



The Rhetoric School Academic Guide

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Trinity Classical Academy-Rhetoric School

An Academic Overview

For 2,500 years, education in the West has prepared students to make a difference in the world. At Trinity, our goal is to equip students for purposeful lives characterized by virtue, wisdom, purpose, and courage. The last six years of our program, the Rhetoric School, intensifies this effort in the lives of each student. Upon graduation, our students will step into the world of adult responsibility, and we want them to be ready as thoughtful, active Christians who can make the most of the educational opportunities that follow.

The Classical and Christian Academic Program

Trinity's academic program distinguishes itself through its deliberate integration of content and an ongoing effort to enable students to synthesize the vast body of knowledge that they have accumulated. In addition to the reinforcement of earlier studies through the chronological organization of this content area, students develop conversational and oratorical skills through Socratic dialogue and careful instruction in persuasive public discourse.

The educations of the greatest minds in our cultural history are emulated in the Rhetoric School, providing students with a truly "liberal" education—one which *frees* them for informed conversation, establishes a basis for convictions on matters of universal importance, and models the tremendous creativity produced by informed and disciplined minds throughout history.

Wherever students turn at Trinity, they receive reinforcement of the importance of pursuing and knowing truth, goodness, and beauty as the basis for what the ancients called "the good life."

Classical schools traditionally draw attention to their emphasis on the humanities. The classical tradition is also *the great* scientific tradition. The monumental discoveries that launched the modern scientific age occurred in the studies and laboratories of classically educated men and women whose critical thinking skills and vast knowledge freed them to hypothesize creative solutions to age-old problems. Disciplined by their knowledge of Latin, mathematics and logic, great minds like Galileo, Da Vinci and Newton devised methods of inquiry, which not only satisfied their curiosity but also made it possible to organize the infinite mysteries of the natural world into disciplines like chemistry, physics and calculus. Each of these disciplines provides an explanation for, and a way to approach further investigation of the wonders of God's creative handiwork. Advanced, modern sciences and mathematics are crucial to the education our students receive.

Because we are both Christians and historians, it is essential that students gain an accurate understanding of the relationship between classical ideas and the Christian gospel. Not only that, but we desire that the education students receive at Trinity informs and strengthens their personal faith in Christ. Students study the historical development of the Christian faith, as western civilization grew along with it, and they are able to describe the essential influences of Christian thinking on our western cultural identity. They learn about both the agreements and the disagreements that have existed among Christians over the centuries, and how those confessions and controversies have shaped their own faith

traditions. Students also further their ability to analyze cultures and the characters and events that shape them through the prism of biblical thinking—a Christian worldview.

Our Christian convictions in the Rhetoric School are not just academic or intellectual. The faculty strives to introduce biblical principles of virtuous behavior and personal responsibility into every activity and every conversation with students. The Rhetoric School sets aside time for students to exercise their faith through ministry to others, obeying Jesus’ admonition to serve those whom he called “the least of these, my brothers.”

We also believe that influencing our society requires more than just knowledge and activism. The classical tradition emphasizes the mastery and use of language as a key component to shaping the thinking and the worldviews of those around us. The third step in the classical language arts is the study of rhetoric. Rhetoric applies the language-based tools of grammar and logic to persuasion. It emphasizes both written and oral communication as the chief means by which ideas enter into society and by which means, society can be led toward the greater good. Students in the Rhetoric School study this crucial discipline in theory and in practice. They employ rhetorical principles in every class, and demonstrate their rhetorical skill in a thesis presented in their senior year.

Academic Quality

While it is well and good to espouse an attractive theory of education, how do we know that the program we offer is adequate for the challenges facing today’s high school graduates? This question is a complicated one, as the tendency of many schools is to reduce their definition of quality to one or two benchmarks. Test scores and college admission are two common criteria used to judge the effectiveness of college preparatory schools. You may also find schools where the focus is more on subjective measurements regarding the faith or character of their students.

Trinity employs a combination of measurable criteria to verify quality academics and to ensure that the education our students receive will allow them as many options for further study as their aptitude and ambition provides.

