APEH Socratic Seminar #1

Humanism and Education

You will be assigned 3 documents to read and analyze at home. Feel free to write, highlight, and annotate the handouts as much as you want. You will need to come to class prepared to discuss, ask, and answer questions.

**Reading #1:** Francesco Petrarch’s *A Letter to Boccaccio* (in your reading packet)

**Reading #2:** Aristotle’s *Views on Education* an excerpt from *The Politics*, written circa 345 BCE, Greece.

\*\* Also, re-watch the clip from *Dead Poets Society*, in which Professor John Keating (Robin Williams) explains to his students why they are in his class. You will find the clip on YouTube (“What will your verse be?”) or on the class website: mrsdillonshistorysite.weebly.com

**Reading #3:** *“As Interest Fades in the Humanities, Colleges Worry”,* from The New York Times, October 30, 2013. **(READ THIS ONE LAST!)**

As you read these questions, consider the following discussion questions:

* Compare Aristotle’s and Petrarch’s opinions on the purpose of an education.
* Compare Aristotle’s and Petrarch’s explanations of the various subjects that a good education must consist of. What are their reasons for favoring these subjects. Are they relevant in today’s world?
* How has the view of education and the humanities changed? When do you think it began to change?
* Could the intensive focus on STEM degrees and careers be harmful? How will this affect society in 10-20 years? What negative repercussions, if any, could there be?
* What has become of the purpose for education? Does this affect what and how you are learning?
* Why is it only “cool to be a STEM nerd” and not a “humanities nerd”?
* Should we be worried about the fading interest in the humanities? Why?

Read the instructions on Socratic Seminars (HOH: Hands On History Discussions) and be ready to participate. YOU ARE BEING GRADED ON YOUR PARTICIPATION.