



The Art of Argument: An Introduction to the Informal Fallacies

Writing Intensive Course

Yearlong 2019-2020

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

Rising 7th–12th graders who are able to type and have had some experience writing academic papers, including the following skills: compare/contrast essays, thesis statement and evidence, and alpha-numeric outlining.

Please note: Students enrolled in this course will complete not only the text, but also **seven** one- page writing assignments and **one** three-page writing assignment, thus earning this course the distinction of being a writing intensive course. Students who complete this course earn 1 high school course credit.

Class Dates: Begin Tuesday, September 3, 2019; running through Thursday, May 21, 2020.

Class Times: **Tuesday & Thursday: 2:00pm-3:15pm** (EST)

Instructor: Ms. Ash White

E-mail: awhite@scholeacademy.com

SCHEDULE FOR ART OF ARGUMENT

Classes will take place on **Tuesday & Thursday: 2:00pm-3:15pm** (EST) for 32 weeks and 64 classes on the following dates*

CLASS SESSION DATES:

September: 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26

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

November: 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21 **[Thanksgiving Break, No Class November 26th and 28th]**

December: 3, 5, 10, 12 **[Christmas Break, No Class December 16th – January 3rd]**

January: 7, 9, 14, 16, **[End 1st Semester on January 17]** 21, 23, 28, 30

February: 4, 6, 11, 13, [Winter Break, No Class February 17-21st] 25, 27

March: 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26, 31

April: 2, [Holy Week/Easter, No Class from April 6-10th] 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30

May: 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21 [End 2nd Semester May 21, 2020]

**Please note the above dates and times are the anticipated class sessions for this course. However, all dates are subject to change as the instructor's circumstances might dictate (e.g. illness, family emergency). Any classes canceled by the instructor will be made up at an alternate time designated by the instructor.*

Course Map

Quarter 1

1. What is Logic?
2. Critical Thinking as a Way of Life
3. Formal vs. Informal Logic
4. Fallacies of Relevance: Ad Fontem Arguments
5. Fallacies of Relevance: Appeals to Emotion

Quarter 2

1. Fallacies of Relevance: Appeals to Emotion
2. Fallacies of Relevance: Red Herrings
3. Unit 1 Cumulative Fallacy Test
4. Fallacies of Presumption

Quarter 3

1. Fallacies of Presumption: Fallacies of Induction
2. Unit 2 Cumulative Fallacy Test
3. Fallacies of Clarity
4. Fallacies of Clarity
5. Unit 3 Cumulative Fallacy Test

Quarter 4: Taking Logic out of the Textbook and into the Real World

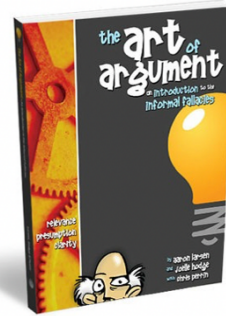
1. Teacher-led Source Analysis & Teacher-led Discussion
2. Response Paper #1
3. Teacher-led Source Analysis & Teacher-led Discussion
4. Response Paper #2
5. Independent Source Research & Student-led Discussion
6. Final Essay (3 Page Paper)

OFFICE HOURS

In addition to scheduled class times, the teacher will generally designate an optional weekly session as needed. During “office hours” students may raise questions, seek assistance, or review class material.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT

The course text is the award-winning *Art of Argument: An Introduction to the Informal Fallacies*, available from Classical Academic Press (<https://classicalacademicpress.com/product/the-art-of-argument/>).



OPTIONAL COURSE TEXTS

Papers and essays must be submitted using basic MLA formatting guides. A helpful resource is Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html

ART OF ARGUMENT COURSE DESCRIPTION

Because this is a writing-intensive course, completing this *Art of Argument* class is the equivalent of 1 full high school credit. As a fundamental text for teaching logic and critical thinking, *The Art of Argument* will impart to students the skills needed to craft accurate statements and identify the flawed arguments found so frequently in editorials, commercials, newspapers, journals, and every other media—as well as the ability to accurately identify fallacies throughout their course texts, lectures, and other curriculum. Students will complete the entire *Art of Argument* text, learning all 28+ fallacies, identifying them, defining them, and creating them.

