



# Everyday Debate

**Dr. Whitney Barnes**

Fall Semester

2023-2024

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## **ELIGIBLE STUDENT:**

**Grades 9-10th (open to 11th-12th):** Designed for early high school students to gain an understanding of the principles of debate and to identify fallacies in both written and oral arguments; the course is open to any student who has completed the first four levels of Writing & Rhetoric or who can demonstrate proficiency in essay writing.

*\*Everyday Debate and Discussion* is designed to serve either as a bridge for students in 9th grade and above who are moving from logic to rhetoric, *or* as a companion to upper-level logic or rhetoric studies. While this course does not have any required prerequisites, it is designed for students who have already completed a study of the informal fallacies. Students who have a working knowledge of the core content provided in an informal logic course will be ideally prepared for this course.

**Please note:** The student who successfully completes this course earns 1/2 high school course credit.

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## **REQUIRED TEXTS:\***

The course text is *Everyday Debate & Discussion: A Guide to Socratic Conversation, Informal Discussion, and Formal Debate*, which is available from Classical Academic Press.  
([www.ClassicalAcademicPress.com](http://www.ClassicalAcademicPress.com))

**Optional Course Texts:** Papers and essays will be submitted using basic MLA formatting guides. The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* - 7th Edition may be a helpful resource.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

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### **ORIENTATION SESSION:**

The date and time of the student/parent orientation will depend on the particular section in which you are enrolled, but all orientation sessions will be scheduled during the week prior to the start of the class.

**CLASS SESSION DATES:** Classes will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11AM or on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30AM beginning September 5, 2023 and ending January 18, 2024. Consult the Scholé Academy [academic calendar](#) for details concerning scheduled, school-wide breaks.

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment; (please include your time zone in your email request)

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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Guided by the *Everyday Debate* text, this course introduces students to classical debate concepts, including Socratic Dialogue and Formal Debate. We will examine the Five Common Topics of Invention and how they inform a discussion or debate, then we'll examine some of the stylistic devices that make a presentation—written or oral—stand out. Throughout the semester, we'll take opportunities to apply the concepts we are studying, practice impromptu speaking, conduct mini debates, hone research skills, and culminate in a formal debate.

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## COURSE MAP

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### **Quarter 1**

1. Units 1-111 of *Everyday Debate*.
2. Background of debate: its purpose and skills.
3. Introduction to logic skills and Common Topics applied to debate.
4. Application of skills in classroom mini debates.

### **Quarter 2**

1. Units IV-VI of *Everyday Debate*.
2. Stylistic devices in debate.
3. Elements of Debate: Affirmative, Negative, Cross-Examination, Rebuttal.

4. Effective debate presentation.  
Application of skills in classroom  
debates.

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

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Students enrolling in the Everyday Debate course will be expected to show the development of Executive Function Skills throughout the semester. Executive Function Skills speak to a set of qualities and skill sets students will develop and hone to better approach the various courses, lectures, readings, and teachers they will encounter in their future academic coursework. It is understood that students enter this course at varying abilities and skill levels and the goal is to improve and increase the skill level of each student.

These skills include:

- **Participation:** A willingness to participate in the discussion, ask questions, supply answers, and contemplate the material being discussed.
- **Note Taking:** The ability to note important content both during and after class and while completing assigned reading. Appropriate note-taking skills provide a valuable resource to be consulted for application during future assignments and assessments.
- **Attention to Detail:** Attention to style guides for assignments, preparation for debates, and participation in conversations and debates require attention to details.
- **Preparedness:** Adherence to deadlines, submission requirements and preparation for debates require intentional preparedness.
- **Application of Assessments:** Understanding assessments from peers and teacher, along with an ability to apply the assessment to future assignments, assist the student to grow in their understanding of debate concepts and their application.
- **Initiative/Maturity:** Willingness to hear and apply critiques and seek guidance from the instructor, if necessary.

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS IN ACTION

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Students will be following the sequence of study contained in our text *Everyday Debate & Discussion: A Guide to Socratic Conversation, Informal Discussion, and Formal Debate*. **The primary goal for the student will be to acquire the ability to engage in intelligent and meaningful debate with their peers. The greater goal is that students develop an appreciation of the beauty and power of language and the art of rhetoric. This appreciation will inform their other studies and their lives in the world.**

Some student work will be completed in the textbook. However, a large portion of the class will involve regular classroom participation, taking notes, and reading adaptations based on the readings in the textbook. Students will receive homework derived from exercises in the textbook and supplementary exercises designed by the instructor. Students will also be encouraged to use some online tools.

During class time, students will review answers, pose questions, and explain and justify their answers and solutions. They will be required to take notes documenting the new content covered each class. 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 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 is ultimately the responsibility of the student.

