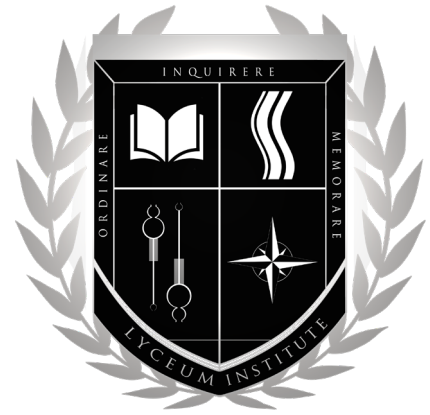


TRIVIUM

ART OF GRAMMAR II: COMPOSITION

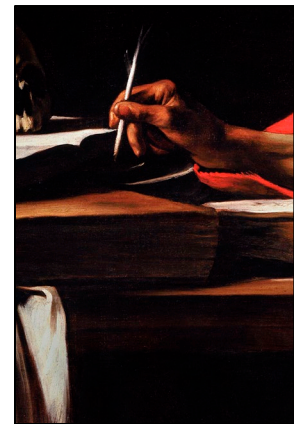
COURSE SYLLABUS

[2025]



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 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.



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

Not everyone needs to be a great writer, and, absent a natural disposition or talent for writing, few persons will come even close. But this is no excuse for not seeking to become *good* writers. As language-imbued social creatures, we depend upon words for not only pragmatic communication but also for the fulfillment of our nature. This fulfillment necessarily unfolds in relation with others. The better we can communicate with others, the better enabled we are to handle those relations. The practice of composition greatly facilitates our ability to communicate not only in the written but also the spoken word. It helps us, also, to see better the intelligible reality of the world we inhabit.

The Art of Grammar consists in two courses: Foundations and Composition. Foundations is a prerequisite to Composition.

Retrieving our insights concerning the nature of language itself, discovered in the Foundations course, Composition will attend to 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

¹ Philosophy of Logic doubles as a Philosophy Seminar.

attention), and finish by undertaking an inquiry into **style**. The intention of the Composition course is to instill in students the habits whereby they can become better writers, and, reflexively, improved in their understanding of the principles of language as well.

METHOD

The Art of Grammar II: Composition course is 8 weeks long, with one brief recorded lecture and two (recorded) discussion sessions each week. **Art of Grammar I: Foundations** and **Art of Logic I: Basics of Argumentation** are prerequisites to this course. It is also strongly recommended but not necessary to have first taken **Art of Rhetoric I: Discovery of Arguments**. Anyone who has *not* taken these courses may ask to take a **qualifying test**. 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 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.

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

READING

There is one primary text for the Art of Grammar II: Composition course: *Linguistic Signification: A Classical Course in Grammar and Composition*. This text is available in hardcover, paperback, or free as a PDF. **It is currently undergoing a revision for a second edition.** Updated PDFs will be provided weekly. 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*; Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*; Jacques Barzun's *Simple and Direct*; a physical dictionary (preferably printed before the year 2000) and a classic (pre-1979) edition of *Roget'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). The primary purpose of the lecture is to stimulate our thinking about how language is best used in composition.

DISCUSSION

Though study of English grammar and composition can occur (to some extent) asynchronously, a discussion period or two is invaluable for deepening our understanding and increasing our conversance with the nuances of language. Accordingly, two discussion sessions will be held every week on Monday at 6:00–6:45pm ET and on Tuesday at 12:00–12:45pm ET.

Each discussion session will begin with a brief synopsis of the week's material and questions which help students to focus on whichever aspects of that material seem most pressing, including those derived from weekly homework assignments. 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. This especially provides students opportunities to ask questions about both particularities of English grammar, the diverse methods which are suitable for composition, the integration of the Trivium, and to ask for feedback on submitted assignments.

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 recursive exercises practicing skills learned in the first Art of Grammar course as well as brief composition assignments. Students will also be tasked to write **three (3) essays**, due at times listed on the schedule below. A rubric that explains how assignments are evaluated will be provided at the outset of the course. This rubric will draw upon all three arts of the Trivium.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Week I 1/6–1/12	Review and Principles of Composition Lecture: Economy and Coherence Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, 141-182.
Week II 1/13–1/19	The Structure of Sentences Lecture: Logic and the Expression of Propositions Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, 182-225
Week III 1/20–1/26	Composition in Paragraphs Lecture: Uniting Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric in the Paragraph Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, 242-294. ESSAY #1 DUE 2/3
Week IV 1/27–2/2	Beginning Essays Lecture: Thinking as a Cause of the Essay Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, 295-333.
	BREAK
Week V 2/10–2/16	Knowledge and the Essay Lecture: Rhetorical Practice and Drafting Readings:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, 334-370.
Week VI 2/17-2/23	Finishing an Essay Lecture: The Art of Revision Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, 371-414. <p style="text-align: center;">ESSAY #2 DUE 3/3</p>
Week VII 2/24-3/2	Perfecting an Essay Lecture: The Question of Style Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, 415-454.
Week VIII 3/3-3/9	Review for Final Essays Lecture: Composition and the Trivium Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Linguistic Signification</i>, 226-241; 455-460. <p style="text-align: center;">FINAL ESSAY DUE 3/17</p>