**95 Theses: A Counter-Reformation Movement**

**Arguments in Support of Humanities**

**By Kathryn Boyle**

I’d like to start out by asking you to keep an open mind. I run track, cross country, and I swim on the swim team, and I have an A in this class. I’m also on AP student leadership board. You can do it. I know you’ve all heard horrible nasty things about Humanities. I’m not stupid, and I’m sure as heck not going to lie to you. Some of those rumors you’ve heard are true, and some are grounded in truth, but others are just blatant lies. Let’s be real here, we all like to complain. I don’t know what it is about whining, but teenagers especially seem to love doing it. Hey, I’m guilty too. However, I’m a firm believer that there are two sides of any story and the truth is somewhere in between. I’m here to present the side of the story you haven’t heard and I’ll leave it up to you to interpret the gray area. Let’s dive right in.

Are the tests hard? Yes. Yes they are hard. The class contains TWO AP classes; what did you expect? Are the tests impossible? No. No they are not. I’m not going to lie, getting an A or even a B on the test first time around is a feat. That isn’t the end of the story though. The teachers know that their tests are hard. They don’t hate you and they don’t want you to die. After every test you are able to redo the ones you missed for half credit. This helps you out a lot. So don’t freak out. You can do it. If you’re a visual or auditory learner (this isn’t me) you’re going to adore this class, or at least learn a ton. You get lectures everyday and powerpoint notes. Sometimes this can be tedious but it’s worth it. Taking notes also helps those kinetic learners. Almost every week we have a reading assignment for Honors World Lit. They’re exhausting, but I’ve acclimated to the work. The good thing is that they can be interesting. I’ve learned a lot and improved my writing just by analyzing other writer’s works. Part of literature is analyzing other points of views on ideas. This really helps in history. Sometimes History can be a little one sided because it’s written by the winners. Reading other pieces by the losers can really open one’s minds to other ideas. On the topic of tests, I’ll mention again that they are hard. But those ridiculously difficult tests will prepare you for even more ridiculously difficult AP exams and college tests. Your teachers really do just want to prepare you. Alright, so, every once in awhile we get to watch really cringey history music videos that teachers made that are effectively stupid and effectively wonderful all at the same time. It’s amazing. My personal favorite is “Fleas on Rats.” One of the things you will learn in history is that humans are incredibly stupid. I didn’t even know it was possible to be as stupid as we are. We do such idiotic things. Well, luckily, you are not stupid and you can shake your head incredulously at the intense stupidity of these historical figures. You can also shake your head at the cringey music videos. Don’t lie, you know you like them. Excellence is recognized in class by shoutouts to students. When I say that I mean mentions of good things that students do. For example, Madison Grosse is an amazing essay writer. How do I know this? Mrs. Tatum mentions it after every essay. I also know Zach has unusually astute observations on life and history. I personally think he’s a genius, but I digress. Alright, onto the next thing on my list. It’s fairly obvious not everyone is happy with the class. However, no one can deny that they are learning. We all know a lot more than we entered the class. This is hard to hear, but your grade really doesn’t matter; what matters is that you learn the material. I can testify that having these three classes together really helps you to learn the material better. A little fun incentive to do well, the highest test grade gets a little trinket after the test. I’ve personally never received one, but I’m not bitter. It’s fine. Oh, I’m sure you’ve heard about the deadly reading quizzes. I’ll give you a hint: You have to read. SUCH A NOVEL IDEA! Reading for a reading quiz? Who in Merlin’s name came up with that crazy notion? Sometimes I feel reading isn’t enough so I’d recommend getting on getafive.com and reviewing a little. The reading quizzes separate the girls from the women. They force you to work. Laziness gets you nowhere. At some point you won’t be able to use notes on the quiz, but at first you can. That’s pretty helpful. When you can’t, I find you commit the information to memory better because you don’t have that backup. Remembering the information you’re supposed to be learning sounds like a good thing to me. There aren’t any in class projects, so for those of you who hate that kind of thing, rejoyce! This