Socratic Seminar for *The Scarlet Letter* Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Rather than a test to assess your understanding of the novel, you will be evaluated on your preparation and participation in a Socratic Seminar on the novel on Tuesday. You will receive two grades for the seminar: Preparation (50 points) and Participation (50 points).

Directions: Choose any 5 questions to answer in preparation for the Socratic Seminar on Tuesday. Make sure to take a clear, well-defined, and well-supported stance in each response. You may connect personal experiences, hypothetical scenarios, and other first-hand accounts to justify your response; however, you must support responses with textual evidence from *The Scarlet Letter* to earn full credit in the seminar (see rubric).

1. Public punishment is more effective than private punishment in deterring other people from committing the same crimes.
2. Professor Nancy Stade writes, “*The Scarlet Letter* is not so much about an adulterous affair as about a severe punishment inflicted by the Boston community and the psychological consequences for the central characters.” To what extent do you find this reflection true?

1. What is Dimmesdale's reason for keeping silent for seven years? How valid is his reasoning? Is he a sympathetic character?
2. How do each of the major characters (Hester, Arthur, Roger, Pearl) sin against the others? Whose sin is the worst by Puritan standards? Whose sin is the worst by modern standards?
3. Define “crime.” Define “sin.” Are all crimes sins? Are all sins crimes? Explain your response using the text, examples from your life, examples from your education, and/or current events.
4. Is there anything we as a society can learn from the Puritans, positive or negative? Are there values they held that we have perhaps lost that might improve our society today? Explain.
5. Sin cannot be washed away completely; it leaves a permanent mark.
6. It is human nature to love more readily than to hate.
7. Defend, justify, or qualify the following statement: The novel was descriptive and detailed. Though difficult to read at times, the elevated language, vocabulary, and sentence structure combine to make the novel a classic work of art.
8. Create your own meaningful, thought-provoking question or statement to defend, justify, or qualify.

**Written Responses - Preparation Rubric:**

50 All questions are thoroughly answered and include documented support from the text. Paragraphs are

very well written and contain a balance of concrete detail and commentary. Responses exhibit

thoughtful consideration of the questions. There are virtually no usage or punctuation errors.

45 All questions are answered well and include documented support from the text. Paragraphs contain

sufficient concrete detail and commentary to make their points. They are for the most part well written

with only a few minor flaws in usage or punctuation.

40 All questions are answered, although not always thoroughly and/or with documented support. Responses lack either sufficient concrete detail or commentary. Writing is acceptable, but may contain

some errors in usage and/or punctuation.

35 All questions are answered, but consistently lack sufficient detail and commentary. Writing shows lack of

preparation and thought.

0 – 30 Insufficient effort. Did not answer all questions and/or did not answer them thoroughly.

**Participation Rubric:**

50 Fully participates in the seminar by making several constructive comments that are supported by

evidence and explained thoroughly. Listens and responds to peers’ comments. Advances, but

does not monopolize, the discussion. Behavior and attitude are exemplary.

45 Answers at least three questions with constructive comments supported by evidence and

explained thoroughly. Listens and responds to peers’ comments. Participates without

monopolizing the discussion. Behavior and attitude are excellent.

40 Answers at least two questions and supports those answers with evidence, although that

evidence may be weak. Behavior and attitude are satisfactory.

35 Participates by agreeing or disagreeing, but does not make a constructive comment. Actively

listens without disrupting or distracting others.

0 - 30 Present in class but does not participate in the discussion. Inattention, distraction, and disruption will result in loss of points.