

# Summer 2009

Dear Foundations Student,

Welcome to Siena College and to the Foundations Sequence – a year-long course that must be taken by all first-year students. The Foundations Sequence is an introduction to the life of the mind that explores perennial questions about human existence from a variety of intellectual and cultural perspectives. The meaning of responsibility serves as the overall theme for the year. The Fall Semester investigates questions about nature, society, and the person, while the Spring Semester focuses on religious and secular worldviews and the American Experience.

Students meet in small classes with the same instructor for both semesters. To encourage dialogue among students, Foundations has adopted a common set of readings, both classic and contemporary, drawn from various disciplines. The sequence emphasizes oral and written communication skills, careful reading, critical thinking and interactive discussion. To reinforce the notion that education in the widest sense occurs as much outside of the classroom as within, the program requires a field trip to a cultural or artistic site.

In addition, a required summer reading offers incoming first-year students a common intellectual experience and introduces several of the perennial questions that Foundations will explore throughout the academic year. This year we have selected Khaled Hosseini's best-selling novel [The Kite Runner](#) for your summer reading. If you will be on Siena's campus this summer, you can purchase the book at Siena's Bookstore. If you have already read it, we encourage you to read it again, as rereading will deepen your understanding of it. It is also likely that you have seen the film by the same name. Please know that the film is *very* different from the book – it leaves out significant parts of the narrative. Also know that you will be responsible for the content of the book, not the film. It might, however, be a valuable exercise for you to compare the two.

## **Requirements for the Summer Assignment:**

- Read the book thoroughly, keeping in mind the themes of the course: the overall theme of responsibility, as well as human nature, our relationships with society and with the natural world, secular and religious worldviews, and the American experience.
- Be prepared to speak in detail about the book when you come to class. Study the book, mark or highlight what you think are important passages from the text and write down questions and reflections that you may have.
- During the first week of class, there will be a written assignment and/or quiz dealing with the themes, concepts, and issues from the book.

We have provided links to discussion questions and other helpful information about [The Kite Runner](#) on our website at [The Kite Runner "Study Guides"](#).

We who teach the course are looking forward to meeting you.  
Happy reading,

The Foundations Sequence Faculty