**E1H: *Romeo and Juliet* Socratic Seminar Questions: 2 Days!**

I’m recommending that you prepare for a graded discussion over *Romeo and Juliet* by filling out the “Graded Discussion Notes Sheet” on the E1H website (you will do better in this discussion if you’re prepared and have evidence/ideas at hand). Include detailed notes, textual evidence, and sub-questions. Be detailed in your responses! YOU NEED TO REFER TO SPECIFIC THINGS/LINES THAT HAPPEN IN THE PLAY!

**DAY 1:**

1. Who/What is most responsible for Romeo and Juliet’s deaths/ tragic situation? If you could only choose 1 person/thing/force, what would that be? Why?

2. Romantic love is a recurring idea in the play. What are the different kinds of attitudes toward love that we see from different characters in the play, which do you think is most real/accurate or most “far-fetched,” and which side do you think Shakespeare is on? To start, maybe compare and contrast the characters of Romeo and Juliet. Consider issues like their maturity, their approach to love and family, their personalities, etc. What is Shakespeare trying to say about young love? Look at the other characters. What is Shakespeare saying about “old” love?

3. What do you think Shakespeare is saying about fate in this play? What are the key lines/moments about fate? Shakespeare’s attitude about fate can be confusing in the play. Is he saying that it is the force the guides all the actions in the play, eliminating personal responsibility? Or, is he saying that characters bend or shape their fates? Is fate as powerful as Shakespeare would have the reader believe? Consider multiple characters and their relationships.

4. Ultimately, do you think Shakespeare is using the ECB to critique the characters in *Romeo and Juliet*, or do you think Shakespeare is using *Romeo and Juliet* to critique the ECB? In other words, in what ways does Shakespeare support the traditional values and ideas present in the ECB, and in what ways does he critique/question the ECB through the characters and actions in the play?

**DAY 2:**

5. In many ways, Romeo and Juliet is said to be a play about contrasts. Note some specific uses of contrasts (symbols, characters, motifs (light vs. dark, etc.). Why does Shakespeare weave these into the play? How do contrasts relate to significant themes in the play?

6. In the end, are Romeo and Juliet triumphant or defeated? Support your argument on multiple levels.

7. Outside of “it’s a classic,” does *Romeo and Juliet* have other compelling reasons to be taught in the 21st century? Does it live up to the hype? Or, is it time to get a new story?