



Upper School Rhetoric Thesis

Yearlong 2018/19



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1. INCOMING STUDENT PROFILE

To be successful in this course, you will need to have a few pre-requisite skills. Make sure each of these descriptions is true of you. If you aren't sure, let's talk, and I can help make sure the course will be a good fit.

- ✓ Reads at or above a tenth-grade level
- ✓ Composes essays with confidence
- ✓ Successfully completed Rhetoric I through Scholé Academy or has comparable experience in classical rhetoric
- ✓ Listens, take notes, and is willing to engage in group discussions (extroversion not required!)
- ✓ Capable of guided, independent reading and research
- ✓ Types sufficiently well to transcribe a lengthy essay without frustration
- ✓ Possesses basic computer skills—browsing, accessing assignments, scanning, e-mailing, and managing files
- ✓ Has the intellectual and spiritual maturity to entertain opinions that are contrary to his or her own established beliefs

2. QUICK LOOK

Class Dates: September 4–May 24

Class Times: M/W 9:30 a.m. EST, 60–75 min.

Instructor: Adam Lockridge

E-mail: alockridge@scholeacademy.com

3. DETAILED SCHEDULE

Classes will take place on Mondays & Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. EST for 32 weeks and 63 classes on the following dates*:

September (7): 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26

October (10): 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, 31

November (6): 5, 7, 12, 14, [Thanksgiving Break] 26, 28

December (4): 3, 5, 10, 12 [Christmas Break]

January (8): [Christmas Break], 7, 9, 14, 16 [End 1st Semester], 21, 23, 28, 30

February (6): 4, 6, 11, 13 [Winter Break], 25, 27

March (8): 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27

April (7): 1, 3, 8, 10, [Easter], 22, 24, 29

May (7): 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22 [End 2nd Semester]

**In case of circumstantial cancellation (illness, family emergency, etc...), I will plan to get a substitute, record a makeup session, or schedule an additional meeting (as needed).*

4. OFFICE HOURS

If a parent or student needs to meet with me, please try to schedule a time during scheduled office hours. If you have a recurring schedule conflict with these times or have a time sensitive need, please feel free to request an alternate time and I will do my best to accommodate. *When you request a meeting, please specify a time zone.*

Monday and Wednesday, 11am-noon EST

Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30-1:30pm EST

By appointment: Send an e-mail requesting alternate times

5. Virtual School Technology

Live meetings will take place using an app called **Zoom** (www.zoom.us). Everything else, like submitting an assignment or accessing a course document, happens on **Schoology** (www.schoology.com). The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio, text chat and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook. Students will submit documents by scanning and uploading them to their personal computer and uploading them to the course assignment page.

6. COURSE MAP

Quarter 1: Essay Overview and Topic Selection

- Find your topic
- Explore your topic
- Find your issue
- Explore your issue
- Find an expert
- Research your issue

Quarter 2: Invention and Arrangement

- Create an outline
- Statement of Facts
- Argument
- Counterarguments
- Introduction and Conclusion

QUARTER 3: Style and Memory

- Refining essay style
- Preparing a speech from an essay
- Revisions

QUARTER 4: Delivery

- Memorize your speech
- Plan your speaking event
- Practice your delivery

7. COURSE TEXTS

Rhetoric Alive! Senior Thesis: Student Workbook

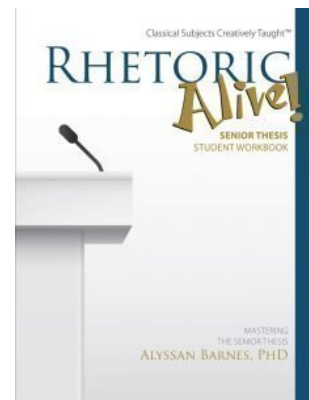
Late Summer 2018 Release

[*Writing with Clarity & Style: 2nd Edition.*](#)

ISBN-13: 978-1138560093; ISBN-10: 113856009X

[*Office of Assertion: An Art of Rhetoric for the Academic Essay:*](#)

ISBN-13: 978-1932236453; ISBN-10: 1932236457



Optional, Supplementary Text:

[*MLA Handbook, 8th Ed.*](#) ISBN-13: 978-1603292627; ISBN-10: 1603292624

8. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Rhetoric Thesis prepares students to meet the challenges of college-level writing in the liberal arts tradition. The thesis paper is the culmination of classical students' high school scholarship, as it provides an opportunity for them to showcase not only their content knowledge but also their ability to engage persuasively in "the Great Conversation." The thesis process—from the initial stage of finding a topic to the final day of presentation—is a jungle within which many students quickly find themselves lost.

