It is impossible to think meaningfully about ideas without reference to a range of experiences. It is a failure of the imagination to experience without some reflection on its meaning. This is a class that examines the classics & works that speak to subjects and ideas rooted in time and place but also time-less.

We will intensively read and reflect on nine to ten classic works, both from fiction and nonfiction. In some cases, we will substitute several short readings or selections from longer texts for one of those ten. In past cycles, authors have included Conrad, Woolf, Kawabata and Didion in fiction: non-fiction authors have included Adam Smith, De Tocqueville and Nietzsche.

The books you read in Ideas and Experience II will be books that you will want to have in your library; the non-fiction sections will draw you into larger schools of thought. Your final grade will be based on five (six to eight page) papers. I will grade you on your capacity to make sustained arguments with evidence from the texts.

I will also grade on your capacity to add to class discussion & discussion based on close textual analysis. Active participation is essential. This is not only a writing-intensive but a reading intensive course.