Students will also be required to write approximately seven one-page essays and one three-page essay. The shorter essays are intended to highlight specific concepts where students often get stymied. The complete list of shorter paper topics is:

1. Similarities and Differences between Inductive and Deductive Logic
2. Propaganda/Non-argumentative persuasion/Legitimate (though possibly fallacious) Arguments.
3. Ad Hominem Circumstantial vs. Genetic Fallacy
4. Appeal to Pity vs. Appeal to Fear
5. Irrelevant Goals and Functions vs. Irrelevant Thesis
6. Composition vs. Division
7. Composition & Division vs. Hasty Generalization & Sweeping Generalization

Students usually complete the AA text with about 4–6 weeks remaining at the end of the year. During that time, we begin the process of learning how to identify fallacies in news reports, speeches, and opinion essays. We start by providing current event samples, which we analyze in class together. Students learn how to engage the examples and find biases and fallacies. During these class discussions, they must take notes during class and then write sample outlines as if they were going to write a paper. We practice crafting thesis statements, gathering evidence of fallacious argumentation, and outlining how they would write analytical essays, but they do not actually write their final paper yet.

The last three weeks of class, they are required to select one of three samples provided to them—usually excerpts from presidential speeches or opinion essays. They then are required to (A) dissect them on their own; (B) write their outlines and submit them for a grade; (C) write a rough draft, which will also be graded; and finally (D) write a final paper that is also graded. The objective here is for them to engage in real-world examples (something more significant than TV commercials) and identify author biases (underlying assumptions) and other fallacies.

Early in the year, we learn basic MLA formatting guidelines that they must incorporate for every essay submission. They practice applying these guidelines for the first seven essays and are also required to apply them for their final three-page essay. Formatting, grammar, spelling, word choice, clearly expressed thoughts—these are all graded.

A final project packet (including due dates, project stages and descriptions, and a grading rubric) will be provided to the students.

The Art of Argument is geared directly toward students as young as 7th grade, while still engaging for students in senior high. The course and text emphasize the practical and real-world application of soundly structured inductive logic. Using methods such as Socratic dialogue, ample discussion, integration of other subjects, and application to current events, the book is essential for dialectic and rhetoric students. We recommend *The Discovery of Deduction* after a study of informal fallacies.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

Students enrolling in Scholé Academy's Logic Program will be expected to show development of Executive Function Skills throughout the year. Executive Function Skills speak to a set of qualities and skill sets students can develop and hone to better approach the courses, lectures, readings, and teachers they will face in their future academic coursework.

Each teacher will invariably have his own set of requirements and skills he requires students to bring to their studies. *Generally* speaking, I believe there are five such qualities that are necessary for my students in various subjects; and I believe they would be accepted as “good” by many other teachers as well.

1. **An Engaged Student:** One who is willing to step into the arena of class discussion, ask questions, supply answers, and generate the internal dialogue necessary to determine if what's being discussed is important and necessary to himself.
2. **Note Taking:** A student who, both during and after being engaged with the class, has been trained to note important and relevant content in an organized fashion (Cornell Notes would be a great option). His notes would then be consulted, independently, for application in assignments and assessments.
3. **Attention to Detail & Preparedness:** A student who consistently adheres to deadlines, submission requirements, and style guides and codes; confirms technology is working prior to the start of class; and is responsible to determine how to proceed after an absence, consulting the course syllabus and adjusting as the class proceeds, etc.
4. **Employing Critiques:** One who receives feedback on a submission and then is sure to apply that feedback to future assignments rather than repeating mistakes. Such a student also gleans information from the live class critiques of fellow students and notes mistakes to avoid by learning from others.
5. **Initiative/Maturity:** This student would hear the teacher's comments and be able to assess whether or not the teacher was describing his work, and then take the initiative to schedule office hours with his teacher if necessary.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS IN ACTION

Students will be following the sequence of study contained in *The Art of Argument*. The ultimate goal for the students will be to engage with this type of logic outside the classroom and apply the skills they learn in class as they engage with the world around them.

Therefore, some student work and assessments will be completed in the text, using online tools and assignments, through regular classroom participation, and through at least seven typed essays. Students will be asked to review news articles in preparation for class—meaning, they will need access to either a local newspaper or an online news source.

During class discussion, students will review answers, pose questions, and explain and justify their answers and solution. Each week the teacher will lead discussions informed by issues and problems raised by students, as well as issues introduced by the teacher. In this class, students will be expected to listen attentively and participate actively in class discussions and practices. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and with all assigned material completed. The instructor will facilitate learning for the student, but the responsibility for staying up-to-date with classwork and assignments ultimately falls to the student.