This course is a step-by-step guide that leads students through the process of writing a thesis paper, helping them avoid the typical false starts and dead ends of the journey. The course instructor walks alongside students as they engage in the challenging task of preparing and presenting a thoughtful, original response to an issue. Grounded in classical rhetorical theory, this course guides students through the five canons of rhetoric, piece by piece, as they write the six sections of their oration. Students will ultimately become thinkers who can combine their wit, wisdom, eloquence, reason, and ethics for future writing endeavors.

9. How to Succeed as a Rhetoric Thesis Student

While students will be supported by the instructor throughout the process, the students must be willing and prepared to do the work. Here are five essential responsibilities that will be required of students who wish to succeed in *Rhetoric Thesis*:

Plan—As with any long-term project, you will need to keep track of e-mails, schedule events on a calendar, and manage numerous complex projects. For example, researching your topic may require you to interview an expert on a topic. This one element of your thesis could involve several discrete tasks, including writing an initial e-mail, scheduling time for an interview, preparing questions, reviewing a recording, taking notes, distilling the interview into usable material, and thanking the expert. Communicating and coordinating with others takes time, so you must be prepared to do this efficiently and tactfully.

Stay organized--Any topic worth investigating will contain numerous subtopics and opportunities for endless expansion. Using your time wisely will mean establishing a structure to track your questions, answers, and ideas. Rabbit trails are inevitable, but a good system for organizing your research will help you minimize distracting tangents. While the workbook will be highly useful in much of this work, you are ultimately responsible to collect, organize, and store your research in a way that you can easily access and use later when you are writing your thesis.

Pay attention--You will likely be helped by many people in the research, writing, and delivery of your thesis. When you are given instructions, input, or critical feedback, it is in your best interest to listen and respond. Listening to others is one part of paying attention; you must also pay attention to

yourself. Intentionally take notice of your own habits, routines, and intuitions so that you can critically evaluate them and get help when you need it. This behavior is key to independent scholarship, and it is therefore an essential ingredient of a successful thesis.

Assume responsibility—While you must seek out and utilize the help of others, you must remember that the only person who can research, write, and deliver your thesis is *you*. Assuming responsibility means putting in time and effort without complaint, receiving success with gratitude, facing obstacles with determination, and accepting failures as part of the learning process. Own your thesis, or it will own you!

Care (but don't worry) -- You may have taken some courses in which caring about the topic was not necessarily required, but caring is essential for success in *Rhetoric Thesis*. Caring does not mean that you must love every minute of your project; it means that you must daily operate with an understanding of the connection between your thesis topic and something that you recognize as truly important. Caring is not the same as worry. Worry is a mindset that will make writing and delivering your thesis more difficult, perhaps *much* more difficult, as it will mean focusing on future problems that are currently outside of your control while distracting you from doing important things that are currently in your control.

10. Student Assessment

There are four broad categories of objectives that I will be looking at when I assess student progress: exercise completion, essay composition, thesis delivery, and merit badges.

A. Exercises

These will be daily assignments that will help you prepare to research, write, or deliver your thesis. These will be the smallest portion of your grade, but that is not a reflection of their importance. They are given a nominal completion grade to give you some credit for completing them. The final proof of your diligence in completing the exercises will be in the paper and the speech itself. Examples of exercises:

- Lists of questions, **idea**, notes from brainstorming
- Reports on what you have read or researched (oral or written)
- Sentence writing practice pages
- Mini-speeches or papers on topics closely related to your thesis topic

B. Thesis - Essay

Your essay will be graded according to the invention, arrangement, and style. The essay will be graded solely by the teacher of the course, though he may get outside input from a topic expert on questions of fact or current expert opinions in a specific field.

