The Classical Portico

@ EUCATASTROPHE COFFEE AND USED BOOKS & DOMUS

Lost Tools of Writing I & Literature
26-27 Course Syllabus

Instructor: Mrs. Alva
Contact: kate@classicalportico.com; (360) 230-8900
Location & Meeting Times:

- **Eucatastrophe Coffee and Used Books:**
- **DOMUS (Classical Portico in-home): TBD**

Course Length: 30 weeks
Cost: $500 + tax. 20% sibling discount.

Course Description

Lost Tools of Writing (LTW) I is a curriculum developed by the Circe Institute. Rooted in Aristotle's Canons of Rhetoric—Invention, Arrangement, and Elocution—this course teaches students to deeply contemplate ideas, organize their thoughts, and express them persuasively through writing. Focused on the persuasive essay, LTW I equips students to analyze whether characters in literature should have taken specific actions, fostering critical thinking and skills that extend to expository and comparison writing.

In this joint literature and writing class, students will explore J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings through the lens of decision-making: who makes choices, why, and what consequences follow. Over 31 weeks, students will write seven persuasive essays, drawing directly from the literature to practice crafting compelling arguments with clarity and eloquence. Each essay cycle spans approximately three-five weeks, with weekly activities to ensure steady progress. This is not a class where you can master the material or complete assignments in one sitting the night before they're due—you must spend quality time with the texts, LTW templates, and exercises, carefully analyzing characters' decisions and rhetorical structures.

Each essay cycle the student will ask a new question about the literature and learn a new element of Invention, Arrangement, and Elocution. There are no midterms or finals, as the work is cumulative, building steadily across the year. This course is designed for students eager to wrestle with ideas, sharpen their logic, and express their thoughts winsomely through the lens of literature.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Learn three canons of rhetoric (Invention, Arrangement, Elocution) to craft compelling persuasive essays.
2. Develop critical thinking by analyzing actions and consequences in literature.
3. Write seven persuasive essays with clarity, structure, and persuasive appeal, drawing issues directly from the literature.
4. Apply rhetorical skills to other essay formats (e.g., expository, comparison) and thoughtful communication.
5. Engage in Socratic discussions to explore decision-making themes: who makes choices, why, and what consequences follow.
6. Build a foundation for advanced writing, literary analysis, and classical education.

Course Materials

- Required Texts:
    - Lost Tools of Writing, Level I (Circe Institute, student workbook - **one per family.** Can often find them used locally.)

    - Three ring binder to keep work in, with section dividers
    - Durable notebook or 8.5x11 lined journal for reading journal
- Provided: Literature, supplementary handouts, LTW templates, highlighters

Submitting Work

- Invention and arrangement templates (handwritten) need to be brought to class on the due date for review.
- Final outline and essay must be typed (12 pt, Times New Roman, Arial, or Courier) and submitted together with the outline and uploaded into Google Classroom by the due date. Your name, date, and essay # need to be in the header.
- Additionally, you will need to identify every element of Arrangement and Elocution within your paper either by a parenthetical citation or a footnote. I will assist you with this as we get closer to Essay 2.

Grading

I don't provide letter grades. However, I will provide feedback on every essay. Your essay won't be considered complete until you've included all the necessary elements expected for that assignment. All Invention, Arrangement, and Elocution elements carry forward, so what you learn in essay two you need to still demonstrate in essay three and all the rest through essay nine, etc. I will send your essay back for revisions if there are missing elements, egregious grammatical/spelling errors, or a lack of coherent flow through the essay.

Key Dates for the Week of:

Aug 31	First week of class
Oct 5	Fall break
Nov 23	Thanksgiving break
Dec 7	Christmas break begins
Jan 4	2nd Semester begins
Feb 15	Mid-Winter break
Mar 29-April 9	**TWO WEEK** Spring break (This covers Easter week as well as the local districts' breaks)
May 24	Last week in class