1. Internal Measurements

- a. **Curriculum Goals.** Our curriculum and instructional goals for each course in the Rhetoric School is documented in specific, standardized forms in each subject area. Faculty members are evaluated on their ability to demonstrate achievement of these goals.
 - b. **Mastery.** Mastery of both the content and the skills assigned to each course is expected of students and measured using assessments that are appropriate to each discipline. The faculty is trained to expect quality work from each student, as they gain the tools necessary for achieving those high standards.
2. **Individualized Evaluation.** As stated above, our goal is to shape integrated thinkers who can articulate both what they know *and the significance* of what they know. The faculty is trained

to evaluate the quality of thinking that students demonstrate as they listen, participate in classroom conversations, and submit work, which requires synthetic thinking and the application of genuine understanding.

3. External Measurements

- a. **College admissions tests**, SAT I/SAT II/ACT/Advanced Placement Exams, and the National Latin Exam. As our students enter into advanced studies in high school, Trinity offers students the opportunity to take Advanced Placement courses when they correspond to our course content goals.
- b. **Nationally Recognized Achievement Programs**. Beginning in ninth grade, Trinity students take the PSAT, the practice test given prior to the SAT.
- c. **Accreditation**. Trinity is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the standard regional accrediting body in California. WASC accreditation requires an ongoing improvement process, connecting Trinity to an enormous network of accredited schools throughout the country that are engaged in similar improvement initiatives.

4. College Admission

- a. **University of California Standards**. Trinity's graduation requirements meet and exceed minimum requirements for admission to the state's two university systems. Trinity coursework is certified by the UC system, ensuring that students receive full credit for courses offered within the university systems' a-g requirements.
- b. **Selective Admissions**. Trinity is a college preparatory school with a program of study designed to prepare students to achieve their academic potential. We know that Trinity students will aspire to attend colleges and universities across the nation. One significant measure of academic success is in the whole package (transcripts, test scores, activities, character) they turn in when competing for college admissions. Trinity students will have outstanding opportunities in their educational future.

5. Community Indicators

- a. **Parent Satisfaction**. We believe that parents are drawn to Trinity because their goals for their children's education align with the school's mission. Trinity is characterized by a highly engaged parent body, which contributes significantly to the expectation for quality academics. We listen carefully to parent concerns. Correspondingly, when parents are happy with their student's experience, it makes us that much more confident in our work.
- b. **Graduates' Experience**. As our students move from Trinity to other schools, we expect to track their experience to learn how we can better equip future classes for similar challenges. Our goal is that every graduate can testify to being *overly* prepared for the next stage of their education.

Instructional Environment

Trinity's quality academic program requires the combination of curriculum, skilled faculty, and an intentional instructional design. Together, they determine the faculty's perspective on teaching and learning and, ultimately, how Rhetoric School students spend the time they commit to learning.

1. Attitudes Toward Instruction

- a. **Deliberate.** Faculty approach their work with a clear plan, beginning with the philosophy of instruction in each discipline and extending to the assessment of student learning. While flexibility and spontaneity are desirable traits of faculty, the larger, planned curriculum structure ensures that knowledge is gained and standards are met.
- b. **Improvement-oriented.** While objective standards are crucial to the measurement of quality, the faculty also concentrates on the progress that students make toward their individual academic potential. Students are constantly encouraged to grow toward higher levels of achievement, and faculty maintain an optimistic perspective regarding the potential of each student.
- c. **Participatory.** Participation in the whole process of gathering and organizing information, analyzing its usefulness, and synthesizing it with other knowledge is the goal of every classroom experience. The more students and faculty collaborate in each of these activities, the more meaningful and permanent the knowledge gained.
- d. **Respectful of ideas.** Encouraging students to realize their potential and to collaborate meaningfully in the learning process requires that the faculty respect students and their ideas. Students are viewed as necessary partners in shaping the school community and in their own education. As such, their ideas about school and learning are heard and shaped respectfully.

