



Tournament of Laurels: Seminar Synopses

We are pleased to present the following series of seminars for the delight and enrichment of participating students. All speakers are members of the faculty at Houston Christian University.

In the Footsteps of Odysseus

[Louis Markos, PhD in English Language & Literature, University of Michigan](#)

If the *Iliad* is the first great tragedy in Western literature, then the *Odyssey* is the first great romance. This timeless tale of a man fighting his way back home through perilous seas is one that speaks to every age and every culture. Join us for a unique tour of Homer's world as Odysseus himself shares with you his wanderings, his sorrows, and his triumphs and then entertains your questions.

The Founders and the Classics

[Chris Hammons, PhD in Political Science, University of Houston](#)

The Founders and the Classics – How Stories of Ancient Greece and Rome influenced the American Founding. Our nation's founders were tremendously influenced by stories from Ancient Greece and Rome. The Ancient World provided inspiring lessons in leadership, cautionary tales of hubris and tyranny, and models of good and bad government. Join Dr. Chris Hammons, Professor of Political Science, in a discussion of how the classics influenced our nation's founders and constitutional system of government. The session will be held in the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty in a room modeled after the famous Assembly Room where the Declaration of Independence and Constitution were forged. A group photo will be taken after the session.

The Love of Language in Anglo-Saxon England

[David J. Davis, PhD in History, University of Exeter](#)

The Anglo-Saxons loved their language. Unlike other Germanic tribes that adopted Latin as their language for literature, theology, and philosophy, the Anglo-Saxon tribes used both Latin and English. They used it to write everything from theology and poetry to works of medicine and collections of clever riddles. Old English is the language of *Beowulf* and *The Wanderer*, as well as translations of the Gospels, Augustine, and Boethius. Join Dr. Davis, Professor of History at HCU, in exploring the Anglo-Saxon love of their native language by examining the history and essential aspects of Old English, including what makes *Beowulf* one of the greatest epic poems in the Western canon.

When Virgil Isn't Enough: Dante on the Difference between Philosophy and Theology

[Austin Freeman, PhD in Systematic Theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity Studies](#)

This talk will focus on a few key moments in the *Commedia* where Dante portrays his otherwise intrepid guide Virgil's failures or limitations. First, we see Virgil's placement in the inferno among the righteous pagans. Second, we note Virgil's failure to get through the gates of the city of Dis, and similarly, his deception by the demons of Malebolge. Third, we see Virgil take a more passive role in the climb up the mountain of purgatory. And finally, Virgil's farewell before the earthly paradise. Each of these passages frames the way Dante urges us to recognize the limitations of human reason and philosophy. Human reason alone is not enough to defeat true evil or to achieve blessedness in this life or the next. For this, we need divine revelation and supernatural help.