All assignments will be due in the appropriate Canvas Assignment folder prior to the start of class each day. Students turning in late work will not be able to receive full credit. Students will submit their work by scanning their homework pages and uploading it into the Canvas assignment window as **one PDF document**. **Photographs of completed assignments will not be accepted as they are incredibly difficult to read.**

## STUDENT GRADING AND EVALUATION

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While pursuing the Everyday Debate course through Scholé Academy will be “restful” (I’d also like to say it’s going to be very enjoyable), 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. The study of Debate, like the studies of Grammar and Rhetoric, is a “core” discipline in Classical Education, and learning to own the material introduced in this class will be a necessary and significant component of future success in Classical Education and communication skills. In that sense then, attaining mastery of Debate is its own reward and, as the teacher, I can assign the following grades to your student’s work: *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*). Work that exceeds the expectations set for mastery will be assessed as *Magna Cum Laude*. Work that is deemed adequate but not praiseworthy will be designated *satis*. *Non Satis* means work that is lacking sufficiency or adequacy.

Since 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 will be readily accessed on the *Everyday Debate* Canvas page. Percentage grades will be translated to letter grades by the parent-teacher using the scale employed within their homeschool. Additionally, Dr. Barnes will provide a grade report to the requesting parent at the end of the year.

## STUDENT EVALUATION : MASTERY PORTRAIT

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Students practice a variety of complex skills within the discipline of debate. Here are the skills which successful students of this course will practice and develop as they complete this course.

### General Scholarship Skills

Socratic Discussion: Formulate questions, define terms, offer examples, compare, contrast, and discover relationships between ideas.

Inspectional Reading: Skim, preview books, study the table of contents and other parts of their textbook, search for information.

Analytical Reading: Identify key passages, terms, and definitions, outline a passage or short chapter; determine the author's message; evaluate key arguments.

Mark a Text: Underline key terms, add marginal notes; annotate; introduction to color-coding.

## **Debate Skills**

Purpose of Debate: Understand the purpose of debate and the relationship between discussion and debate.

History of Debate: Examine how the debate has shaped history along with those who used this art and science well.

How Dialectic Shapes Debate: Learn the Five Common Topics of Invention, their use within the debate process, and practice their implementation.

Categorical Syllogism: Understand the purpose of the categorical syllogism in discussions and debates and develop proficiency in its use.

Parts of the Debate: Understand and employ the affirmative, negative, cross-examination, and rebuttal in debates.

Importance of Memory: Realize the importance of memory in both everyday discussions and formal debates and develop a system to increase Memoria.

Internal Resources: Examine how pathos and ethos contribute to debate skills and implement those skills within discussions and debates.

Stylistic Devices: Learn various stylistic devices and employ their use within debates and discussions.

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### **STUDENT EVALUATION: ASSIGNMENTS, TYPES & WEIGHTS**

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Dr. Barnes 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 Everyday Debate course page.

Students' grades will have the following weight (out of 100):

1. Weekly Exercises/Homework: 20
2. Quizzes: 10
3. Impromptu Presentations: 15
4. Mini Debates: 15
5. Class Participation: 1
6. Debate Preparation Assignments: 10
7. Final Debate: 15

The incremental nature of the assessments is in place to ensure that students are continually reviewing previous material.

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### **STUDENT EVALUATION: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

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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 directions on obtaining, quoting, and paraphrasing sources.

### THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM:

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We will be using the free online "virtual classroom" software provided by Zoom. The live, interactive nature of our courses is foundational and we require cameras to be on during all class sessions. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio 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. Courses will be managed through our learning management system, Canvas.

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.

As stated earlier in this syllabus, 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 Everyday Debate Canvas assignment page (access granted after enrollment is secured).

### ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

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**Dr. Whitney Barnes** began her teaching career in the humanities in 2012. She holds a Bachelor's in history from the University of Georgia, a Master's in history from Georgia State University, and a PhD in French history from Boston College. Throughout her career, Whitney has developed a passion for teaching rhetoric, writing, and critical thinking to her humanities students and believes deeply in the spiritual and academic value of honing these skills.

Whitney is a published author through Palgrave MacMillan, she was the recipient of the Donald J. White Teaching Excellence Award at Boston College, she held the esteemed post of *Pensionnaire étranger* at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* in Paris, France between 2016-2017, and she has been an avid reader and bookworm her whole life. In her spare time, Whitney enjoys singing in the chancel choir at her church, playing the mandolin, trying new recipes, and cultivating a vegetable garden in her backyard. She lives in Marietta, Georgia with her husband, their 3-year-old son, and their affable golden retriever, J.R.R. Tolkien.

*Please note: While this syllabus addresses details specific to this course, it is not extensive. Parents should also read the Student-Parent Handbook located on [scholeacademy.com](http://scholeacademy.com) and be familiar with the ideas, policies, and procedures outlined.*