2. Essential Instructional Skills

- a. **Engaging lectures.** One important role of faculty is to dispense information, whether strictly factual or analytical in nature. Rhetoric School faculty work hard at developing their own oratorical skills, both for the sake of helping students remain attentive and to model rhetorical skills for students.
- b. **Logical thinking.** In addition to rhetorical excellence, Rhetoric School faculty also model logical thinking in their instruction. Faculty encourage students to think critically about the subjects they are learning, and they employ formal principles of logic in their approach to instruction and assessment.
- c. **Skillfully facilitated discussion.** A key distinguishing characteristic of the Rhetoric School classroom environment is that it is highly conversational. Faculty and students are regularly engaged in discussion about the importance of the things being learned. Rhetoric School faculty are trained to encourage

and facilitate meaningful discussion that accomplishes curricular goals and involves students in the learning process.

d. **Skillful assessment.** Rhetoric School faculty work hard to align assessments of student learning to curricular goals. They put as much energy into the variety and design of assessment as into the other aspects of curriculum delivery.

3. Curriculum Materials

- a. **Secondary nature.** The faculty determines the objectives and instructional priorities for each course and selects curriculum materials and resources, which correspond to those goals, not the reverse.
- b. **Accuracy and timeliness.** The faculty chooses texts and other resources for the quality of information they contain. Texts, which are well-written and well-designed for instruction, are generally preferred to texts or materials which are inferior in quality but which agree with a particular worldview or philosophical position.
- c. **Primary source documents.** When practical, students read primary historical documents in subject areas, which are key to our classical or western identity. We believe that a firsthand familiarity with significant texts is necessary to a critical understanding of the various ways in which those texts are interpreted in the modern age.

Faculty Development and Accountability

Trinity Classical Academy has made the professional development of its faculty a top priority. Faculty who come to teach in the Rhetoric School, whether experienced or novices to the profession, are engaged in an ongoing protocol of training and improvement.

1. **Mentoring.** The Head of School and the Upper School Principal observe each new Rhetoric School faculty. New faculty meet regularly to discuss observations and other important aspects of school culture unique to Trinity. In the first semester, the Upper School Principal observes the new faculty at least three times. In the second semester, observations and meetings continue.
2. **Formal instructional training.** Faculty are sent on a regular basis to formal programs designed to improve instruction in specialized areas. Humanities faculty, for instance, receive formal training in Socratic instruction or in the classic texts they teach. Faculty instructing AP courses go through a weeklong training and certification from the AP program in their courses.
3. **Annual evaluation.** Each faculty member receives an annual evaluation that may be based on the following elements:

- a. Observations by supervisory staff.
 - b. Self-evaluation.
 - c. Accountability for professional development goals.
4. **Travel programs.** Faculty with significant tenure can qualify for educational travel.

Student Academic Culture

The truest measure of a school's mission is its impact on each student. A school may accept a myriad of responsibilities for the raising and shaping of students, but its main task is to impart knowledge and skills—its mission is academic. How that happens in each student's experience is sometimes difficult to judge, but the priorities for the major aspect of that experience at Trinity are clearly articulated.

1. **Academics and Christian discipleship.** Trinity students are expected to have their faith shaped by their studies, not apart from their studies or in spite of them.
 - a. The faculty are theologically informed Christians who can apply what is being learned to faith and life as the study of God's character, creativity, grace, and sovereignty.
 - b. The most important relationships that students have within the school are with the faculty. As students learn and as they develop a sense of their own identities, they feel secure to question, wonder, and even doubt.
 - c. Students and faculty regularly discuss the importance of intellectual maturity as a key component of spiritual growth.
 - d. The faculty is motivated to develop relationships with students outside of the classroom through co-curricular activities.
2. **Academic standards.** By merely having academic standards to which the faculty and administration adhere, a school distinguishes itself in this day and age. Trinity combines academic standards with a challenging curriculum, which prescribes topics and a range of studies not found in many schools. There is no way around it—a Trinity education is a rigorous education. Therefore, these rigorous requirements must be managed so that they make sense in the lives of our students.
 - a. **Purposefulness of work.** Academic work in the Rhetoric School is both challenging and essential. Students are only assigned work which moves them toward the stated goals of a course and which can be adequately assessed as a measurement of progress toward those goals.
 - b. **Graduation requirements.** Students who enter the Rhetoric School with the expectation that a certain course of study will result in graduation can be confident that those requirements will not change, will remain consistent, and serve a valid purpose toward their future educational endeavors.

