**Notes for Unit 5—World Literature**

**After St. Augustine**

* Sunshine—happiness, enthusiasm, laughter; frost—loneliness, sadness, weakness; storm—turmoil, trouble, anxiety, worry, doubt; calm—peace, rest, blessedness
* Nothing, absolutely nothing can take God from us

**Of the Imitation of Christ**

* What is at the center of being a Christian?
* The tension between heart and the mind in following Christ
* Go through line by line and discuss the meaning of the thoughts

**The Practice of the Presence of God**

* What does it mean to be a mystic?
* A holy life means doing what we ordinarily do for God’s glory

**Three Words of Strength**

* Look at personification

**Excelsior**

* Longfellow

**The Great Stone Face**

* Nathaniel Hawthorne
* Where do we see the “herd mentality” at work in this story? How does a person resist this?
* Allusion to the story of Midas—do you know the story?
* What is admirable about Ernest’s character?
* Why do the people of the valley not recognize Ernest as a great man? (note our tendency to glorify the distant thing)
* Who were the people that were proclaimed to measure up to the great stone face? How do they correspond to the common idols of our world? Money, military service, personal charisma
* What sarcastic comment is made about politics in this story?
* Numerous mention is made of Ernest’s integrity—he lived his thoughts and beliefs; he lived truth, beauty, and goodness; that was the secret of his greatness
* The power of admiration or aspiration—who do I admire?

**Work**

**Quality**

* Story’s commentary on the nature of our modern economy—the move from private, local shops to gigantic impersonal industry
* “His boots lasted terribly” –what does this mean? Describe the Gessler brothers’ work ethic; what made them so good?
* What was Gessler’s language and culture? (that’s not a coincidence)
* What did Mr. Gessler value more than profit? (he told the narrator to send his creaky boots back and he would take them off of his bill)
* What was Mr. Gessler’s attitude toward the “big firms”? Read this selection
* The story of uncompromising quality is inspiring—how often do we find products that haven’t resorted to cheaper parts and lower quality in order to be competitive?
* And did his price go up? No

**Elixir**

* George Herbert
* Do stanza by stanza interpretation
* Confession of need for growth in seeing all my work for God’s glory

**A Retrieved Reformation**

* Why did Jimmy ask Annabel for the rose on her dress before he opened the safe?
* Why did Ben Price say and do what he did?
* Do you think that Jimmy really changed in this story? When does the story say that he changed?
* Discuss irony and satire
* Talk about *The Peasant Wedding*

**My Father’s Hands**

* This is such a sad, painful story—it’s enough to make a person cry
* What are the incidents in this account that show the pain and shame that his father experienced as a result of his handicap? (losing the farm worthy of special mention; the questioning )
* One of the tragedies of this story is the failure of the educational system—it actually made the problem worse
* What is the son’s attitude toward his father? (this is one of the most touching elements of the story) (respectful, admiring, loving, caring)
* What adjectives would you use to describe the tone of the story?

**Pleasures of Knowledge**

* What genre or form of writing is this? Short story, poem, novel…? (essay)
* The many facets of truth mentioned in paragraph 1…these examples of truth lead us to the question, What is truth? How do we define it? Is knowledge and truth the same thing?
* The idea of hard work is raised here again—Smith says that many of the world’s great thinkers and writers spent the first half of their lives in obscurity but then made a great contribution to the world in their later lives. This gives us an idea of what to focus on at this point in our lives
* “Ransacking a thousand minds” rather than rely on just one
* There is danger and imbalance in trying to speak of an abstract Truth; where do we go to find the concrete reality of truth? Jesus Christ
* Critique: in the last sentence of this essay, Smith suggest that distinguish is the motivation for pursuing truth—this is not Christian

**The Ways**

* What do we call it when we describe one thing in terms of another? (another path/roads metaphor here)
* The high way and the low way could represent many different things—what are the different levels of the symbols? (ultimate destiny and common, everyday decisions)
* Where this really affects us is at the simple, little decisions in life…this is where the big decisions actually begin forming; sometimes we think we can live in the misty flats in the little things and take the high way in the big things—this is a dangerous mindset

**Hinds’ Feet on High Places**

* Habukkuk 3.19: “The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places.”
* Who does Much Afraid represent? What about her crippled feet and crooked mouth?
* The Valley of Humiliation is contrasted with the High Places in this allegorical story? How does this correspond to our experience? What do they represent? (states of existence—a place of self-preservation/self-reliance vs. full surrender and abandonment to Christ’s love and leadership
* The story shows the power of fear—when Much Afraid hesitated in responding to the Shepherd’s call, fear took over and paralyzed her
* The role of Mrs. Valiant—sometimes we need fellow believers to come alongside us and help us deal with our fears and unbelief
* Look over questions in book