also forces kids to be self-sufficient and learn the vital tool of time management. Get ready to grow up kids. Hey, Humanities may be 99.9999999999999999999999999999999999999999999999999999% work, but we got an excellent food day at Thanksgiving. In the words of Madison Grosse “That food day we had was poppin’”. Indeed it was. Also, suffering through the boring stuff makes the fun stuff more fun! Tests have two parts: multiple choice and an essay section. If you particularly suck at one section, at least you have that other section as a bit of a buffer. Again, who doesn’t like to whine. Now you have another fifty kids you can whine alongside. Whine fest! You can also (SURPRISE!) study with these people. Networking is important. Create a group chat. I took Acc. Precalc, H/AP Chem Combo, H Spanish 3, H Spanish 4, and Graphics and Design on top of this class. With the possible exception of Acc. Precalc, they are all ridiculously easy compared to this one. I have a 98 in AP Chemistry. If you can do this, you can do anything. If you’ve listened to our complaints, we’ve probably mentioned the cold room. Suck it up. Bring a jacket. The cold room keeps you awake when all you want to do is sleep. I understand sister. I want to sleep too. The teachers tease and joke with each other. They’re normal people too. Mrs. Herndon and Mrs. Tatum are *almost* as sarcastic and salty as we are. It’s brilliant. Mrs. Tatum make depressing literature awesome and her reading skills are fire. I’m so captivated when she reads. She also dances and sings for us and it’s absolutely awesome. I wish she did it everyday. I haven’t got any of the other teachers to do it yet, but I’m working on it. I will succeed. The amazing and talented John Green runs a crash course on world history on youtube. He will be your best friend. He is hilarious. You have been blessed by John Green’s presence. You’re welcome. I have been disillusioned. Gone is the innocent stupid naive person I once was. No, the world is a horrible place, but light does exist if we know where to look. This class gives a very objective view of the world. I have an arsenal of jokes about esoteric things because of Humanities. I also know the word esoteric because of Membean. Sleep is for the weak y’all. Who needs sleep? BE STRONG. This class is structured to everything fits perfectly. Art fits into history which in turn fits into lit, which also fits into art. Everything overlaps in one perfect delicious pie. Sorry, I’m hungry. Historical drama is awesome. Get yourself a table partner like Katie Thompson who is literally excited about everything but also really witty and bitter. Your life will improve 144000%. Get ready to expand your mind. What we consider “art” is constantly be challenged. One of the hardest things for me was studying the nude paintings, especially ones like Olympia and La Grande Odalisque, ones that are just nudes for the sake of nudes. It’s uncomfortable, no doubt, but we have to be willing to have open minds. Just as a testimony for how much I’ve learned- I know what the 95 theses are and I’m able to apply that to create this. God I love creativity. I also know what the Reformation and Counter Reformation are and I’m able to apply those things to everyday ideas. Exhibit A: This. After this class, I’m a wiz at random trivia. Try me, I’ll win. One thing you’ll learn is that everything, and I do mean everything, is a symbol. Even if it wasn’t meant to be a symbol, I’m able to take anything that’s nothing and make it something meaningful and important to the world. That’s very important. Finding something in nothing is a sign of a highly intelligent and creative person. Khan Academy becomes a very important study tool and you will soon be racking in the points. That being said, you will soon be acquainted with Beth and Steven, which we as Humanities student LOVE making fun of. Honestly all this class is a ton of kids making fun of everything. Um...I don’t know about you, but this class blew my mind, especially art? I mean, Stonehenge wasn’t made by aliens? What? Anyways, get yourself a bomb spotify playlist, sit your little fanny down and study. Your study skills are going to skyrocket should you choose to take this class. I know people that come back from field trips in other classes and mention things from Humanities they recognized on the the field trip. Connecting the past to the present is an important skill that you will learn. You have plenty of material available for you to study. If you get the chance, check the blog. There’s so much study material. You will be prepared if you want to be. My computer kills fascists. Does yours? Take humanities and it will. I literally have like 6 Khan Academy tabs open right now and I’m trying to work on an literature essay