- c. **Good standing.** Rhetoric School students will remain in good standing as long as they are adhering to the school's academic policies and there is a mathematical chance that they can meet graduation requirements. Low grades or failures will result in probationary status and ineligibility for co-curricular activities. While the ultimate goal of these measures is to help the student improve his performance, probation and ineligibility are always imposed in combination with other accountability measures designed to give struggling students and the faculty more time together to address shortcomings.
- d. **Work management.** Major assignments and assessments are scheduled by semester, negotiated in department or general faculty meetings, and published for faculty, students, and parents. Students are given due notice of schedule adjustments, and syllabus changes are published.
- e. **Workload.** There is no such thing as a "typical" workload at the secondary level, as measured by time. Students should not be surprised that homework may require 2-3 hours per night at times, with work on weekends. Still, workloads do ebb and flow with the academic calendar, and students are encouraged to use periods of lighter work to make progress on long-term assignments.
- f. **New students.** While Trinity values the contribution that new students and families can make to the school community, care is taken to admit new students to the Rhetoric School in a manner that is consistent with the school's overall academic standards. Furthermore, students seeking admission at the secondary level may be held to a higher standard than younger students regarding their academic habits and independence.
- g. **Academics and co-curricular activities.** Every effort is made to encourage students to develop areas of interest and skill outside of the classroom. The benefits of a Trinity education extend beyond the classroom, and the faculty, coaches, and other staff work collegially to help students to participate successfully in a full range of school-related activities.

***** IT MUST BE NOTED: No student will be given HONORS weighted course credit if they do not receive a MINIMUM OF AN 80% at the end of any given semester. The class title will remain unchanged on their transcript but the GPA boost will be lost.**

*****While a student enrolled in an AP class can maintain the course with a "C", it must be noted, that it is MANDATORY for the student to pay for and take the AP exam, which will take place in May.**

Graduation Requirements and Diploma Sequences

The Curriculum

Graduation Requirements

Students must complete 300 credits to graduate from Trinity Classical Academy.

All Students will complete the following:

<i>History</i>	<i>40 Credits</i>
<i>Literature</i>	<i>40 Credits</i>
<i>Rhetoric</i>	<i>40 Credits</i>
<i>Liberal Arts Core</i>	<i>10 Credits (Apologetics, U.S. Gov't)</i>
<i>Elective Credit</i>	<i>30 Credits</i>
<i>Fine Art (1 year)</i>	<i>10 Credits</i>
<i>Physical Education</i>	<i>20 Credits</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>190 Credits</i>

In addition, students may distinguish themselves academically at graduation by being honored with one of these three Trinity Classical Academy Diplomas.

Distinguished Scholar Diploma Sequence:

****THIS DIPLOMA IS FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN AT TRINITY SINCE LOGIC SCHOOL AND MEET THE ABOVE LISTED PREREQUISITES**** IN ADDITION STUDENTS MUST REMAIN IN HONORS/AP COURSES THROUGHOUT 9-12th GRADE CORE CLASSES.

<i>Latin Honors Track</i>	<i>30 Credits</i>
<i>Math Honors Track</i>	<i>40 Credits</i>
<i>Science Honors Track</i>	<i>40 Credits</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>110 Credits</i>

Honors Scholar Diploma Sequence:

**** FOR THE HONORS DIPLOMA: AFTER TAKING ALGEBRA II, A STUDENT MUST TAKE HONORS STATISTICS OR HONORS PRE-CALCULUS & SCIENCE MUST BE HONORS****

<i>Latin/Spanish</i>	<i>30 or 40 Credits</i>
<i>Math Track</i>	<i>40 Credits**</i>
<i>Science Honors Track (40) or Science Honors (30) + Economics (10)</i>	
<i>Total</i>	<i>110 Credits</i>

College Preparatory Diploma Sequence:

<i>Latin/Spanish</i>	<i>30 or 40 Credits</i>
<i>Math</i>	<i>40 Credits</i>
<i>Science (40) or Science (30) and Economics (10)</i>	
<i>Total</i>	<i>110 Credits</i>

*Students that transfer in after 9th grade will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Rhetoric School Course List

Foreign Language

- Intro to Latin
- Latin I, Latin II, Latin III
- *H. Latin II
- *H. Latin III
- *AP Latin
- Spanish I
- Spanish II
- Spanish III
- *AP Spanish
- *Intro to Greek

