

CHAPTER 3: Things to Consider

Humanities Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. become acquainted with the human tradition as expressed in its literature, philosophy, and the arts;
2. become familiar with seminal modern ideas and theories as expressed through literature, philosophy, and the arts;
3. examine underlying assumptions about and ways of seeing literature, philosophy, and the arts;
4. think critically about the humanities by looking outward at the world and formulating thoughtful and informed ideas about it; and
5. understand themselves as persons whose identities are shaped through participation in a wider community and longer history.

The Cold War, Existentialism, Origins of Theater & Theater of the Absurd, Abstract Expressionism

As you explore the historical events, key figures, works of art, artistic movements, intellectual movements and political events outlined in Chapter 3, think about the following questions:

1. What discoveries did you make during your exploration of this chapter?
2. How did the discoveries you made during this chapter connect to these learning outcomes?
3. How did some Americans turn their wartime experiences into lasting personal gains (i.e. better employment, a new home, or an education) after the war was over? Why did others miss out on these opportunities?
4. What was the reason for the breakdown in friendly relations between the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II? What were the results of this conflict?
5. How did fear of the Soviet Union and Communism affect American culture and society?
6. What social changes took place in the United States after World War II? What role did the war play in those changes?
7. Is abstract expressionism about chaos or control?
8. What is existentialism?
9. How is existentialism depicted in the arts?
10. What makes theater absurd?
11. How have existentialism, anticolonialism, and the quest for personal freedom influenced the last 50 years?
12. What connections can you make between the events and art explored in this chapter with those explored in the previous chapter?