Socratic Circle Ground Rules:

1. Speak to one another and not the teacher.
2. Respect all participants. Disagree with grace, understanding and courtesy.
3. Participate selectively if you have a lot to say. Draw others into the discussion.
4. Listen actively by watching and refraining from distractions and side conversations.
5. Build on points previously made when you make your point.
6. Wait to speak until your peer is finished.
7. Back up your points with textual evidence.
8. When asked to evaluate your peers, do so with constructive criticism.

It is important that students do some preparation for seminars by responding to questions in writing, either in class or for homework. This encourages you to think about the topics before engaging in a conversation about them.


**SEMINAR QUESTIONS ACT II**

**Love and Marriage**

_Play Related Questions:_

1. What indications do we have that Romeo and Juliet are experiencing lust rather than true love? What indications do we have that they are experiencing true love? Which feeling is stronger?

_Relevance Questions:_

1. Is love at first sight possible, or is it just physical attraction at work?
2. What social barriers do people today face in their love lives?

**Rebellion**

_Play Related Questions:_

1. The Nurse and the Friar both engage in forms of rebellion in this act. What kind of rebellion do they embrace? What is their motivation for breaking the social order?
2. If there is a continuum of rebellion (1 being a conformist, non-rebellious personality, and 10 being an anti-authority, rebellious personality), what ratings would you give Mercutio, Benvolio, Romeo, Juliet, the Nurse and the Friar? Why?

_Relevance Questions:_

1. How and why do teenagers use romantic relationships to rebel against their parents?
2. Do people tend to be more rebellious when they are with peers than when they’re alone? In what ways do friendships encourage or discourage rebellion?

**Dichotomy and Paradox**

_Play Related Questions:_

1. Friar Laurence talks about how “virtue itself turns vice.” How does this happen in the play? Consider the oppositions of love/hate, comedy/tragedy, temperance/intemperance, youth/old age.
2. Why does Shakespeare use so many paradoxes in this play? How similar are the supposed opposites and what function do they have in the play?

_Relevance Questions:_

1. How can someone or something exhibit opposite characteristics? For example, how can you both love and hate someone? How can something be both a lifesaver and a deathtrap?
Identity

*Play Related Questions:*
1. How do love and hate define the identities of the play’s various characters, especially Romeo, Tybalt, Mercutio, and Juliet?

*Relevance Questions:*
How much does our identity rely on others? In what ways? How are we defined by the existence of “the other”—our seeming opposite? Do opposites truly attract?

Time: Haste V. Patience

*Play Related Questions:*
1. Is it better to love passionately? Or to love moderately? Why? How does love or any intense emotion affect a sense of time for you?
2. Is love truer if it happens quickly? Why or why not?

Looking and Sight

*Play Related Questions:*
1. Why does Friar Laurence say that young men’s love lies in their eyes, rather than in their hearts?

*Relevance Questions:*
1. Do we judge most with sight? Or do we use other means of judging?

Please jot down some quick points and a reference or two from the play on the provided note-cards. We will hold the Socratic Circle on Thursday, but you should have your cards started before class on Wednesday. We will work on them together for this first Circle.

If you become overwhelmed, do not worry... I would rather we go into the Socratic Circle feeling ready rather than feeling confused!