Science

- *H. Biology
- *AP Biology
- *H. Chemistry
- *AP Chemistry
- *H. Anatomy/Physiology
- *AP Physics I
- *AP Environmental Science

Electives

- Theater
- Film
- Yearbook/Desktop Publishing
- Art
- Computer Programming
- *AP Computer Science A
- Jazz Ensemble
- Orchestra

- Jazz Band
- Senior Thesis Research
- Christ & Culture
- *H. Apologetics
- Economics

Math

- Algebra B
- Geometry
- *H. Geometry
- Algebra II
- *H. Algebra II
- Pre-Calculus
- *H. Pre-Calculus
- *AP Calculus AB
- *AP Calculus BC
- *H. Calculus (Trig/Calc A)
- *H. Statistics
- Math Theory

History

- *H. Ancient History
- *H. Medieval History
- *H. European History
- *H. US History
- *H. Government

English

- *H. Classical Literature
- *H. Medieval Literature
- *H. British Literature
- *AP English Language and Composition
- *AP English Literature

Rhetoric

- *Pre-Rhetoric I: Advanced Composition
- *Pre-Rhetoric II: Beginning Disputation/
Western Political Philosophy
- *Rhetoric I: Advanced Disputation/ AP
Language
- *Rhetoric II: Senior Thesis

Physical Education

- JV & V Football
- JV & V Girls Volleyball
- V Cross Country
- JV & V Boys Basketball
- V Girls Basketball
- V Boys Soccer
- V Girls Soccer
- V Cheer
- V Golf
- V Girls Softball
- V Boys Baseball
- V Swimming

Coursework

Liberal Arts

Trinity's entire curriculum is built around the language component of the classical liberal arts (the trivium): grammar, logic, and rhetoric. These disciplines have formed the platform for learning in every other discipline for more than 2,000 years. We believe that mastery of the English language in the manner prescribed by the liberal arts is crucial to successful learning and to the preparation of society's future leaders.

In the Rhetoric School, students build on their knowledge of English and Latin grammar, basic academic writing skills, and basic logic. In addition to these integrated elements of the curriculum, students' progress through a sequence of rhetorical studies is designed to equip them with practical skills of argumentation, persuasion, and civil public discourse.

Humanities

The studia humanitatis pursue two questions: Who is man? How should humans live? At Trinity, the disciplines of the Humanities - Bible, History, Literature, and Rhetoric - engage these questions in a chronological exploration of human culture. By studying the causes and consequences of different answers to these questions across time and cultures, students will gain an understanding of the power of ideas to shape human life and thought. In every Humanities class, students will practice the arts of attentive reading, skillful writing, and dialectical engagement that is courageous and charitable.

As a result of Humanities instruction at Trinity, students will:

- Cultivate a love of and discernment for goodness, truth, and beauty, all in imitation of Christ.
- Develop skillful reading, verbal articulation, and adept writing.
- Enter into the Great Conversation of ideas, learning to ask and answer good questions.

- Cultivate coherent capacities for wonder, humility, work, and leisure.
- Train to see how all things hold together in Christ.
- Through scholarship and the activities of the Humanities, be provoked to love and service for one another.
- Learn how to be happy.
- Pursue and attain true knowledge of self.

Mathematics

Through the study of Mathematics, students see the order, precision, creativity, and consistency of God's creation. They come to understand the immutability of God through the fascinating immutability of the number systems. Students learn how to reason logically and stick with a problem until it is solved. They have the opportunity to discover and ponder basic mathematical facts for each discipline as well as memorize and master these facts. Both conceptual and practical understanding of mathematics is emphasized through the frequent use of natural world problems.

The Rhetoric School math curriculum is designed to provide students with exceptional instruction and cumulative knowledge in Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry through Calculus as well as Math Theory and Statistics. Students have the ability to choose from among a variety of Rhetoric School math classes, depending on their aptitude and future educational plans. We live in a world, which is

Increasingly oriented toward mathematical knowledge, and our students are prepared to step into university-level math courses with confidence and a high level of competency.

