AESTHETICS, VALUES, AND AUTHORITY:
TRIALS, CASES, DISPUTATIONS

Deep stresses in social life often rise to public attention in arenas designated for conflict resolution. Here values, beliefs, authority, and power jostle for position in the struggle between change and stasis. Sometimes themselves about art and aesthetics, these social dramas often become material for art as parts of arguments made in other places, or other times – arguments made in the form of essays, plays, and other stories. More recently, some of these dramas have received cinematic treatment. We will look at eleven trials, cases, and disputations that have marked western history. We will ask what they were about, what was at stake, who were in battle, and what stories were made of them.

READINGS:

Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*
George Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan*
Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*
Bertolt Brecht, *Galileo*
Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*
Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays*
Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, *Inherit the Wind*

ASSIGNMENTS:

Everyone starts with 55 points.
Beginning with the week of September 21 (and each week thereafter) I will ask each student for a 2 – page thought piece on the previous week’s topic. Possible questions include: What were the issues? Who fought them? For what interests did the protagonists stand? What aesthetics came into play in the imaginative works? What do you think?

Each piece that I accept earns 5 points. You will have a chance to rewrite those essays that I choose to deem inadequate to the talents and energy of an Honors College student. Among the ways to be deemed inadequate at best (and perhaps plagiaristic at worst) is to show evidence that you have visited the internet without attribution. A second way to show that you are not at your best is to begin a sentence, “According to Webster’s (or anyone else’s) Dictionary…” For your own well-being, please don’t do these things.

Think on your own. Be creative. Nine superb essays will bring you to 100 points. You will have earned an A+. The University won’t record it, but we’ll know.
CALENDAR:

R Aug 31  Introduction: No assignment

R Sept 7  Reprise: Ideas of Origins, Origins of Ideas; Inhabiting Other Lives

R Sept 14 Socrates
            Reading: The Trial and Death of Socrates. Film: The Death of Socrates

R Sept 21 Jesus Christ
            Reading: The Gospels: Matthew 24-27; Mark 13-15; Luke 19-23; John 11-25. Film: Jesus Christ, Superstar

R Sept 28 The Papal Inquisition
            Film: The Name of the Rose

R Oct 5  Joan of Arc
            Reading: Saint Joan

M Oct 9  Honors College Convocation

R Oct 12 Thomas More
            Reading: A Man for All Seasons. Film: A Man for All Seasons

R Oct 19 Galileo
            Reading: Galileo

R Oct 26 Salem
            Reading: The Crucible. Film: The Crucible

R Nov 2 Thoreau
            Reading: Civil Disobedience and Other Essays

R Nov 9 To the US Civil War
            Film: Amistad

R Nov 16 The Scopes Trial
            Reading: Inherit the Wind. Film: Inherit the Wind

R Nov 23 Thanksgiving: Ave Turkeys!!!

R Nov 30 TBA

R Dec 7  Brown V. the Board of Education, Wichita, Kansas: Film: Simple Justice