

Rhetoric:

College Prep English

Course Objectives

In Torrey Academy's Rhetoric course, students will become part of an intimate, tutor-led writing cohort. Within this writing community students learn the critical writerly skills they need to become winsome, compelling, and effective communicators in the world. Through regular rhetorical exercises, dynamic readings and discussions of texts within the Great Books tradition, and step-by-step guidance in the writing process, Rhetoric empowers students to clearly communicate genuine, original thoughts and participate in an ongoing academic conversation about great ideas and great texts.

Torrey Academy Rhetoric approaches training in writing through the classical rhetorical principles of Aristotle and Cicero with an added commitment to virtue ethics. We engage writing as a site for forming virtuous habits of mind in addition to learning practical skills. By the end of the year, students should have developed habits of invention, organization, and revision that are key to writing at the college level, and should be cultivating the intellectual virtues essential to acquiring and sharing knowledge through reading, writing, and discussion throughout their adult life. We recommend that parents and independent study programs count this class as meeting the requirements for ten high school credits of English Composition and Literature.

Students who participate in Torrey Academy's Rhetoric course have the following objectives:

- To understand and practice academic writing as a process
- To understand and practice the writerly habits of Invention, Organization, and Revision
- To recognize, imitate, and produce sound, compelling, and logical arguments
- To engage literary material in multiple genres, demonstrating both comprehension and independent thought: clarifying, synthesizing, interpreting, interrogating, and concluding
- To produce arguments that properly balance abstract or general ideas with specific, illustrative detail
- To acquire literary research skills
- To engage multiple perspectives with fairness and precision in reading, discussion, and writing
- To accurately represent the ideas of others and engage them in dialectical conversation, both in speech and in writing
- To demonstrate intellectual generosity and charity when engaging the ideas of others both in speech and in writing
- To make intentional and creative writerly choices that develops a comprehensive, sustainable, writerly voice
- To properly employ a variety of sentence structures and wide-ranging vocabulary with denotative accuracy and connotative resourcefulness
- To provide meaningful, accurate, and constructive feedback on the writing of peers
- To incorporate the feedback of peers and instructors in substantial revisions of writing assignments
- To present writing orally in a manner that is both winsome and professional
- To develop the core writerly virtues of curiosity, humility, courage, and hospitality

To this end, Rhetoric students will practice the act of writing in several forms, among them:

- Weekly short writing exercises, both in class and as take home assignments: these will include brief theme explications, critical questions, term definitions, imitations, and creative exercises
- A short paper for oral presentation
- Iterative assignments for the development of longer essays: essay brainstorms, freewrites, evidence lists, thesis statements, function outlines, rough drafts, and revision plans
- A first-semester term paper of roughly 1500 words
- A final, revised term paper of roughly 2000 words.