

Provisional Syllabus
Rhetoric I/II
Classical Cottage School
Fall 2020 (Year Course)
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Location: Christianson 3

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.
Proverbs 15:4

Rhetoric is widely known as the art of persuasion. In the beginning of the *Rhetoric* (1354a), Aristotle also describes rhetoric as the art of self-defense. In this course, we will try to understand what Aristotle meant by such expressions. Just as importantly, we will learn to think more carefully and deliberately about persuasion, and about particular techniques of clear thinking and of effective communication to others.

Rhetoric is the capstone of a classical education, bringing a young person's formation into a harmonious whole. In the "grammar stage" of your education, you acquired the building blocks of language, and you learned how to arrange these according to accepted models of expression. In the "logic stage," you learned the rules of deduction, and how to begin applying them in each area of study. In the "rhetoric stage" you will learn to write and speak with force and originality. The student of rhetoric applies the rules of logic to the foundational information learned in the early grades and expresses conclusions in clear, elegant, compelling language. By mastering rhetoric, you will be well equipped to discern and defend truth and justice in any walk of life to which you are called.

How you will achieve mastery:

Before each class session, you will study Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; Cothran's exercises will help you understand his writing. You may use any translation, provided it has the Bekker numbers on the margins. However, I recommend the Sachs translation, which is close to the Greek and reads smoothly; the second edition of Kennedy's translation (2006) is the most scholarly, dense with footnotes and demanding.

Aristotle will give you the classical theoretical foundation to understand the art of persuasion. This reading—Aristotle's lecture notes, as it happens—will inform your analysis of public oration, serve as a model for your own speeches, and help you to evaluate the delivery of your peers. By regularly giving and analyzing speeches, you will learn to use the tools of rhetoric for day-to-day persuasive encounters. The point is to acquire new habits, new virtues as second-nature.

A typical class session will be divided into three parts: 1) discussing the Aristotle reading and its context, 2) reviewing the Cothran materials, 3) delivering and peer-evaluating a student's speech.

Required Books:

Plato: Gorgias and Aristotle: Rhetoric. Joe Sachs, trans. Focus Philosophical Library/ Hackett Publishing, 2009. (ISBN: 978-1585102990)

Classical Rhetoric by Martin Cothran. Memoria Press, 2009. (ISBN: 978-1930953444)

How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading by Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren. Simon & Schuster, 1940 [reprinted many times]. (ISBN: 978-0671212094)

Optional:

Figures of Speech: 60 Ways to Turn a Phrase by Arthur Quinn. Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., 1982. (ISBN: 978-0879051211)

Also very useful for figures of speech:

<http://rhetoric.byu.edu/>

Schedule:

September 17 in person at Bethel - Introduction to the course - Historical introduction - Plato's *Gorgias*

September 24 ONLINE - Lesson I (Cothran - Prepare in advance each week, including readings, exercises, or case study exercises as indicated.) Optional: Read *Gorgias*.

October 1 in person at Bethel - Lesson II

October 8* ONLINE - Lesson III

October 15 in person at Bethel - Lesson III Case Study Exercises - Delivery 1 & 2

October 22 ONLINE - Lesson IV

October 29 in person at Bethel - Lesson IV Case Study Exercises - Delivery 3 & 4

November 5 ONLINE - Lesson V

November 12 in person at Bethel - Lesson V Case Study Exercises - Delivery 5 & 6

November 19 ONLINE - Lesson VI

November 26th No classes, off for Thanksgiving

December 3 in person at Bethel - Lesson VI Case Study Exercises - [Delivery 7 & 8]

December 10* ONLINE - Lesson VII

December 17, 24, 31 No classes, off for Christmas Break

January 7 in person at Bethel Lesson VII Case Study Exercises

January 14* ONLINE - Lesson VIII

January 21 in person at Bethel - Lesson VIII Case Study Exercises (End of Book I)

January 28 ONLINE - Review

[Spring schedule has yet to be determined.]