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Sample Discussion questions for Roosevelt Montás's *Rescuing Socrates: How the Great Books Changed My Life and Why They Matter for a New Generation*

Objective: The goal of this document is to make students reflect on the significance, meaning, and criticisms of a liberal education. Some of the questions below will prompt students to zoom in on Montás's experience, and some will prompt them to think about their own. Many of these questions do not have correct answers and are simply designed to spark conversation.

Text: *Rescuing Socrates: How the Great Books Changed My Life and Why They Matter for a New Generation* by Roosevelt Montás. Princeton University Press. 2021.

1. To Roosevelt Montás, what is the value of a liberal education?
2. Who were some of the main authors that had an impact on Roosevelt Montás' worldview?
3. How was reading Augustine impactful for Montás?
4. How was reading Freud impactful for Montás?
5. How was reading Gandhi impactful for Montás?
6. How was reading Plato impactful for Montás?
7. Roosevelt Montás explains that a liberal education is at odds with the rise of research universities. Can you explain how this is the case?
8. Montás makes the argument that a liberal education is an education for "free" individuals. Non-elites have been traditionally excluded from this type of education, and have instead been taught skills or trades. Montás is saying: marginalized individuals can cultivate true freedom through the introspection provided by a liberal education. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
9. Roosevelt Montás talks about a liberal education promoting freedom. To you, what is freedom? How can we obtain it? How can a liberal education lead to freedom?
10. What is the main criticism of Columbia-style core curricula that Roosevelt Montás brings to light?
11. How does Montás respond to these criticisms?
12. What are the four features of a core curriculum, according to Montás?
13. Why does Montás believe that a core curriculum is valuable?
14. Why does Montás believe that core curricula are dying in universities across the United States?
15. Name two books that had a substantial impact on your worldview. Describe their impact in detail (later, you will have an opportunity to share with the rest of the students). The goal of this exercise is to look inward, as Roosevelt Montás did throughout this book.

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16. What are your opinions on having a core curriculum? Should we be reading the classics of “western” literature (Plato, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, etc.)? Why or why not?
17. If you had to design your own core curriculum, what authors would you choose? Why?