as well. Your computer enables you to learn everything you need to. I’m sure you’ve all heard of perseverance, and I’m sure you all think you have it. Boy, you don’t know nothing about perseverance. This class we test you to your wildest dreams, but you will grow as a result. Never giving up hope is an important life skill. I’ve wanted to cry so many times and I may have developed minor depression at certain points, but I’ve learned to keep hope and push through. I know this is not the hardest thing I will face. In fact, this is just a baby step in preparing me for what’s ahead. Even if this is just a baby step, it’s one I will gladly take. It’s one step forward. This is kind of a given, but it’s still important: You will learn about other cultures. I really can’t stress how important this is. It is so important to know about other cultures. It will expand your mind and enable you to think on higher levels. We do a few projects and they are so fun! I learn so much doing them but they are really funny and memorable. What are they you ask? Take the class and find out. We do skits every once in awhile and they are bloody brilliant. They are awesome. Oedipus was the best for sure. We’re all gonna be on Broadway guys. You are able to get extra credit to help your grade. Again, the teachers don’t hate you. They love you and want to see you succeed. They help you with taking notes. That’s another thing, your note taking skills will improve so much. It’s crazy the difference from the beginning of the semester to now. Our initial complaints and worries about the class are (slowly) being resolved. Our fears have seemed to be irrational. As the class draws to close it’s easy to look back and see pain, but it’s also easy to see how things have changed and how all our assumptions on the class were wrong. Nothing is perfect guys, but they are trying. This was the only second year of the class. This years seniors didn’t get the chance to take it and that stinks for them. In fact, you are the luckiest class out of all of the classes at Harrison right now. This year’s Juniors were the guinea pigs. They were still working out the kinks as I took the class, but by the time they get to you, they will have it down. There are no daily unimportant grades. Everything is important, just like in college. This class teaches independence. How you do depends completely on how hard you want to work. My advice would be to work hard because this class can either make or break your GPA. Ok, so part of this class is growing up. You have to act as college students. You also come face to face with reality. All your dreams will be crushed (Don’t worry, you’ll find new ones), like extra extra credit. That’s not a thing, unfortunately. Hey, reality is reality. My other teachers and friends all express pity for me. It’s nice to have [a little] attention. Also, they all think we’re lowkey geniuses. That’s actually true for like, I don’t know, Anna, Zach, Madeline, Madison, Avery… I know I’m leaving people out, but you get the point. GUESS WHAT I CAN DO!? I CAN BORE MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS! \*evil laughter\* I can bore the heck out of them because I can literally talk for like 5 days straight about art or history or literature. It’s fascinating to me, but I get the impression it’s not for them. Guys, I can identify 250 art pieces. Like what? We do review posters to review for tests and those are extremely helpful. It’s a good review. The teachers know what they are talking about; they are passionate and want to help you. You only need ask. We will not be fooled by “alternate facts” and lies on TV. We know history. I can spot historical inaccuracies in TV and in movies. I can also spot random art pieces in movies and TV as well. Hagia Sophia was on a documentary I was watching with my grandmother. I know, I’m boring. The Swing was in Frozen. Guys, this all relates. This is life. You need to know this. The more you know, the better choices you will make. The better choices you make, the better off we **ALL** are. Mrs. McCullough often uses the columns in Humanities to reference hardness or place emphasis or show size and it is really funny cause she just like hits it and pets it and pats it and it’s all I can do not to laugh. If someone saw that out of context they would be so confused. In the end, what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger. This class won’t kill you, no matter what you hear. I’ve probably told you in person that it will. It won’t. I’m a dramatic little piece of crap; it’s okay, I’ve come to terms with it. Just take the class guys. Once you’re out of it you won’t regret it. Excuse my crappy grammar and spelling as it is late, but I hope you learned a bit. The following is a summary of the above.

