The Classical Portico

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

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

- Eucatastrophe Coffee and Used Books: Tuesdays, 10:00-10:50
    - **Class begins Tuesday, 9/1**

Course Length: 30 weeks
Cost: $500 + tax. 20% sibling discount.
Prerequisite: LTW 1

Course Description

In LTW I, students grasped the fundamentals of building a persuasive essay. By applying the three core principles of classical rhetoric, Invention, Arrangement, and Elocution, they worked toward mastering the development of a clear, well-structured argument from scratch to a polished final piece. The emphasis of LTW I was less on the specific style of persuasion and more on using the tools of rhetoric to construct solid, logical, and winsome writing.

In LTW II, the journey advances by developing the judicial address, a more sophisticated form that enhances and sharpens the persuasive skills introduced in LTW I. Just as the components of the initial level layered progressively, this second level extends and expands on that foundation.

Across seven essays, which focus on judging the specific action of a character, students operate within the same three rhetorical canons, but now tailored to a narrower approach.

Many elements will feel recognizable, like the invention charts, arrangement outlines, and elocution elements. However, this year students will be pivoting from pondering ‘should’ questions to judging the actions of a character and whether or not they deserve punishment. For example, students will look at questions such as whether Odysseus be punished for blinding Polyphemus, or whether George Wickham be censured for eloping with Lydia Bennett, for example. Not only will students build upon the Five Common Topics by adding Special Topics relevant to a Judicial Address (An Sit, Quid Sit, Quale Sit), they will ponder the meaning of justice as well as evaluate biases. They will pick a judge to address, craft arguments for both the prosecution and defence, and by considering the same issue from these two perspectives will lead them to discover flaws in their arguments.

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 30 weeks, students will write seven judicial addresses, drawing directly from the literature to practice crafting compelling arguments with clarity and eloquence. Each address 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 address 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 judicial addresses.
2. Develop critical thinking by analyzing actions and consequences in literature.
3. Write seven judicial addresses 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 about justice 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 II (Circe Institute, student workbook - one per family.)
    - Three ring binder to keep work in, with section dividers
    - Durable notebook or large lined journal to use as reading journal all year
    - *Provided: Literature, supplementary handouts, LTW templates, highlighters*

Submitting Work

- Invention and arrangement templates (handwritten) need to be brought to class on the due date every week for review.

- Final outline and essay must be typed (12 pt, Times New Roman, Arial, or Courier) and submitted together and uploaded into Google Classroom.
    - Your name, date, and address # 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.

Grading

I don't provide letter grades. However, I will provide feedback on every address. Your address 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 address two you need to still demonstrate in address three and all the rest through address nine, etc. I will send your address back for revisions if there are missing elements, egregious grammatical/spelling errors, or a lack of coherent flow through the address.

Key Dates for the Week of:

Sept 1	First day 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	Spring break (This covers Easter week as well as the local districts' breaks)
May 31	Last week in class

2026-2027 Assignments and Due Dates

Week	Date	Essay	Novel Pages	Canon of Rhetoric	Week Due
1	9/1	Review Essay LTW	FOTR: Prologue, I: A Long Expected Party, pgs 1-51	How to keep a reading journal/How to read a book/Character-Action chart	2
2	9/8		FOTR: The Shadow of the Past; Three is Company pgs 52-106	Invention Review - LTW I	3
3	9/15		FOTR: A Shortcut to Mushrooms; A Conspiracy Unmasked; The Old Forest pgs 107-152	Arrangement Review - LTW I Elocution Review - LTW I Essay Due Week 5	4
4	9/22		FOTR: In the House of Tom Bombadil; Fog on the Barrow-downs; At the Sign of the Prancing Pony pgs 153-203	**Close Reads - Lit Discussion 1**	5
5	9/29	Judicial Address 1	FOTR: Strider; A Knife in the Dark 204-245	NEW ISSUE: Character Bias Essay revisions due week 6	6
6	10/13		FOTR: Flight to the Ford; Many Meetings pgs 246-295	Arrangement: Refining the Narratio	7

