**English 10**

**Exam Essay Topics**

The written component of your exam will consist of a short written essay that you will prepare in advance at home. You will be allowed one cheat sheet the size of a cue card (front only) to write down any key points you want to remember for this part of the exam. This could be an outline, quotes or any other relevant information you might want to use.

*\*\*Remember: An essay should have an introduction (with a thesis statement), 3 paragraphs supporting your thesis and giving examples and a conclusion.*

You will choose one of the following topics to prepare for your exam:

1. Brutus is often considered a tragic hero.  Considering his positive attributes, his flaws, and his role in the play, do you agree or disagree with this sentiment? Why/why not? What is Shakespeare's larger message? You may also consider discussing why another character may be the tragic hero.
2. Who is the protagonist in this play? Is it Caesar, who dies well before the end but whose power and name continue on? Or is it Brutus, the noble man who falls because of his tragic flaws? Should the title name Brutus, or is it fitting that it names Caesar, or should it name both of them? Why? What is Shakespeare's larger message?
3. Discuss the power of deception/manipulation in the play. What is Shakespeare's larger message?
4. How is loyalty portrayed in the play? Discussing Antony, Brutus, and/or Cassius in relation to Caesar. What is Shakespeare's larger message?
5. Discuss Brutus’ actions. Is he right to join the conspiracy against Caesar? What are his reasons? Does he choose to join the conspiracy, or is he tricked by Cassius? How do Cassius’s motivations compare to those of Brutus? Are they more noble or less noble? Why? What is Shakespeare's larger message?
6. How does Shakespeare establish the themes, conflicts, and moods of the play?
7. Discuss friendship in the play. Consider Caesar and Brutus, Caesar and Antony, Brutus and Cassius (and how their friendship changes), Antony and Octavius, and/or any other pairings. Are these true friendships or merely political alliances forged for the sake of convenience and self-preservation? How do they compare with the heterosexual relationships in the play—the relations between husbands and wives? Are they more profound or less profound, more revealing or less revealing of their participants’ characters? What is Shakespeare's larger message?
8. What causes and effects lead to Brutus’ death? What is Shakespeare's larger message?
9. Choose a character from the play and do a close character analysis, discussing his/her function, morality, internal and external conflicts, actions, motivations, influences, and whether or not they are justified. Consider discussing Brutus (is he dishonorable or mistaken? self-righteous? egotistical? opinionated? humorless? intellectually limited/mediocre? big-minded? rash? decent? kind?), Caesar (is Caesar egocentric? dangerous? noble? deserving of death?). What is Shakespeare's larger message?
10. Create your own topic (check with me BEFORE the exam!!)