



SCHOLÉ ACADEMY
CLASSICAL ACADEMIC PRESS

WRITING AND RHETORIC III: *REFUTATION, CONFIRMATION, AND COMMONPLACE*

2023-2024

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS: Rising 6th-7th graders, or rising 5th graders who have completed previous levels of Writing & Rhetoric. Students should be familiar with the writing elements of narration, description, and exposition, and should feel comfortable writing a five- or six-paragraph essay when guided by prompts. All students should be in the process of mastering basic typing and word processing skills, for students will be expected to type all essay assignments.

WRITING & RHETORIC YEAR 3 COURSE MAP:

QUARTER 1: Refutation and Confirmation I <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduction to the role of refutation and confirmation; review and proofreading.2. A Review of Narrative and Types3. Writing Legend4. Quarrel vs. Argument5. Preparing to Refute: Identifying Problems	QUARTER 3: Commonplace I <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review of attacking and defending2. Thesis and contrary3. <i>Synonymia, antynomia, paraphrasis, and soliloquy</i>4. First commonplace
QUARTER 2: Refutation and Confirmation II <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. First refutation2. First confirmation3. Second refutation4. Second confirmation5. Final essay (student's choice, ref. or conf.)	QUARTER 4: Commonplace II <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Second commonplace2. Third commonplace3. Fourth commonplace4. Fifth commonplace5. Sixth commonplace

OFFICE HOURS: In addition to class times, **students may schedule extra time with me during my “Office Hours,” Monday-Thursday from 12:15-1:00pm (EST), and Fridays as available.** At these appointments, students may raise questions, seek assistance, or review class material.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

- Classical Academic Press’ *Writing & Rhetoric Book 5: Refutation & Confirmation* and *Book 6: Commonplace*.
- Journal (Must be bound—no looseleaf paper!)
- Optional: Audio files of both texts are available through www.ClassicalAcademicPress.com



WRITING & RHETORIC YEAR 3 COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Writing & Rhetoric Year 3 continues the series with *Book 5: Refutation & Confirmation* and *Book 6: Commonplace*. In this stage, students start to develop and hone their skills in persuasive writing and speaking. In the first semester, students learn to refute or defend certain parts of narratives according to whether the identified parts are unbelievable, improbable, unclear, or improper—or believable, probable, clear, or proper. After learning to identify the parts of a story that can be attacked or defended, students practice writing refutations or confirmations using sound arguments to explain their opinions. In the second semester, students continue to develop the art of persuasive writing and oration. They learn to create six-paragraph essays that are arguments against the common vices of people and arguments in favor of common virtues. Students also learn to support a thesis statement, use comparison and contrast, introduce and conclude an essay, use a rhetorical device known as “the contrary,” invent soliloquies to support an argument, deliver writing orally, and revise writing.

In this course, students dive deeper into their understanding of narratives to make connections between their lives and stories. Students are exposed to peer editing and are expected to assess their own writing by identifying the main argument, selecting appropriate textual support, strengthening phrasing, and finding grammar errors. Students will be expected to write on average one essay a week and begin to develop the skill of annotation (learning to take notes and comment on the readings).

Course Objectives in Reading:

1. Expose students to various forms of narrative and nonfiction writing, as well as culturally important stories from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries of American history.
2. Model fluent reading for students and give them practice reading multiple texts.
3. Review the concepts of narrative, plot, character, fable, parable, fairy tale, history, myth, and ballad, with an additional focus on legend and the introduction of biography.
4. Aid student reading and recall by teaching techniques for annotation.
5. Facilitate student interaction with well-written texts through discussions and exercises in evaluation and critical thinking.
6. Introduce research by giving students multiple texts to read and having them summarize, outline, lift quotes, and create a thesis from the material.

Course Objectives in Writing:

1. Practice the concepts of argument versus quarrel and refutation versus confirmation. Refutation and confirmation correspond to persuasive (or argumentative) essays in modern writing theory. They were extracted from two parts of classic oration by the same name.
2. Give students opportunities to creatively assess and critique narratives by weighing believability/unbelievability, probability/improbability, clarity/lack of clarity, and propriety/ impropriety.
3. Enable students to write well-crafted, six-paragraph persuasive essays—with introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion—attacking general types of wrongdoing and defending general types of virtuous behavior. This includes the development of an awareness of transitions and tone.
4. Demonstrate the use of pathos to engage the emotions of readers.
5. Practice the concepts of thesis and supporting arguments. This includes practicing the anticipation of opposing arguments.
6. Encourage students to map (pre-write) their arguments before they write a paragraph.
7. Support the development of invention (inventing topics and ideas to write about) and demonstrate how to use quotations in a crafted piece of writing.
8. Continue the development of revision, proofreading, and joint critiquing.
9. Reinforce grammatical concepts such as participial and prepositional phrases and simple and compound sentences, as well as provide practice recognizing and repairing sentence fragments and run-on sentences.

