***The Crucible* Socratic Seminar**

**EnglishIII 2019**

**\***Your unit test for *The Crucible* will consist of an 80 minute discussion. It’s worth 100 pts & is on **Nov 4th/5th .**

**Seminar portion**: In this seminar you have roughly 80 mins. to discuss the questions listed below. You will discuss with your classmates. I will observe and your grade will be given based on your participation, the quality of that participation, and *the use of evidence (quotes) from the text to support your opinion****. You are allowed to use any and all notes and the play for reference during the discussion.*** See the end of this handout for a summary of how you will be graded. \*Note: you do have to write 3 questions of your own. See top of page 2 for details.

**John Proctor:** Evaluate John Proctor’s internal conflict in Act III regarding openly exposing his affair with Abigail in court. What motivates his final decision and what is the result of his honesty? When his life is on the line in Act IV, explain his reasoning for choosing to confess and then renouncing his confession. What does his final decision say about his character? What are the repercussions of his decision? Is his sacrifice worthwhile?

**Hysteria:**  The theme of hysteria is present throughout the play, how does this theme impact the events in the play? Where do you see it most? How would the play be different if people did not become hysterical?

**Intolerance:** As you know, the intolerance and hysteria that were present in 1692 during the Salem Witch Trials also occurred in the 1950’s during the McCarthy era. Many claim that we are in the same type of period today. We are becoming increasingly intolerant of a variety of ideas. Identify & explain some ways that Miller’s message might be relevant to us today. (Note: do not exclude yourself in this analysis. In other words, it’s easy to say “THEY need to stop…” I want you to consider “WE need to stop…”

**Reputation:**  As you learned in class, in a theocracy, everyone’s personal business is a matter of public importance. In fact, the very idea of a private life is blasphemy. The state of your relationship with God is of public importance. Who is concerned with their reputation and in what ways? Is that a positive or a negative? In what ways does the importance of having a good and solid reputation influence the actions of the characters? Are they foolish for being concerned about it? Think specifically about John Proctor, Reverend Parris, & Abigail, although you are welcome to discuss other characters as well.

**Elizabeth Proctor:** Arthur Miller portrays Elizabeth Proctor in a certain moral light throughout Acts I and II. Trace her development of character from Act II through Act IV. What events influence her actions and testimony in Acts III and IV? How does her conversation with John Proctor influence his ultimate decision, as well as indicate a change in her own heart? In other words, discuss the content of Elizabeth’s character and the ways that it might change, or be more clearly revealed throughout the play.

**Mary Warren:** As the end of Act II closes, and the trial begins in Act III, Mary Warren must decide whether or not to “hold to the truth.” Trace the mounting internal and external pressures Mary experiences in Act III and how they influence her final “confession.” How does her decision affect the Proctors? Do you agree or disagree with her decision? Do you sympathize with her situation? If so, why?

**Abigail:** At the center of this drama is Abigail, a young and headstrong girl who is leading the group of accusers. Do you believe her to be the villain or simply another victim of Salem’s hypocrisy & deceit? Think carefully about life in Salem as well as her actions and her words, and defend your position. Also consider her background & family life. Can you sympathize with her as a character

**General:**

Is there a hero in this play? If so, who? Think about heroic actions taken by minor characters as well as major characters. If you think the play lacks a hero, explain why you think none of the characters’ actions are heroic. Use quotes from the text to support your answers.

Do you believe that people who commit serious crimes (murder, assault) can change? Do you think they should be forgiven by society? Discuss society as a whole, but use the characters from *The Crucible* as your evidence. Can Abigail change? Proctor? Hale? Etc. Use quotes from the text to support your answers.

Create 3 open-ended questions of your own to keep the conversation going.

An open-ended question is an insightful question about the text that will require group discussion and “construction of logic” to discover or explore the answer to the question. An open-ended question cannot be answered with “yes” or “no”.

**Your discussion will be graded as follows:**

A Level Participant:

* Participant offers frequent solid commentary, without prompting, to move the conversation forward.
* Participant’s remarks often refer back to *specific parts of the text*.
* Participant, through his/her comments, demonstrates a deep knowledge of the text and the question.
* Participant has come to the *discussion prepared, with thorough notes and a marked/annotated text*
* Participant, through his/her comments, shows that he/she is actively listening to other participants.
* Participant offers clarification and/or follow-up that extends the conversation.
* Participant demonstrates awareness of other group members by involving them in the discussion.

B Level Participant:

* Participant offers good & frequent commentary without prompting.
* Participant’s remarks occasionally refer back to specific parts of the text.
* Through comments, participant demonstrates a good knowledge of the text and the question.
* Participant has come to the seminar prepared, with good notes and a marked/annotated text.
* Participant shows that he/she is actively listening to others and offers clarification and/or follow-up

C level Participant:

* Participant offers some commentary, but needs prompting from the discussion leader.
* Through comments, participant demonstrates a general knowledge of the text and question.
* Participant is less prepared, with few notes and no marked/annotated text.
* Participant is actively listening to others, but offers little clarification and/or follow-up to others’ comments.
* Participant relies more upon his or her opinion and less on the text to drive his/her comments.

D/F Level Participant:

* Participant offers little commentary.
* Participant comes to the seminar ill-prepared with little understanding of the text and question.
* Participant does not listen to others and offers no clarification or follow-up to others’ comments.
* Participant distracts the group by interrupting other speakers or by offering off-topic questions and comments.
* Participant ignores the discussion and its participants.