All assignments will be due into the appropriate Schoology Assignment folder prior to the start of class each day. Students turning in late work will earn a 10% penalty for each day the assignment is late. Students will submit their work by scanning their homework pages and uploading them into the Schoology Assignment window. Photographs of completed assignments will not be accepted as they are incredibly difficult to read.

STUDENT EVALUATION: GRADING

While pursuing *The Art of Argument* through Scholé Academy will be “restful” (I’d also like to say it’s going to be a lot of fun), we also recognize the need to provide grades for students who will be using this course as part of their prepared college transcript. It’s a delicate balance to achieve both restful learning and excellent academic performance. Earning a specific grade should not overshadow achievement goals for mastery of this discipline. Logic, like the studies of Grammar and Rhetoric, is a “core” discipline in classical education and learning to own the concepts introduced in this class will be a necessary and significant component of future success in upper-level classical education. In that sense then, attaining a mastery of Logic is its own reward. As the teacher, I can assign the following grades to your student’s level of achievement: *magna cum laude* (with great praise), *cum laude* (with praise), *satis* (sufficient, satisfactory), and *non satis* (not sufficient).

Ideally, every average student working diligently should do praiseworthy work (*cum laude*). Those who excel beyond this expectation will be the *magna cum laude* students. Students who do adequate but not praiseworthy work will be designated *satis*. *Non satis* means lacking sufficiency or adequacy.

Inasmuch as you might be fully on board with this grading method in theory, there will undoubtedly be the need to complete a college transcript with either a numeric or traditional letter grade. Traditional percentage grades will be provided and readily accessed on the *Art of Argument* Schoology page. Additionally, I will provide a transcript of that grade to the requesting parent at the end of each semester.

STUDENT EVALUATION: MASTERY PORTRAIT

Mastery portrait: Students who are prepared to take this class are typically early to late teens, adolescents approaching young adulthood. This developmental stage is an interesting one, brimming with lots of new characteristics. It’s imperative, then, that this course not only provide the academic components necessary to achieve mastery of the content of the class (knowledge) and skills associated with analytical thought, but also help engage the student in development of his/her moral virtues. These three aspects of the course would comprise the “learning target.”

- At the completion of this course, *cum laude* students will be able to name, define, and categorize the 28 informal fallacies listed in *The Art of Argument*.
- Additionally, they will have attained the skills necessary to identify those fallacies both from text examples and from external sources either presented to them by their teacher, or identified independently and presented to the class. Similarly, students should also be cultivating the ability to craft arguments without employing the use of these informal fallacies.
- Students will also be guided in development of the virtues of Truth, Goodness, and Wisdom. Ideally, students will employ wisdom in governing self, refraining from unnecessary and petty argumentation and instead developing discernment in conflict and resolution.

By the end of the course, students should understand that knowledge, rational argumentation, and reason are not complete without a humble, teachable spirit—one that is responsible to appropriately engage skills and tools with generosity and respect for others, even their opponents (and their teacher).

STUDENT EVALUATION: ASSIGNMENTS, TYPES & WEIGHTS

Ms. White will communicate with students regarding assignment feedback and grading through the free online grading system **Schoology**. The teacher will provide students with more detailed information and access to the *Art of Argument* course page.

Student's grades will be comprised of:

1. Exams: 30% of the grade
2. Class Participation: 25% of the grade
3. Homework & Response Papers: 25% of the grade.
4. Final Paper (including drafts): 20% of the grade

STUDENT EVALUATION: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students will often take assessment tests and/or quizzes privately at home. Students are on their honor to abide by [Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy](#), which assumes the personal cultivation of Student Virtues described in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Additionally, plagiarism is a serious and punishable offense. Proper citation of all sources is essential to the academic endeavor. Remember to cite any source if the information is not common knowledge or is an opinion obtained through any source. A plagiarized assignment will result in a failing grade. Students should consult their chosen style manual (see Student Expectations above) for specific direction on obtaining, quoting, and paraphrasing sources.

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

We will be using the free online “virtual classroom” software provided by **Zoom**, one of the leading companies that offers such software. 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 e-mail students a link that will enable them 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, then attaching those files as .pdfs to an email. They will submit their work to the *Art of Argument* Schoology assignment page (access granted after enrollment is secured).

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Ash White holds a BA in English and Theatre from Mary Baldwin University, and has taught literature, writing, and logic at the middle and secondary level for nearly fifteen years. Ash is passionate about classical education and homeschooling, both of which are flourishing in the Shenandoah Valley where she and her husband Jon make their home and perform in the local music and theatre scene. If you visit their home, you'll find it difficult to determine which is largest: their library or their record collection!