.

**The booklist for Winter will be available later in the year.