



The Classical Portico

@ EUCATASTROPHE COFFEE AND USED BOOKS
& DOMUS

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

Instructor: Mrs. Alva

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Location & Meeting Times:

- **Eucatastrophe Coffee and Used Books: Tuesdays, 12:00 - 12:55**
- **DOMUS (Classical Portico in-home): TBD**

Course Length: 31 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) needs 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 in the same document shared with me online either via Google Docs or MS Word. This is done by giving me “Reviewing” permission in MS Word, and “Share” with commenting permissions in Google Docs.
- 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 day of class
Oct 12	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	Spring break (This covers Easter week as well as the local districts' breaks)
May 31	Last week in class

1		1	FOTR 1-44	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			FOTR 45-71		3
3			FOTR 72-109		4
4		2	FOTR 110-152	INV: 5 Common Topics	5
5			FOTR 153-198	ARR: Sorting I	6
6			FOTR 199-244	ARR: Sorting II	7
7			FOTR 245-304	ELO: Parallelism I: Essay 2 due week 8	8
8			FOTR 305-359	CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 2 (Essay 2 revisions due week 10)	9
9		3	FOTR 360-395	NEW ISSUE: Comparison I - similarities	10
10			FOTR 396-458	ARR: Exordium	11

11				ELO: Basic Editing - STRONG VERBS; Essay 3 due week 12	12
12				CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 3 (Essay three revisions due week 14)	
13		4	T2T 3-40	NEW ISSUE: Comparison II - difference in degree and kind	14
14			T2T 41-93	ARR: Amplification	15
15			T2T 94-139	ELO: Parallelism II - Essay 4 due week 16	16
16			T2T 140-179	CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 4 (Essay 4 revisions due week 18)	17
17		5	T2T 180-212	INV: Definition	18
18			T2T 213-251	ARR: Division	19
19			T2T 252-285	ELO: Antithesis - Essay 5 due week 20	20
20			T2T 286-340	CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 5 (Essay 5 revisions due week 22)	21
21		6	T2T 341-367	INV: Circumstance	22
22			T2T 368-398	ARR: Refutation	23
23			ROTK 3-33	ELO: Simile - essay 6 due week 24	24
24			ROTK 34-71	CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 6 (Essay 6 revisions due week 26)	25
25		7	ROTK 72-111	NEW ISSUE: INV: Testimony	26
26			ROTK 112-151	ARR: Relation	27
27			ROTK 152-203	ARR: Narratio	28
28			ROTK 204-241	ELO: Metaphor	29
29			ROTK 242-289	ELO: Alliteration	30
30			ROTK 290-340	ELO: Assonance - Essay 7 due week 31	31
31				CLOSE READ: LIT DISCUSSION 7	