

TRIVIUM: ART OF RHETORIC

SEMINAR SYLLABUS

[SUMMER 2022]



DESCRIPTION

The Trivium always exists as a whole: any attempt to divorce rhetoric from grammar and logic, 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 rhetoric, it does not do so to the exclusion of its sisters in the Trivium. In our study of Rhetoric, we incorporate definitions and syllogisms, tensions of the enthymeme, considerations of syncategoremata and categorematic precision, and more that draws upon our other inquiries.



We study, in all the Trivium, as our chief object, the word as the sign of thought. The word, which is the principle of all our discursive intellectual operations, seizing meaning—succinctly understood as the intelligibility of being which directs our specifically human way of living—and brings it forth. The word, therefore, may communicate the truth. But, by neglecting a study of the word we allow it to be used rather to the obfuscation of meaning or the creation of meanings at odds with human nature; we imperil truth and abandon meaning to the basest of impulses. Contrariwise, by continually deepening our understanding of the word, we not only defend the truth, but allow meaning to thereby flourish, and it is this flourishing as diffused through language into culture that the rhetorician seeks.

In this course, we will investigate the persuasive expression of the word which makes known the truth and train ourselves in those means of persuasion which do not manipulate the mind but clear away its confusions.

METHOD

The Art of Rhetoric course is 10 weeks long, with one brief recorded lecture and one discussion session each week. Each discussion session is structured around readings Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric* and Edward Corbett's textbook, with supplements drawn from elsewhere in the tradition. 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 and its use. 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.

In addition, there will be brief assignments given each week specifically tailored for the purposes of honing our abilities in the rightly-ordered persuasive use of language.

READING

The texts for this course are primarily two: Edward P.J. Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (in first or second editions; PDF provided) and Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*, translated by Robert C. Barlett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019). Supplemental readings are recommended from Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* in the Loeb edition (Latin-English facing; PDFs provided) and one reading will be from Cicero's *Orator* (different from *De oratore*; PDF will be provided). **Readings are subject to change.**

LECTURE

Each week there will also be a 15-30 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 elements of the study of rhetoric can occur asynchronously—there being countless examples wherein we may encounter it on our own—discussions are nevertheless crucial for rightly directing our attention to the most salient points of expressing ourselves persuasively through language. Accordingly, two discussion sessions per week will be held on **Mondays** from **6:00-6:45pm ET** and **Thursdays** from **12:00-12:45pm ET**.

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.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Each week there will be an assignment given by the instructor which corresponds to the reading material and which is aimed at sharpening the students' abilities in persuasively employing words to the communal attunement to the truth. These assignments will combine elements both written and oral.

FINAL EXAM

The final exam for this course is twofold: first, students will submit a written composition of 1500-3000 words on a topic determined in the final week of classes. This composition must be persuasive on a topic of clearly-stated differing opinions. Subsequently, students will deliver an extemporaneous oral defense concerning a related topic given them by the instructor to last no less than seven minutes.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Discussions on June 6 June 9	<p>Nature and Function of Rhetoric</p> <p>Lecture: Defining Rhetoric</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (20-33). • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, I.1-3 (5-21). <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>, 1.II.15 (301-19).
Discussions on June 13 June 16	<p><i>Inventio</i> & the Appeal to Reason</p> <p>Lecture: Language, Logic, and the Persuasive Argument</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (39-80). • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II.1 (76-77).
Discussion on June 20 June 23	<p><i>Inventio</i> & the Appeal to Passion</p> <p>Lecture: Linguistic Signs and Cathectic Response</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (86-94). • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II.2-11 (77-108).
Discussion on June 27 June 30	<p><i>Inventio</i> & the Ethical Appeal</p> <p>Lecture: Persuasion and the Human Symbol</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (80-86). • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II.12-17 (108-16).
BREAK	
Discussion on July 11 July 14	<p><i>Inventio</i> & the Topics</p> <p>Lecture: Structures of Persuasion</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (94-137). • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II.18-21 (116-27).
Discussion on July 18 July 21	<p><i>Exordium</i></p> <p>Lecture: Audience and Attention</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (273-288). • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, III.13-14 (191-96). <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>, 2.IV.1 (7-49).
Discussion on	<p><i>Narratio</i> & <i>Refutatio</i></p> <p>Lecture: <i>Intentiones Cordis</i></p>

<p>July 25 July 28</p>	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (288-302). • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II.24-25 (144-52). <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>, 2.IV.2 (49-121).
<p>Discussion on August 1 August 4</p>	<p><i>Peroratio</i></p> <p>Lecture: Belief and Action</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, 302-312. • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, III, c.19 (209-10). <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>, 2.VI.1 (382-417).
<p>Discussion on August 8 August 11</p>	<p><i>Elocutio</i> – Style and Structure</p> <p>Lecture: Vocabulary and Style</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, 384-402. • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II, c.26. <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>, 3.VIII.1-3 (195-263).
<p>Discussion on August 15 August 18</p>	<p><i>Elocutio</i> – Performance</p> <p>Lecture: Style and Delivery</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cicero, <i>Orator</i>, §20-32; 61-99 (174-77; 186-97). • Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>, 3.VIII.4-5 (263-301).