

## Rhetoric Overview

The study and use of rhetorical skills have often been misunderstood as a game of words. After all, politicians, pundits and demagogues are frequently known to use “rhetoric” to obscure truth or to trick an audience into accepting a spurious argument. Such a misrepresentation is unfortunate in a world that is in need of the logic and skills of communication that can be obtained through a close study of rhetoric. Indeed, this course of study ought to be understood as a culmination of a student’s education, for in the study of rhetoric, grammar and writing, the student is taught to draw upon his now substantial body of knowledge in the creation of confident, well reasoned and orderly arguments, expository essays, narratives, epistolary essays and poetry as well as all manner of written and oral communication. With these tools in hand, the student can then easily decipher the spurious argument and counter with a clear, concise response. The student who has established strong convictions rooted in a worthy education can now effectively communicate that knowledge and those convictions in such a way as to persuade. With these skills, the student becomes a stronger citizen, able to argue on behalf of those ideals necessary for a free and moral society.

The formal study of rhetoric begins in the ninth grade. Ending in the junior year, the study of rhetoric is designed to train students in the rules, language and art of communication. The foundations for the study of rhetoric have already been laid in their general lower and middle school studies, particularly in the study of grammar, writing and vocabulary. It will not be purely oral in its emphasis, but will incorporate written argument as well including the introduction of formal rules and types of communication central to the study of rhetoric.

## Rhetoric • Grade 9

**DESCRIPTION:** The study of rhetoric in the ninth grade serves as the first, formal introduction to the rules, language and history of rhetoric. Students read Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric* and are expected to give oral presentations and complete written assignments based on their reading.

**METHOD:** In this first year, assignments should be closely directed with teacher-assigned topics for all presentations.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Aristotle. *Art of Rhetoric*. Translated by Hugh Lawson-Tancred. New York: Penguin, 1992.
- Corbett, E. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

### SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS:

- Bizzell, B. and B. Herzberg. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. New York: Bedford Books, 1990.
- Kennedy, George A. *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, 2nd ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.
- Lanham, Richard A. *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 2nd ed. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1992.

## SEMESTER ONE

### Topics

- Introduction
- Argument and emotion
- Modes of persuasion
- Kinds of rhetoric
- Political oratory
- Speaking of virtue
- Forensic oratory

### Materials

- Corbett, pp. 20-27, 29-31
- Aristotle, Bk. I, chap. 1, Corbett, pp. 4-19
- Aristotle, Bk. I, chap. 2, Corbett, pp. 28-29
- Aristotle, Bk. I, chap. 3
- Aristotle, Bk. I, chap. 4-8 (selections)
- Aristotle, Bk. I, chap. 9
- Aristotle, Bk. I, chap. 10-15 (selections)
- Extensive writing assignment & Student presentations

## SEMESTER TWO

### Topics

- What an orator must do
- Oratory assignment
- Student Presentations
- Emotions, human character and fortune
- Modes and style
- Conclusions
- Final assignment
- Final presentations

### Materials

- Aristotle, Bk. II, chap. 1
- Aristotle, Bk. II, chap. 2-17 (selections)
- Aristotle, Bk. II, chap. 20-26; Bk. III, chap. 1-18 (selections)
- Aristotle, Bk. III, chap. 19

## Rhetoric • Grade 10

**DESCRIPTION:** The study of rhetoric in the tenth grade is the most intense of the three years of study in this discipline. It serves to strengthen as well as add to the skills learned in the previous year of study by focusing on the style and modes of communication. The tenth grade studies include reading assignments, orations and written assignments, all of which are contiguous with the history and literature studied in the School's Humane Letters curriculum.

**METHOD:** In this second year, the teacher should begin to allow greater creativity and flexibility for the student in his choice of topics. The class meets daily.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Bizzell, P. and B. Herzberg, eds. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. New York: Bedford Books, 1990.
- Corbett, E. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Strunk, William Jr. and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1979.
- Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 2nd ed. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1992.

### SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS:

- Kennedy, George A. *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, 2nd ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.
- Lanham, Richard A. *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

## SEMESTER ONE

### Topic

- Rules of Usage
- Composition
- Form & Style
- Form & Style Ctd.
- Introduction to Argument
- Argument
- Argument Ctd.

### Materials

- Strunk & White, pp. 1-14
- Strunk and White, pp. 15-33
- Strunk and White, pp. 34-38, 66-86
- Extensive writing assignment 1
- Corbett, pp. 3-31, Isocrates, *Against the Sophists*, in Bizzel, pp. 43-49.
- Corbett, pp. 32-142, Weston, pp. 1-27
- Corbett, pp. 143-150, Selections from Socrates, *Apology*, in Corbett, pp. 233-249 Weston, pp. 28-59

## SEMESTER TWO

### Topic

- Argument, Ctd.
- Arrangement of Material
- Written Presentation
- Precision: grammar, diction and composition
- Style
- Final assignment

### Material

- Selections from Cicero, *Of Oratory*, in Bizzel, 200 – 232
- Corbett, pp. 278-316
- Written Presentation
- Corbett, pp. 380-403, Weston, pp. 60-79
- Corbett, pp. 404-423, Selections from Erasmus, *Copia: Foundations of the Abundant Style* in Bizzel, pp. 502-556

## Rhetoric • Grade 11

**DESCRIPTION:** The first portion of the eleventh grade will serve as an introduction to the study and writing of poetry. The remainder of the year is spent mastering rhetoric and oral argumentation.

**METHOD:** This final year of study in rhetoric provides the student greater freedom in choosing topics and introduces him more fully to the nuances of poetic expression and formal debate. The class meets daily.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Phillips, Leslie. *Basic Debate*, 4th ed. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook, 1997.
- Strachan, John and Richard Terry. *Poetry: An Introduction*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 2001.

### SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS:

- Altenberd, L. and Leslie L. Lewis. *A Handbook for the Study of Poetry*. New York: Macmillan, 1966.
- Davie, Donald. *The New Oxford Book of Christian Verse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Hill, Bill. *The Art and Practice of Argumentation and Debate*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 1997.
- Kilby, Clyde. *Poetry and Life: An Introduction to Poetry*. New York: Odyssey Press, 1953.
- Strunk, William Jr. and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1979.
- Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 2nd ed. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1992.



## SEMESTER ONE

### Topic

- Introduction to poetry
- Shape and sound
- Meter and rhythm
- Comparisons and associations
- Words/language
- Student Presentations
- Democracy and debate
- Analysis and research

### Material

- Strachan, pp. 1 – 23
- Strachan, pp. 24-74
- Strachan, pp. 75-114
- Strachan, pp. 115-141
- Strachan, pp. 142-166
- Student presentations1
- Phillips, pp. 3-10
- Phillips, pp. 11-48

## SEMESTER TWO

### Topic

- Logic and reasoning
- Argumentation
- Student assignments and presentations
- Argumentation, continued
- Parliamentary procedure
- Formal debates
- Final assignments/presentations

### Materials

- Phillips, pp. 49-68
- Phillips, pp. 69-118
- Student assignments and presentations
- Phillips, pp. 119-190
- Phillips, pp. 257-264
- Formal debates
- Final assignments/presentations