7	10/20		FOTR: The Council of Elrond; The Ring Goes South pgs 296-365	Elocution: Personification & Apostrophe Judicial Address I due week 9	8
8	10/27		FOTR: A Journey in the Dark; The Bridge of Khazed-dûm pgs 366-411	**Close Reads - Lit Discussion 2** Essay revisions due week 10	9
9	11/3		FOTR: Lothlórien; The Mirror of Gaaladriel pgs 412-455	Invention - Intro to Special Topics (Same issue as JA I)	10
10	11/10	Judicial Address 2	FOTR: Farewell to Lórien; The Great River; The Breaking of the Fellowship pgs 465-506	Arrangement - Refining the Exordium	11
11	11/17		No reading	Elocution: Compound/Complex Sentences Judicial Address II due week 12 (Revisions due week 14)	12
12	12/1			**Close Reads: Lit Discussion 3**	13
13	1/5	Judicial Address 3	T2T: The Departure of Boramir; The Riders of Rohan 511-549	NEW ISSUE: Justice	14
14	1/12		T2T: The Uruk-hai; Treebeard pgs 550-604	Arrangement: Refining the Amplification	15
15	1/19		T2T: The White Rider; The King of the Golden Hall pgs 605-652	Elocution: Compound/Complex Sentences Judicial Address III due week 17	16
16	1/26		T2T: Helm's Deep; The Road to Isengard pgs 653-694	**Close reads: Lit Discussion 4** Essay revisions due week 19	17
17	2/2		T2T: Flotsam and Jetsam; The Voice of Saruman; The Palantír pgs 695-746	NEW ISSUE: Evidence	18
18	2/9	Judicial Address 4		Arrangement: Refining the Refutation	19
19	2/23		T2T: The Taming of Sméagol; The Passage of the Marshes; The Black Gate is Closed pgs 749-805	Elocution: Anaphora & Epistrophe Judicial Address IV due week 21	20
20	3/2		T2T: Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit; The Window on the West; The Forbidden Pool pgs 806-862	**Close reads - Lit Discussion 5** Essay revisions due week 23	21
21	3/9		T2T: Journey to the Cross-roads; The Stairs of Cirith Ungol; Shelob's Lair; The Choices of Master Samwise pgs 863-924	NEW ISSUE: Laws I	22
22	3/16	Judicial Address 5	ROTK: Minas Tirith; The Passing of the Grey Company pgs 929-983	Arrangement: Refining the Case & Refutation I	23
23	3/23		No Reading	Elocution: Synecdoche	24
24	4/13		ROTK: The Muster of Rohan; The Siege of Gondor pgs 984-1032	Elocution: Sentence Amplification Judicial Address V due week 26	25
25	4/20		ROTK: The Ride of the Rohirrim; The Battle of Pelennor Fields; The Pyre of	**Close reads - Lit Discussion 6** Essay revisions due week 29	26

			Denethor; The Houses of Healing pgs 1033-1085		
26	4/27		ROTK: The Last Debate; The Black Gate Opens; The Tower of Cirith Ungol pgs 1086-1140	INVENTION: Laws 2 SAME ISSUE AS JA5	27
27	5/4	Judicial Address 6	ROTK: The Land of Shadow; Mount Doom; The Field of Cormallen pgs 1141-1193	Arrangement: Refining the Case & Refutation 2	28
28	5/11		ROTK: The Steward and the King; Many Partings; Homeward Bound pgs 1194-1243	Hyperbole & Litotes	29
29	5/18		ROTK: The Scourging of the Shire; The Grey Havens 1244-1285	Erotema and Hypophora Judicial Address VI due week 31	30
30	5/25			**Close reads - Lit Discussion 7** **LAST DAY OF CLASS**	31