Week	WEEK OF***	Essay	Novel Pages	Canon of Rhetoric	Week Due
1	Sept 3	1	FOTR: Prologue, I: A Long Expected Party, pgs 1-51	How to Read a Book | Intro to Reading Journal | Finding an Issue | Issue to ANI | ANI to Outline | Outline to Essay | Rudimentary (very, very, very rudimentary Persuasive Essay | **CLOSE READ: INTRO TO LIT DISCUSSIONS**	2
2	Sept 10		FOTR: The Shadow of the Past; Three is Company pgs 52-106		3
3	Sept 17		FOTR: A Shortcut to Mushrooms; A Conspiracy Unmasked; The Old Forest pgs 107-152		4
4	Sept 24	2	FOTR: In the House of Tom Bombadil; Fog on the Barrow-downs; At the Sign of the Prancing Pony pgs 153-203	INV: 5 Common Topics	5
5	Oct 1		FOTR: Strider; A Knife in the Dark 204-245	ARR: Sorting I	6
6	Oct 15		FOTR: Flight to the Ford; Many Meetings pgs 246-295	ARR: Sorting II	7
7	Oct 22		FOTR: The Council of Elrond; The Ring Goes South pgs 296-365	ELO: Parallelism I: Essay 2 due week 8	8
8	Oct 29		FOTR: A Journey in the Dark; The Bridge of Khazed-dûm pgs 366-411	**CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 2 (Essay 2 revisions due week 10**	9
9	Nov 5	3	FOTR: Lothlórien; The Mirror of Gaaladriel pgs 412-455	NEW ISSUE: Comparison I - similarities	10

10	Nov 12		FOTR: Farewell to Lórien; The Great River; The Breaking of the Fellowship pgs 465-506	ARR: Exordium	11
11	Nov 19		No reading	ELO: Basic Editing - STRONG VERBS; Essay 3 due week 12	12
12	Dec 3			**CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 3** **(Essay three revisions due week 14**	
13	Jan7	4	T2T: The Departure of Boramir; The Riders of Rohan 511-549	NEW ISSUE: Comparison II - difference in degree and kind	14
14	Jan 14		T2T: The Uruk-hai; Treebeard pgs 550-604	ARR: Amplification	15
15	Jan 21		T2T: The White Rider; The King of the Golden Hall pgs 605-652	ELO: Parallelism II - Essay 4 due week 16	16
16	Jan 28		T2T: Helm's Deep; The Road to Isengard pgs 653-694	**CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 4** **(Essay 4 revisions due week 18**	17
17	Feb 4	5	T2T: Flotsam and Jetsam; The Voice of Saruman; The Palantír pgs 695-746	NEW ISSUE: INV: Definition	18
18	Feb 11			ARR: Division	19
19	Feb 25		T2T: The Taming of Sméagol; The Passage of the Marshes; The Black Gate is Closed pgs 749-805	ELO: Antithesis - Essay 5 due week 20	20
20	Mar 4		T2T: Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit; The Window on the West; The Forbidden Pool pgs 806-862	**CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 5** **(Essay 5 revisions due week 22)**	21
21	Mar 11	6	T2T: Journey to the Cross-roads; The Stairs of Cirith Ungol; Shelob's Lair; The Choices of Master Samwise pgs 863-924	INV: Circumstance	22
22	Mar 18		ROTK: Minas Tirith; The Passing of the Grey Company pgs 929-983	ARR: Refutation	23
23	Mar 25		No Reading	**CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 6**	24
24	Apr 15		ROTK: The Muster of Rohan; The Siege of Gondor pgs 984-1032	ELO: Simile/Metaphor - **Essay 6 due week 25, revisions week 27**	25
25	Apr 22	7	ROTK: The Ride of the Rohirrim; The Battle of Pelennor Fields; The Pyre of Denethor; The Houses of Healing pgs 1033-1085	**NEW ISSUE:** INV: Relation	26
26	Apr 29		ROTK: The Last Debate; The Black Gate Opens; The Tower of Cirith Ungol pgs 1086-1140	ARR: Narratio	27
27	May 6		ROTK: The Land of Shadow; Mount Doom; The Field of Cormallen pgs 1141-1193	**CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 7**	28
28	May 13		ROTK: The Steward and the King; Many Partings; Homeward Bound pgs 1194-1243	ELO: Alliteration / Assonance, Essay 7 due week 29, Revisions week 30	29
29	May 20		ROTK: The Scourging of the Shire; The Grey Havens 1244-1285	REVIEW	30
30	May 27			**LAST DAY OF CLASS CELEBRATION, LAST CLOSE READ**	