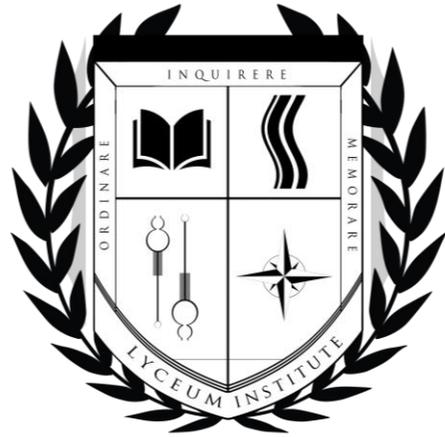


TRIVIUM: GRAMMAR

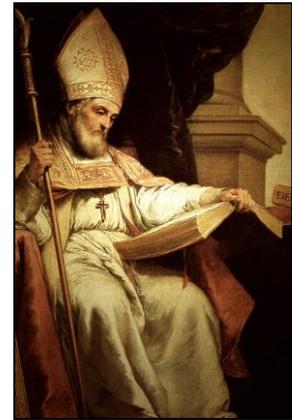
SEMINAR SYLLABUS

[FALL 2021]



DESCRIPTION

The Trivium always exists as a whole: any attempt to divorce grammar from logic and rhetoric, or any of these three from each other, such that one studies one and not the others, results in an inadequate command of each and therefore an inadequate command of language. Thus, although this study *focuses* upon grammar, it does not do so to the exclusion of its sisters in the Trivium. Syntax and semantics are studied not as ends in themselves, but as means through which we may better understand the language of others while improving in our own ability to convey meaning.



There are two axes along which we can consider grammar: from the general to the particular and from the speculative to the practical. This course will study language speculative and in general but will also focus on the particulars of the English language and aims at our collective improvement in the practice of writing. Thus, we will study the **fundamentals** of grammar; learn the art of **diagramming**; discover the **principles of composition**; practice the composition of **sentences, paragraphs, and essays** as well as the art of **revising our compositions** (which drafting and revising will occupy much of our attention), and finish by undertaking an inquiry into **style**.

METHOD

The Grammar course is 12 weeks long, with one brief recorded lecture and one discussion session each week. Each discussion session is structured around a reading from *Linguistic Signification: A Classical Course in Grammar and Composition*. Participants are expected to have read the assigned reading and listened to the lecture prior to the session, so that they may engage in a semi-structured discussion directed and moderated by the instructor and ask insightful questions about language. Moreover, *continual discussion* will foster that participation and engagement throughout the week. Participants will be expected to partake in these discussions on a regular basis and will be challenged to do so directly.

More importantly for the study of *any* language, practice in its use will instill the habits of thought necessary to its mastery. Thus, regular assignments structured grammar and composition will be given.

READING

There are two primary texts for the Grammar course: *Linguistic Signification: A Classical Course in Grammar and Composition* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, in the translation by Robert Fitzgerald. Secondary recommended texts include but are not limited to: Sr. Miriam Joseph's *The Trivium: The Liberal Arts of Logic, Grammar, and Rhetoric*; J.C. Nesfield's *Manual of English Grammar and Composition*; H.W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*; and a classic (pre-1979) edition of *Roget's Thesaurus*. **Readings are subject to change.**

LECTURE

Each week there will also be a 15-20 minute audio or video lecture, posted to Teams at the beginning of the week. This lecture will be based upon the assigned reading, but will also stray into related topics, or may use the reading as a launching point for addressing some related issue (perhaps one more general, or perhaps one more specific).

DISCUSSION

Though study of English grammar and composition can mostly occur asynchronously, a discussion period may be fruitful to deepening our understanding and increasing our conversance with the nuances of language. Accordingly, a once-a-week discussion session will be held on **Mondays** from **6:00-6:45pm ET**. If sufficient interest is had, an additional session will be held at another time.

Each discussion session will begin with a brief synopsis of the week's material and a focusing on whichever aspects of that material seem most pressing. Beyond the direction provided by the instructor, participants are encouraged to bring their own concerns explicitly into view and to engage with the instructor and one another in civil debate and collective inquiry.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

As this is a course in composition, and no one improves in composition except by practice at it, regular assignments will accompany each week's study. Some of these will be self-directed and can be evaluated independently, others will require feedback from the instructor.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Discussion on September 27	Meaning, Significance, and Terms Lecture: On Categorematic and Syncategorematic Terms Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Part I: Fundamentals of Grammar and Chapter I: The Parts of the English Language.• Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, I.1-410.
Discussion on October 4	Function of Language Lecture: Function of Parts and of the Whole

	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Chapter II: The Functions of Linguistic Parts. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, I.411-1037.
Discussion on October 11	<p>Principles of English Syntax</p> <p>Lecture: Cases and Mood</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Chapter III: Approaching Language and Chapter IV: Verbs. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, II.1-1046.
Discussion on October 18	<p>Visualizing Syntax</p> <p>Lecture: Diagrammatic Representation and Linguistic Relations</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Part II: Diagramming, Chapter V: Basics of Diagramming I, and Chapter VI: Basics of Diagramming II. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, III.1-373-952.
Discussion on October 25	<p>Relation of Syntactical Units</p> <p>Lecture: Relations of Clauses and Phrases</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Chapter VII: Intermediate Diagramming. • William Shakespeare, Sonnet XL.
Discussion on November 1	<p>Principles of Composition</p> <p>Lecture: Economy and Coherence</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Part III: Principles of Composition, Chapter VIII: What is Composition, Chapter IX: Economy, and Chapter X: Coherence. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, IV and V.1-627.
Discussion on November 8	<p>The Structure of Sentences</p> <p>Lecture: Logic and the Expression of Propositions</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Part IV: Composing Sentences, Chapter XI: Structure of the Sentence, and Chapter XII: Logic Underlying the Sentence • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, V.628-1141 and VI.1-574.
Discussion on November 15	<p>Composition in Paragraphs</p> <p>Lecture: Uniting Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric in the Paragraph</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Part V: Composing Paragraphs, Chapter XIII: The Basic Unit of Composition, Chapter XIV: Structuring Paragraphs, and Chapter XV: Context of the Paragraph. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, VI.575-1222 and VII.

<p>Discussion on November 22</p>	<p>Beginning Essays</p> <p>Lecture: Thinking as a Cause of the Essay</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Part VI: Composing Essays, Chapter XVI: Outlining, and Chapter XVII: Theses and Introductions. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, VIII.
<p>Discussion on November 29</p>	<p>Knowledge and the Essay</p> <p>Lecture: Rhetorical Practice and Drafting</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Chapter XVIII: Knowledge & Writing and Chapter XIX: Matter and Content. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, IX.
<p>Discussion on December 6</p>	<p>Finishing an Essay</p> <p>Lecture: The Art of Revision</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Part VII: Polishing, Chapter XX: Revising for Accuracy, Chapter XXI: Revising for Coherence & Economy, and Chapter XXII: Revise, Revise, Revise. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, X and XI.1-721.
<p>Discussion on December 13</p>	<p>Perfecting an Essay</p> <p>Lecture: The Question of Style</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Chapter XXIII: Editing, Part VIII: Style, Chapter XXIV: Writing from a Standpoint, and Chapter XXV: Description & the Concrete. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, XI.722-1240 and XII.