Course Related Concepts:

1. Aid in the development of vocabulary and analysis of language as well as thinking in analogies.
2. Review the concepts of contrast and comparison (*chreia* unit) as well as monologue and soliloquy (Narrative II unit).
3. Reinforce the ability to summarize and paraphrase, as well as to amplify through description, for greater rhetorical flexibility.
4. Employ a number of new rhetorical devices: the *contrary*, *synonymia*, *antonymia*, *periphrasis*, *anacolutha*, and repetition.
5. Strengthen working memory through recitation (*memoria*), thus improving storage of information and rhetorical power.
6. Increase understanding of the flexibility and copiousness of language through sentence manipulation.

Course Objectives in Speaking:

1. Strengthen students' oratory skills by providing opportunities for public speaking and for working on delivery—volume, pacing, and inflection.
2. Encourage students to see the relationship between writing and speaking as they consider their ideas orally and to use oration as an aid to the process of revision.

IMPORTANT SKILLS & BEHAVIORS NEEDED PRIOR TO STARTING THE COURSE

Students should be able to read with fluency and to comprehend the text independently. Students should be able to narrate (tell back the story), summarize (shrink the story down), and amplify (stretch a story out by adding details, dialogue, and description) before enrolling in this course. Students should also be able to write a fable, a *chreia* (with the help of some prompts), and a 5- or 6-paragraph essay before enrolling in this course. Students must be able to type or write legibly and understand basic English grammar rules and punctuation (ex: recognize a noun, verb, adjective, subject, etc.). They should be persevering as they begin on a long journey towards becoming great writers. Students should be motivated and inspired to persevere by the vision of mastery and wisdom laid before their eyes. They should be willing to take risks and to explore the art of writing. 6th-7th graders should be able to log-in to Canvas to review homework assignments and upload completed work. When necessary, students should be able to comment on and collaborate with classmates through Canvas. Some rising 5th graders or students new to Canvas may not be able to navigate Canvas independently; and thus, a parent or guardian should be willing to assist that student with homework assignments and other course materials obtained through this platform.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

Students enrolling in Scholé Academy's Writing & Rhetoric Year 3 will be expected to show development of Executive Function Skills throughout the year. Executive Function Skills are 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. The following six qualities are necessary for students to be successful in *this* course and in other courses of study that they'll pursue throughout their lives:

- 1. An Engaged Student:** One who is willing to step into the arena of class discussion, ask questions, supply answers, generate the internal dialogue necessary to determine if what's being discussed is important and necessary to himself. Students should be viewing the class via Zoom on their computers and should not be browsing the internet. Scholars should be prepared to begin taking notes on the text and on class discussion.
- 2. Attention to Detail & Preparedness:** These students are ones who consistently adhere to deadlines and submission requirements. A prepared student not only completes all assigned reading and writing before class, but also confirms that technology is working and that homework is uploaded to Canvas before the start of class. Year 3 students should begin to learn how to proceed after an absence, being responsible for consulting Canvas for recordings and assignments. These students will be expected to show the virtue of constancy by remaining focused and diligent and pushing away even "good" distractions that would inhibit learning and mastery.

3. **Self-Monitoring:** Students who successfully self-monitor can evaluate their own performance. This is the action of perceiving both one's own strengths and weaknesses. Self-monitoring students are the ones who determine which problems they can work through on their own and where they need peer, teacher, or parent support. A mature student will also take the initiative to schedule office hours with the teacher, if additional support is needed.

4. **Task Initiation:** One who is able to recognize when it is time to begin working and is able to do so without procrastination. A student who can initiate tasks easily adjusts from the whole-class Zoom to a breakout room while still maintaining a scholarly attitude. Students should move toward mastering typing, as assignments must be typed.

5. **Employ Critiques:** These students are ones who receive feedback to one of their submissions, and then attempt to apply that feedback to future assignments rather than repeating mistakes. These students also glean information from the live class critiques of fellow students and note mistakes to avoid by learning from others. Students should have an attitude of humility when receiving critiques, as this feedback affords an invaluable opportunity to grow and to develop their God-given talents. Likewise, students should celebrate the successes of their peers.

6. **Problem Solving:** A student with well-developed problem-solving skills is ready and willing to press through, even when he is unable to successfully overcome a challenge on the first try. Good writing involves the problem-solving skills of perseverance, looking at a story from a new perspective, finding an additional source or doing research, taking a rest to refresh, or asking for help from a teacher, parent, or from the Lord.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS IN ACTION: DEADLINES, PUNCTUATLITY, AND ATTENDANCE.

