

Name: _____

Consider guiding philosophical questions. Pick two of them and think of a book that aptly pairs with those questions, that could help you answer the question. Describe 3-5 events or characters that may help you answer those questions below.

1. Question: _____

1. Book: _____

Describe the events or characters below that would help you answer this question. Explain.

2. Question: _____

2. Book: _____

Describe the events or characters below that would help you answer this question. Explain.

Senior Thesis

Guiding Philosophical Questions

Note: These questions are meant to help you brainstorm and move towards a focus for your Senior Thesis. Do not try to force each of the questions onto your texts. Instead, students should discover the questions that each text explores or addresses.

Goodness

- 1) What constitutes happiness for this author?
- 2) What prevents one from attaining happiness?
- 3) What false understandings of happiness are presented? What are the consequences of adopting such understandings?
- 4) What is the relationship between the good and lesser good?
- 5) What is common good? How is this related to individual goods?
- 6) What is this author's view of human nature? Are human beings naturally good? Inclined towards evil?
- 7) How does the author present the nature of evil?
- 8) What is the relationship between virtue and happiness?
- 9) What is virtue?
- 10) What is the nature of a particular virtue, according to the text?
- 11) What constitutes true friendship?
- 12) What vision of friendship is presented in the work?
- 13) What role does friendship play in the human experience?
- 14) What is the relationship between goodness and truth?
- 15) What is the relationship between goodness and beauty?

Truth

- 1) What constitutes wisdom, according to this author?
- 2) What is philosophy? What are the defining characteristics of the philosopher?
- 3) What is the relationship between human nature and truth?
- 4) If human beings desire the truth by nature, then why do so many people fall into error or falsehood?
- 5) What is the relationship between the divine and truth?
- 6) Which characters seek the truth most ardently? How does this pursuit impact them?
- 7) What is the nature of education? What are the primary stages of education? Is there a final stage?
- 8) What responsibilities come with a growth in wisdom?
- 9) In what respect is knowledge its own end?
- 10) What is the relationship between truth and beauty? And goodness?

Beauty

- 1) According to what universal standard can one assess beauty? What elements must be present in order for something to be genuinely beautiful?
- 2) Why is beauty important to humanity? What significant impact can it have on a human being or society?
- 3) Are false and true understandings of beauty presented in this work? What are some false understandings of beauty?
- 4) What is the relationship between beauty and ethics?
- 5) What is the relationship between beauty and truth?
- 6) What is the relationship between beauty and goodness?

Justice

- 1) According to what universal standard can one determine what is just?
- 2) What is the relationship between justice and liberty?
- 3) What constitutes the just man, according to this work?
- 4) Is it ever just to disobey or go against the law?

- 5) What is the relationship between law and justice?
- 6) Compare and contrast divine justice and human justice.
- 7) How is divine justice depicted in this work? Is it knowable?
- 8) How does justice allow us to understand the relationship between the self and the other?
- 9) What is necessary for human beings to understand and/or achieve justice?

Equality

- 1) What are different senses of the word “equal”? In what respect(s) are people equal? In what respect(s) are people unequal?
- 2) What is the difference between natural equality and political equality?

Liberty

- 1) What is the nature of liberty? What is the difference between authentic liberty and license?
- 2) What are the false understandings of liberty, and what are the consequences of adopting such understandings?
- 3) What is the distinction between natural liberty and political liberty?
- 4) What is the purpose of liberty?
- 5) Can the mutual pursuit of liberty lead to conflict?
- 6) What is the relationship between liberty and the good? Between liberty and truth?
- 7) What is the relationship between liberty and the common good?