

TRIVIUM

ART OF RHETORIC I: DISCOVERY OF ARGUMENTS

COURSE SYLLABUS

[GENERAL]

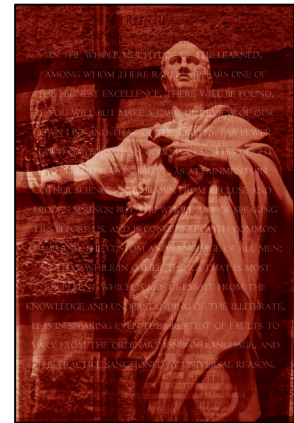


DESCRIPTION OF THE TRIVIUM

The Trivium—consisting in the three arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric—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 syncategorematic and categorematic precision, and more still that draws upon our other inquiries within the Trivium.

Our Trivium program consists in **eight courses**, to be taken in sequence:

1. Art of Grammar I: Foundations
2. Art of Logic I: Basics of Argumentation
3. Art of Rhetoric I: Discovery of Arguments
4. Art of Grammar II: Composition
5. Art of Logic II: Advanced Argumentation
6. Art of Rhetoric II: Styles of Persuasion
7. Grammar & Rhetoric: Literature and Philosophy
8. Philosophy of Logic¹



COURSE DESCRIPTION

We study, in all the practices and doctrines of 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—“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.

¹ Philosophy of Logic doubles as a Philosophy Seminar.

The Art of Rhetoric consists in two courses: **Discovery of Arguments** and **Styles of Persuasion**. The Discovery of Arguments is a prerequisite to the Styles of Persuasion.

In this course, the Discovery of Arguments, we will analytically investigate the use of persuasive expression in its most fundamental structures: beginning with a consideration of **ethics** and the use of **rhetoric**; attaining a correct and thoughtful **definition** of rhetoric; and examining *inventio*—the habit of discovery—in its two interrelated aspects of *appeal* and the *topics*. This study will allow us to see how others affect (or fail to affect) persuasion in their written words. We will also draw attention during discussions to the persuasiveness of the spoken word.

METHOD

The Art of Rhetoric I: Discovery of Arguments is 8 weeks long, with one brief recorded lecture and two recorded discussion sessions each week. Each discussion session is structured around readings of Aristotle’s *Art of Rhetoric*, Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*, and Edward Corbett’s textbook, with supplements and examples drawn from elsewhere in the tradition. Our study within discovery will attend primarily to the works of Aristotle and Corbett. 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 three: Edward P.J. Corbett’s *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (in first or second editions; PDF provided), Aristotle’s *Art of Rhetoric*, translated by Robert C. Barlett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), and Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* in the Loeb edition (Latin-English facing; PDFs provided—an English print edition is being prepared) and one reading will be from Cicero’s *Orator* (different from *De oratore*; PDF will be provided). Some additional readings will also be required (PDFs to be provided). **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 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 at times TBD.

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.

ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to weekly readings and reflections, students will be required to read and analyze a brief passage each week. Analysis must be presented either in class or submitted in writing. A rubric for these analyses will be provided by the instructor.

FINAL EXAM

The final exam for this course consists in a practice of analyzing an argument, provided by the instructor, in two parts. First, students must identify the appeals and common topics employed by the author. Second, students must, in 800-1500 words, give reason for acceptance, rejection, or distinction of the argument analyzed.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Week I	<p>Ethics of the Rhetorician</p> <p>Lecture: Philosophy and Rhetoric</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>, I, Preface (v.1, 5-19). • Cicero, <i>Orator</i>, §1-19 (169-173).
Week II	<p>Nature and Function of Rhetoric</p> <p>Lecture: Defining Rhetoric</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, I.1-3 (5-21). • Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>, II, c.15 (v.1, 301-19). <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (20-33).
Week III	<p><i>Inventio</i> & the Appeal to Reason</p> <p>Lecture: Language, Logic, and the Persuasive Argument</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (39-45; 61-70). • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II.1 (76-77). <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (70-80).
Week IV	<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"> • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II.2-11 (77-108). • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (86-94).

	BREAK
Week V	<p><i>Inventio</i> & the Appeal to Ethos</p> <p>Lecture: Persuasion and the Human Symbol</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II.12-17 (108-16). • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (80-86).
Week VI	<p><i>Inventio</i> & the Topics</p> <p>Lecture: Structures of Persuasion</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, <i>Art of Rhetoric</i>, II.18-21 (116-27). • Corbett, <i>Classical Rhetoric</i>, (94-137).
Week VII	<p>Analysis of Arguments</p> <p>Lecture: <i>Intentiones Cordis</i></p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, “Harvard Address”, 1978. • James Barrat, “AGI 2.0” in <i>Our Final Invention</i>. <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Milton, “Of Education, to <i>Samuel Hartlib</i>”.
Week VIII	<p>Review and Examination</p> <p>Lecture: Reflecting upon the Art of Rhetoric</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review notes. • The final examination will be posted at the end of the final class. Students will have one week to complete the examination, which must be uploaded to Teams before 11:59pm ET at the end of that week. <p style="text-align: center;">FINAL EXAMINATION DUE TBD</p>