**95 Arguments in Support of Humanities**

1. Period 1 test corrections
2. Period 2 test corrections
3. Period 3a test corrections
4. Period 3b test corrections
5. Period 4 test corrections
6. Period 5 test corrections
7. Period 6 test corrections
8. Plenty of material for visual and auditory learners (powerpoints and notes)
9. Reading assignments can be interesting and open our narrow minds to other ideas
10. Ridiculously difficult test prepare us for the even more ridiculously difficult AP and college tests.
11. Every once in awhile we get to watch cringey music videos that are effectively stupid and wonderful all at the same time.
12. We get to make fun of stupid humans doing really stupid things throughout history while we make fun of the silly teachers dancing.
13. Excellence is recognized by shoutouts in class to certain students \*cough\* Madison \*cough\*
14. Not everyone may be pleased, but no one can deny that they are learning.
15. The highest test grade got a little gift after every test
16. Reading quizzes require us to do more than just read- they teach the ones of us who want to be lazy that laziness leads to failure
17. Not being able to use reading notes on reading quizzes forces kids to actually remember material. That is a good thing.
18. No in class projects (only out of class) makes students learn to be self sufficient and have time management skills
19. We get a heck of a fun food day at Thanksgiving time.
20. Suffering through the boring stuff makes the fun stuff more fun.
21. We’re smart and knowledgable about everything now.
22. Tests have two parts- multiple choice and short/ long essays. If you do really bad on one part, you can at least partly redeem yourself on the other part.
23. You have a lot of other people in the class that you can complain and whine alongside
24. You also have all of those people to help you study
25. All of your other classes will seem sooooo easy after this one
26. The cold room keeps everyone awake and alert
27. The teachers joke with each other and
28. Are ALMOST as bitter and sarcastic as we are
29. Mrs. Tatum makes lit absolutely hilarious and her reading skills are on point
30. Mrs. Tatum sings and dances for us and it is absolutely gold.
31. Crash Course (John Green) becomes your best friend
32. We no longer can reside in our naive innocence that the world is a good place
33. We can joke about esoteric things because we’ve learned so much
34. I know the word esoteric because of...wait for it...membean!
35. Sleep is for the weak anyway.
36. Class is structured so everything fits like a glove.
37. Historical drama- need I say more
38. Our definition of “art” is challenged more and more every day as our expectations get pushed
39. I know what the 95 theses are and I can use the idea to create this! Creativity!
40. I know what the counter reformation is (and the reformation) and I’m able to connect these ideas to everyday life
41. I’m a wiz at trivia. Wanna play?
42. EVERYTHING is a symbol. Even if it’s not, I’m positive that we can find deeper meaning and relate anything and everything to something meaningful and important.
43. So apparently Stonehenge wasn’t made by aliens?
44. With so many people in the class you get a ton of opinions and you see things from perspectives you wouldn’t have before
45. Everyone can make fun of Beth and Steven from Khan Academy
46. We can see humanities as we go on field trips with other classes
47. STUDY SKILLS
48. There’s a TON of study material on the blog
49. Your computer: “This machine kills fascists”
50. Perseverance
51. Never giving up hope is a life skill
52. Educates us about others and other cultures
53. The few projects we do are really fun and educational
54. Note taking skills improve
55. Skits are fun
56. We can use notes on reading quizzes
57. We will do well on the AP exam
58. College credit
59. Be grateful- this year's seniors and next year’s seniors couldn’t take this class. You have an advantage.
60. We love the teachers and they love us
61. Ekphrasis project was fun
62. Teachers can control the classroom- there’s three of them
63. EXTRA CREDIT
64. All of our initial worries are being resolved (for the most part) as the class moves on
65. Nothing is perfect guys
66. My other theses is slowly having to be edited more and more. (you’ll see what I mean at the end of the year)
67. No daily unimportant grades
68. Class teaches independence. Your success is based entirely on your want to do well
69. If you take the AP exams you get an easier final
70. GROW UP- We have to act like college students
71. Unrealistic expectations (extra extra credit) squashed. Reality sucks sometimes, but it is reality
72. My other friends and teachers have pity on the Humanities students and feel bad for us. Attention is something we all like (at least some).
73. Everyone thinks we’re really really smart
74. I can bore my family with random ramblings about history and art (hehehehe)
75. I can identify 250 art pieces
76. Review posters are helpful
77. Teachers know what they are talking about
78. Teachers are willing to help if we ask
79. Our eyes are open to the historical inaccuracies in TV shows
80. We can spot artistic references in TV shows
81. This all relates. This is life
82. Mongols are always the exception
83. Eurocentrism is not a problem for us. We have been disillusioned.
84. Ms. McCullough pats and pets the columns in Humanities a lot and it is honestly just awesome and hilarious
85. The white man’s burden is just lies
86. Lots of projects at the end of the year (I like those)
87. Passionate teachers
88. Strict way of behaving, social behaviour is taught as well
89. Fun facts
90. Your GPA can improve a lot after this
91. What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger?
92. Live breathe and sleep DFTBA
93. Plenty of opportunities to learn more outside of class (Khan Academy, Crash Course, History Documentaries)
94. When the other theses gets released, the power of diction will be clear. (we learned this in Humanities)
95. This class exists

Hey all. So again, this is Kathryn. Should you have questions, and I’m sure you do, ask one of the Humanities teachers or ask them if you can ask me. I’m very open to any questions. Hoped this helped and wasn’t so boring. If you read it all, you are loyal as heck. Nice job.Excuse my crappy grammar and spelling as it is late, but I hope you learned a bit.