Our goal in the Mathematics Department is to produce students who ~

- Develop an appreciation of the beauty of mathematics, by perceiving its elegance, order, simplicity, unity, and perfection.
- Driven by wonder, think meticulously, systematically, and creatively.
- Are willing to persevere in observation and contemplation of mathematics.

- Humbly love and help others as they struggle in math.
- Understand the development of math through history and how other cultures and peoples have viewed mathematics.
- Develop a well-ordered mind, and the ability to interpret, analyze and solve problems.
- Perceive how all things hold together in Christ (Col. 1:14 – 18), specifically that all math is orderly and works together as observed in the world around us, and all subjects are interrelated and complimentary.
- Master and retain the most relevant mathematical concepts indispensable to prepare for university-level math courses as well as SAT testing.

Science

The Rhetoric School Department of Theology and Science ~

- Imparts the principles of each scientific discipline.
- Integrates the scientific method across those various disciplines.
- Illuminates the ramifications of scientific discovery to a comprehensive worldview.
- Illustrates the fingerprint of God within each scientific discipline.

The Rhetoric School Department of Theology and Science develops students ~

- Who understand the content of scientific disciplines.
- Who have developed tools of learning through exposure to scientific disciplines.
- Who include scientific discovery as part of the foundation to their Christian faith.
- Who have developed a sense of awe and wonder for God's creation and who see the design aspect of creation.

Science at Trinity is a thoroughly modern study, integrated with the great ideas and the sense of history that characterizes a classical education. The goal of each class is to acquaint students with

the progress of scientific thinking, the mental discipline required to think scientifically, and the specific skills students will need as they progress into advanced science studies in college.

We at Trinity believe that the purpose of science is in the pursuit of truth wherever it exists in the natural world. Scientific facts, organized together as a body of knowledge, provide a glimpse into God's creative genius. As many of the great dilemmas of our age stem from modern advances in science, controversial questions in the areas of evolution, bio-ethics, and quantum physics are examined in a reasonable, fact-oriented manner.

Current Christian thinking on important issues such as those mentioned above are modeled for students by the faculty, and students are encouraged to test their own convictions in light of both Christian faith and known facts.

At the same time, students of science at Trinity are taught that the comprehensiveness and the certainty of knowledge that science can provide is limited. All scientific theories, even those we might refer to as "laws," are incomplete. Ultimately, scientific study can tell us a great deal about the world we live in, but it is not sufficient to answer the ultimate questions of human existence definitively. Scientific study, undertaken with humility, results in the proper conclusion that there is a difference between the Creator and His creatures. A humble approach to scientific discovery allows the pursuit of truth enthusiastically and still be willing to admit that we cannot provide ourselves as fallible humans with the answers to life's most important questions.

Foreign Language

Our goal is to produce young men and women who ~

- Will develop a deep understanding and a solid foundation in what it means to study and learn a foreign language well.
- Will acquire love, respect, and have appreciation for other languages as part of God's creations.
- Will learn that each language as part of God's creations has its own pronunciation, grammar rules, peculiarities, idiosyncrasies, and beauty that are to be admired and are worthy of being studied.
- Will learn that different languages both separate and unite us.

The serious study of foreign languages provides multiple benefits to the classically educated student. On the one hand, the study of Latin in the middle years provides an application for the

study of English grammar, which our students begin as soon as they can read. There are cognitive benefits, as well, that accompany classical language study. The mental processes that are honed in Trinity's Logic School (grades 7-8) are strengthened by the whole curriculum—sequential thinking and the application of rules from one context to another are each aided by math, logic, and Latin.

In the Rhetoric School students have the option of continuing their Latin study through a collegiate level (AP) or studying Spanish. The goal of each of these is fluency. Students who continue Latin will deepen their appreciation for the foundations of western culture as they learn to read the ideas of Latin-speaking politicians, poets, and theologians. Students who study Spanish will gain access to the history and contemporary culture of people with whom Americans interact.

Fine Arts

Fine arts are an excellent opportunity for students to pursue areas of interest and artistic endeavors where they can appreciate and create beauty whether it be through their hands (art), voices (vocal ensemble), or minds and bodies (theatre, worship band, hand bells, film).

Physical Education

Classical educators throughout the centuries have valued physical discipline and development. Students have the opportunity to participate in various athletic teams, which build skill and discipline.