



SCHOLÉ ACADEMY  
CLASSICAL ACADEMIC PRESS

# Persuasive Writing

**Dr. Whitney Barnes**

Spring 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, the course is open to any student who has completed the first four writing levels of Writing & Rhetoric or who can demonstrate proficiency in essay writing.

\*It is recommended (though not formally required) that students have a working knowledge of the core content from both introductory informal and formal logic courses before taking this course. This course assumes introductory courses in informal and formal logic have been completed; students who have taken both logic courses are ideally equipped 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 the award-winning *The Argument Builder* which is available from Classical Academic Press. ([www.ClassicalAcademicPress.com](http://www.ClassicalAcademicPress.com))

Additional readings may be provided by the instructor, as needed.

**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 Tuesday and Thursdays at 9:30AM beginning January 22, 2024 and Ending May 22, 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 course text, *The Argument Builder*, this course looks at the skills and process of constructing good arguments. By studying historical examples, both ancient and modern, we will learn how to pursue and present truth in both written and spoken forms. We'll review logical fallacies and end the semester putting these concepts into practice with a formal debate.

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## COURSE MAP

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### **QUARTER 3**

- Chapters 1-12 of text
- Introduction to the course; focus on Common Topics of Definition, Testimony, and Comparison
- In-class activities focusing on oral presentation skills, applying logic and persuasive skills, graciously "arguing" a viewpoint

### **QUARTER 4**

- Chapters 13-25 of text
- Continued discussion of comparison
- Focus on Common Topics of Relationship and Circumstance
- In-class activities focusing on oral presentation skills, applying logic and persuasive skills, graciously "arguing" a viewpoint
- Course review
- Final Debate

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

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Students enrolling in the Persuasive Argument 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 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.

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 Persuasive Essay 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 a 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 *Persuasive Essay* 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**

Learn how inductive logic helps us recognize general patterns and theories that everyday observation or examples indicate.

Learn the principles of logic to help the student learn what is right and true.

Become aware of four ways we can deceive ourselves.

Learn the importance of defining terms and the fallacies of definition.

Delve deeply into the topic of comparison and the fallacies of comparison.

Learn the various components of the topic of relationship and the fallacies of relationship.

Learn how to use the topic of circumstance and its various components, along with the fallacies of circumstance.

Practice the skills of debate in both an oral setting and written form.

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 Persuasive Writing course page.

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

1. Class Participation: 15
2. Homework assignments: 20
3. Quizzes: 10
4. Essays (Initial Drafts): 15
5. Essays (Final Drafts): 20
6. Debate Prep: 10
7. Final Debate: 10

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

Typically Speaking:

- magna cum laude is the grade range of 94% or above.
- cum laude is the grade range of 85-93%
- satis is the grade range of 75-84%
- non satis is any grade lower than a 75%

This reflects the student's mastery and ability to move on to the next level.

Students and their parents will receive quarterly feedback from their teachers in the form of a quarterly update.

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

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Students will often take 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. **We ask that parents proctor quizzes and tests to help keep their children accountable.**

Specifically, cheating and plagiarism are punishable offenses. Copying the work of other students is prohibited and proper citation of all sources is essential.

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### **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.

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### **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 [scholacademy.com](http://scholacademy.com) and be familiar with the ideas, policies, and procedures outlined.*