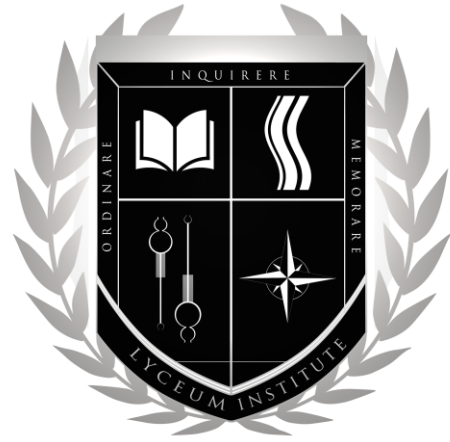


TRIVIUM: ART OF GRAMMAR

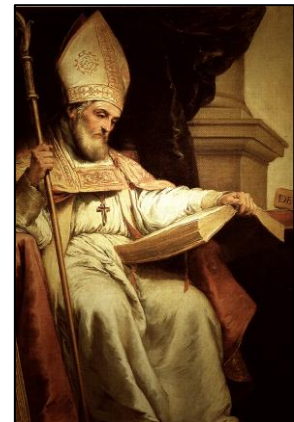
COURSE SYLLABUS

[2023]



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 grammar both speculatively and in general but will principally focus on the particulars of the English language and aims at our collective improvement in the practice of writing; one cannot understand any general rule or principle except inasmuch as it is seen to exercise an efficacy upon the particular. 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**. Along the way, we will observe syntax and semantics. Through all these diverse topics, we will see how they inform both the structure of a literary work and our ability to read, understand, and analyze such a text, giving us not only a familiarity with grammar as the art of good English composition but also a rudimentary insight into the practice of grammatical exegesis.

METHOD

The Grammar course is 12 weeks long, with one brief recorded lecture and two (recorded) discussion sessions each week. Each discussion session is structured around a reading from *Linguistic Signification: A Classical Course in Grammar and Composition* and a reading from Virgil's *Aeneid*. Participants are expected to have read the assigned reading and listened to the lecture prior to the sessions, so that they may engage in semi-structured discussions directed and moderated by the instructor and ask insightful questions about language and literature in light of a grammatical mode of study. 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. As such, participants should be ready to type and post observations and questions on the weekly discussion threads which will be posted on **Friday mornings**.

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 *King's English* and *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*; and a classic (pre-1979) edition of *Rogers's Thesaurus*. **Readings are subject to change.**

LECTURE

Each week there will also be a 15 to 45-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(s) 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 or two may be fruitful to deepening our understanding and increasing our conversance with the nuances of language. Accordingly, two discussion sessions will be held every week, 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.

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. These will include exercises in identifying proper grammatical forms, diagramming sentences, and brief composition assignments. Students will also be tasked to write **four (4) essays**, due on **January 26, February 16, March 16, and April 13**.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Discussions on	Meaning, Significance, and Terms
January 9	Lecture: On Categorematic and Syncategorematic Terms
January 12	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.

Discussions on January 16 January 19	Function of Language Lecture: Function of Parts and of the Whole Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Chapter II: The Functions of Linguistic Parts. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, II.
Discussions on January 23 January 26 Essay #1	Principles of English Syntax Lecture: Cases and Mood Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Chapter III: Approaching Language and Chapter IV: Verbs. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, III.
Discussions on January 30 February 2	Visualizing Syntax Lecture: Diagrammatic Representation and Linguistic Relations Readings: <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>, IV.
Discussions on February 6 February 9	Relation of Syntactical Units Lecture: Relations of Clauses and Phrases Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, Chapter VII: Intermediate Diagramming. • Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, V.
Discussions on February 13 February 16 Essay #2	Principles of Composition Lecture: Economy and Coherence Readings: <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>, VI.
Discussions on February 27 March 2	The Structure of Sentences Lecture: Logic and the Expression of Propositions Readings: <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>, VII.
Discussions on	Composition in Paragraphs Lecture: Uniting Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric in the Paragraph Readings:

<p>March 6 March 9</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>, VIII.
<p>Discussions on March 13 March 16</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>, IX.
<p>Discussions on March 20 March 23 Essay #3</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>, X.
<p>Discussions on March 27 March 30</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>, XI.
<p>Discussions on April 3 April 6 Essay #4 Due April 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>, XII.