- A) Invention – Have you developed a specific question and offered a compelling and credible thesis? Have you supported your thesis with the best and most relevant arguments? Have you addressed and countered the most powerful counterarguments to your position? Have you offered clear and detailed definitions, examples, comparisons, and testimonies? Have you considered your audience and offered fitting anecdotes, humor, and sufficient evidence of your own credibility?
- B) Arrangement—Does your speech follow a design? Are the parts of your speech in the best order? Are each of the parts of a discourse accounted for, and do they exist in proper proportion? Did you include transitional language to guide the reader through each step of your argument? Is your argument easy to follow, and did you begin and end with your audience in mind by including a winsome introduction and conclusion?
- C) Style—Does your essay follow the mechanics and conventions of English? Did you artfully design each sentence? Does each paragraph demonstrate a clear purpose and design? Did you adhere to the requirements of MLA citation and formatting?

C. Thesis - Speech Delivery

The speech delivery will be scored by a panel of judges which will include the teacher as well as two or three other judges who will score the speech according to the following rubric:

Memory—Did you have a clear grasp of your argument, and did you deliver it naturally, intuitively, and expressively? Did you include all of your best points from your essay?

Poise—Did you maintain eye contact with your audience? Did you maintain good posture? Did you carry yourself with ease and dignity? Did you make fitting hand gestures and refrain from fidgeting or distracting behaviors? Did you display confidence, sincerity, and humility in your personal demeanor?

Eloquence—Did your oral delivery exhibit mastery of English? Did you speak with proper volume and articulation? Did you create interest by including modulations in your tone, speed, and volume? Did your vocabulary help create interest, clarity, and fitting emotions?

Planning (graded by the teacher)—Did you select an appropriate venue for your speech? Did you offer timely invitations to specific individuals? Did you meet deadlines for making decisions and arrangements for your speaking event? Did you ensure that guests were treated with honor and hospitality?

D. Praiseworthy Accomplishments

Students will be recognized for specific skills, achievements, or qualities by earning merit badges; they will receive more information about these at the beginning of the school year.

12. Grading Scales

Grading is of necessity a reflection of the standards that are set, and standards set by Scholé Academy will likely not map directly on to your state and local requirements. Homeschooling parents are the final authority on the grade for the course as it is applied on a transcript. As an online school, we offer a grade recommendation based on our experience and objectives, and we provide transcripts for courses to assist you in your communication with other entities, such as umbrella organizations and local bureaucrats. We are fully aware, however, that states and local districts vary in their expectations, and you must translate your child's performance in a way that makes sense of those standards and expectations.

For our purposes, we are aiming to downplay the role of GPAs and modern grading systems to preserve a restful and contemplative approach to education. This is an indication of our desire to shield our classes from the current climate of high stakes testing, competitive schooling environments, and grade inflation. A restful school needs a restful grading system. Therefore, our day to day communications will use the following grading scale:

Magna cum laude (MCL) – an especially gifted student performing at his or her best

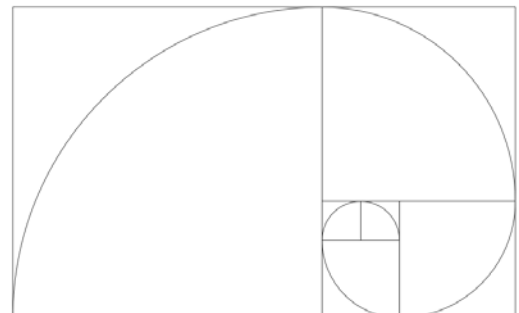
Cum laude (CL) – work done by the average student performing at his or her best

Satis (S) – work that is completed as assigned and on time

Non satis (NS) – work that is incomplete, poorly executed, or late

I plan to assign many “S” marks, so please do not equate this with a “C” or as an indication of failure in any way. Many assignments will be “complete” or “incomplete,” and completion is a binary standard. CL and MCL will be reserved to express satisfactory completion combined with greater overall performance in composition and participation quality.

To generate numerical grades, I will use the following scale derived from the famous Golden Rectangle. It has three advantages: 1) the extra decimal places will serve as a reminder that grades are measurements which attempt to quantify a quality (and not the other way around); 2) it will slow down the “bean counters” among us (you know who you are!); and 3) a teacher must draw the line somewhere, so he might as well draw it somewhere pretty.