Students will be following the sequence of study contained in Writing & Rhetoric Year 3. The student should plan to complete all course assignments and homework to the best of his or her ability. During class sessions, students will be expected to listen attentively and participate actively in class discussions and practices. Students may also be expected to participate in discussion forums outside of class time - these will be part of the student's homework assignments.

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and prepared. Understandably conflicts will arise necessitating that a student miss class; a message from a parent will excuse an absence. **I ask that students not attempt to attend class while traveling in the car, train, bus, etc.** I've found this is far too distracting for both the class and the individual student, making it difficult for the student to engage well in the day's lesson. **Please note that the Student-Parent handbook also allows for a total of six absences for this course**, so if you are aware that your child may miss more than six classes for the year, it may not be advisable to enroll in this course!

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. Missing work happens sometimes, but students who regularly and chronically fail to submit homework to the appropriate Canvas assignment prior to the start of class will not be permitted to join the live class session. Those students will be invited into a separate Zoom breakout room to work privately until they have completed the day's assignment. After they have completed their homework submission, they will be permitted to rejoin the class in session. **A day spent in a breakout room due to incomplete work will constitute an absence from class. Two such absences in a given quarter will warrant a parent-teacher Zoom meeting.** If there are extenuating circumstances that prevent a student from completing the homework prior to class, the parent must contact the instructor prior to class time to arrange an extension.

All due assignments must be uploaded to the appropriate Canvas assignment post prior to the start of class each day. Students turning in late work will earn a **5% penalty for each school day the assignment is late; any assignment missing after one week will remain a zero.** Canvas accepts a variety of file types, **but I will not accept photographs of completed assignments, as they are incredibly difficult to read. The exception is for commonplace journal entries in second semester!**

STUDENT EVALUATION: GRADING

While pursuing Writing & Rhetoric Year 3 through Scholé Academy will be “restful,” we also recognize the need to provide grades for students. 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. Writing, as an element of 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 growth in a Classical Education. In that sense then, attaining a mastery of Writing & Rhetoric is its own reward. As the teacher, I will 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.

STUDENT EVALUATION: MASTERY PORTRAIT

Above all, the goal of Writing and Rhetoric is to foster a love of writing, and to provide students with the building blocks they need to flourish as young writers. In Writing and Rhetoric III, scholars master two formal essay structures: Refutation/ Confirmation and the Commonplace. Students who are prepared to take this class are typically upper-elementary age or early adolescents. Students of this age are becoming young adults, increasingly taking on the responsibility of their educations. It’s imperative, then, that this course does not only provide the academic components necessary to achieve mastery of the content of the class (**knowledge**) and **skills** associated with analytical thought; but to also help engage the student in the development of their **moral virtues**. These three aspects of the course would comprise the “learning target.”

At the completion of this course, a *cum laude* student is able to read, narrate, discuss, annotate, summarize, and quote from a variety of texts at grade level. He or she can proceed with the confidence that comes from practice when asked to amplify, summarize, praise, refute, confirm, critique, or in other ways, respond to a given text. He or she shows strength in imitating a model text and growing skill in invention. The Refutation/ Confirmation and Commonplace essays evidence respect for rules for proper form, punctuation, grammar, and spelling. Finally, the writing of a *cum laude* student includes a variety of rhetorical devices, literary devices, and strong vocabulary.

Elocution, the art of speaking skillfully, is also a key component of this course. Throughout the year, students have faithfully practiced the skills necessary to read aloud with fluency, learning to show attention to volume, pace, and inflection when speaking. Similarly, students are encouraged to speak constructively to one another in pursuit of excellent work, in discussion of ideas and responses, and to build the camaraderie of the classroom. Finally, students are also guided in the development of the virtues of Truth, Goodness and Wisdom. Ideally, students will employ wisdom when responding to virtues and vices, the actions and thoughts that they encounter in the readings. By the end of the course, a *cum laude* student understands that reading a rich selection of great literature is one of the ways in which it is possible to build the reservoir out of which one can draw good ideas and model our own lives and behaviors.

STUDENT EVALUATION: ASSIGNMENTS, TYPES & WEIGHTS

Ms. White will communicate with students regarding assignment feedback and grading through the free online grading system Canvas. The teacher will provide students with more detailed information and access to the Writing and Rhetoric III course page. Student’s assignments will fall into two categories:

1. Assessments (60%): elocution recitations, drafts, and final papers.
2. Participation (40%): homework, outlining, discussion boards, and other classroom activities.

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 the instructor or an MLA style manual 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 provides 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 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 assignments and engage with other course materials on our designated *Writing & Rhetoric 3* Canvas course 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 over fifteen years. Ms. White is passionate about classical education and homeschooling. She and her husband Jon live in the Pittsburgh area, and are voracious lovers of books and music. If you visit their home, you'll find it difficult to determine which collection is largest: books or vinyl records!

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