

St. Monica Academy

ANCIENT HISTORY

SMA students ended the trimester with a final exam and a completed paper on the complex relationship between religion and Ancient Near Eastern political structures. As we move into the new trimester, we are turning our attention to Greece, where we will be introduced to — among other things — Athenian democracy, the Greek pantheon, the Persian Wars, Socrates, Plato, and Alexander the Great.

THEOLOGY

Theology is looking at the Philosophy of Religion. The questions that we are working on are:

- Are there good reasons to believe in the existence of God?
- Must we insist on having good reasons for believing in God's existence, or is it acceptable to believe based on faith?

We are looking at Aristotle, Ansel, Aquinas, Kant, Kierkegaard, Hume and others to help shed light on our philosophical questions.

We are grappling with the existence of evil, atheism, and agnosticism as arguments against the existence God (classical theism).

ANCIENT LITERATURE

In literature class, we've begun our unit on the Psalms as ancient Near-Eastern poetry. Through lecture and seminar we are looking at the characteristic features, genres, voice, and theological themes of this part of our canon. One of the assignments will be psalm memorization and recitation, to be completed before Christmas break. The final project will tie in elements from literature and theology (but has not yet been assigned).

LATIN ONE

The first trimester went by *celeriter!* We continue to move at a quick pace, but everyone is staying, seemingly, in stride *gratias omnibus ago!* We have read passages by Cicero, Seneca, Catullus and Horace and will continue to follow in the footsteps of our Classical forefathers daily. In Latin mythology, we have read adapted passages about the Curse of Atreus, upon which the students have briefly touched in Homer's *Odyssey*. The Adventures of Io, the Tragedy of Phaethon and Pandora's Box — it's always a fun mix of drama, tragedy and comedy. There is so much more fun to be had and I look forward to sharing it with the SMA students.

CHEMISTRY

This month marks our second lab and our first lab report! Chapter three is all about the wild world of atomic and subatomic structures. While this may seem disconnected to our everyday senses and potential understandings of chemical reactions, the truth is, most of chemistry — the study of changes in matter — is often hidden from us, just as nature tends to hide its beautiful and complex mysteries from our intellect. However, achieving a good grasp on the seemingly impossible world of the infinitesimally small, the stage is set to delve deep into the intricacies of the period table.

GEOMETRY

Geometry students will be testing on November 30, December 9, and December 17th.

ALGEBRA II

The month of December will begin our foray into the world of exponents and radicals. We will spend some time connecting these two operations to the larger whole of mathematics in preparation for the coming introduction of a new operation: the logarithm.

This month, we also spend a little more of a focused effort in understanding the "why" of mathematics through our reading, discussions, and assessment of our secondary text, *Mathematics for the Nonmathematician*. A true mathematical education should spend dedicated and thoughtful time with what it means to *do* and *be* a mathematician. My hope is that the students get a sense that mathematics, at its heart, is an art—a liberal art that reflects and informs the beauty and complexity of the human mind.

IMPORTANT DATES

History CP Due: December 17

Geometry Test: November 30

Geometry Test: December 9

Geometry Test: December 17

"THE CELEBRATION OF ADVENT IS POSSIBLE ONLY TO THOSE WHO ARE TROUBLED IN SOUL, WHO KNOW THEMSELVES TO BE POOR AND IMPERFECT, AND WHO LOOK FORWARD TO SOMETHING GREATER TO COME."

- DIETRICH BONHOEFFER