Grading weights and percentages

Thesis Paper	62%	
Thesis Oral Delivery	24%	
Exercises	9%	
Basic Badges	3%	1/2 point each (6 total)
Intermediate Badges	1%	1/2 point each (2 total)
Advanced Badges	1%	1/2 point each (2 total)
Total	100%	

13. Academic Integrity

A. The Scholé Academy Learning Philosophy

Students are entrusted with the responsibility, under the guidance and authority of their parents, to abide by [Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy](#).

B. The Scholarly Vices and Academic Integrity

To help highlight the importance of academic integrity, please review these “Vices,” copied from the Student-Parent Handbook:

- **Pride:** Pride drives students to love their opinion and thoughts such that they cannot learn from others or discern the broader wisdom from other minds that would inform them.
- **Envy:** Envy agitates the mind by refusing to honor the gifts and capacities of others; it hinders students from learning from other honorable and able students.
- **Sloth/Laziness:** This is where the good gifts and capacities of students go to die.
- **Sensuality:** Indulgence in sensuality (not only of the sexual variety) creates lethargy, befogs the imagination, dulls the intelligence, and scatters the memory; sensuality distracts from learning.
- **Irritation/Impatience:** Irritation and impatience repels exhortation, direction, and constructive criticism and thus deters students from mastery and leads them to increased error.
- **Excessive Ambition (a form of intemperance):** Excessive ambition leads students to leap ahead of their capacity without true mastery and integration (often out of pride), which ultimately slows down learning and leads to patchy, non-integrated understanding.

A student with **academic integrity** does two things. First, he resists these vices insofar as he is able. Second, he is honest with his parents and teachers when he realizes that he has failed. Small slips, like saying something overly opinionate in class, can be easily rectified by noting the offense and moving on. More serious offenses that show evidence of planning and calculation, like cheating on a test or plagiarism on a paper, will certainly have larger consequences (a failing grade, risk of expulsion). Remember that we all make mistakes, and that the discipline to self-correct and even “turn yourself in” is always the way to the best possible outcome of a mistake (or even outright sin). Getting caught cheating or plagiarizing will only make matters worse. If you do cheat (God forbid), tell someone who cares about you as soon as you come to your senses!

Success is good, because it is satisfying to enjoy the reward of honest effort. Failure can be good too, as the pain can be transformed into “growing pain” by learning from our mistakes. Dishonesty circumvents both, as a liar stands only to reap the harvest that he did not plant (creating false feelings of success), or it shields him from the life lessons that he needs to mature. Telling the truth is good for you, and it is the key to cultivating academic integrity.

14. About the Teacher

Adam lives in rural Kansas where he and his wife homeschool their three children. Adam studied Philosophy at the University of Kansas and received his MA in Philosophy from the University of Memphis. As a philosophy student, Adam was most interested in the history of philosophy. Over the past ten years, Adam has taught a variety of subjects in 5th-12th grades, mostly in the humanities. His study of philosophy taught him the joy of carefully reading old books and gave him a Socratic paradigm for in-class discussion—two essential components of his teaching style.



Although Adam’s teaching interests have largely gravitated towards teaching the Great Books and classical rhetoric, he started his career as a 5th grade teacher at Westminster Academy in Memphis, Tennessee. After that, Adam taught Middle School Logic, Ancient History, three levels of High School Rhetoric, and Senior Capstone. For two of his years at Westminster he also served as the Director of Instruction.

In 2014 Adam became the Executive Director of St. Raphael School, an online program designed for Orthodox Christian homeschooling students. He designed their Liberal Arts curriculum, an integrated humanities program inspired by Eastern Christian spirituality and Orthodox Christian history. This is Adam’s first year teaching at Scholé Academy, and he looks forward to teaching Rhetoric Capstone, Medieval History and Literature, and Ancient History and Literature. Adam will also serve as the Academic Director for St. Raphael School, now a part of Scholé Academy.

While teaching is one of Adam’s favorite activities, he has a variety of interests which help remind him that, although “the unexamined life is not worth living,” it is also true that the “unlived life is not worth examining.” Thus, he tries to pull his nose out of a book (or away from the computer) long enough to take his wife to a concert, read to his children, go on a walk with his dog Buck, mow the churchyard, fix something that is broken, or otherwise hold back the forces of primordial Chaos.