

# APPENDIX

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## SAMPLE SYLLABUS

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### SENIOR THESIS SYLLABUS<sup>1</sup>

Lead Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

The senior thesis project is a rite of passage at this school and provides an opportunity to apply the principles of grammar, logic, and rhetoric to a particular area of research. Students are expected to develop a cogent argument that addresses a topic of public concern, interacts with scholarly sources, and urges a course of action; they are then required to present that argument orally before their peers and a panel of three respondents. The student must connect this discussion to matters of wisdom and human flourishing. The primary objective of the thesis process is the development of wisdom and eloquence. As Quintilian says, the ideal rhetor is *bonum dicendi peritus*, “a good [person] speaking well.”

### REQUIREMENTS

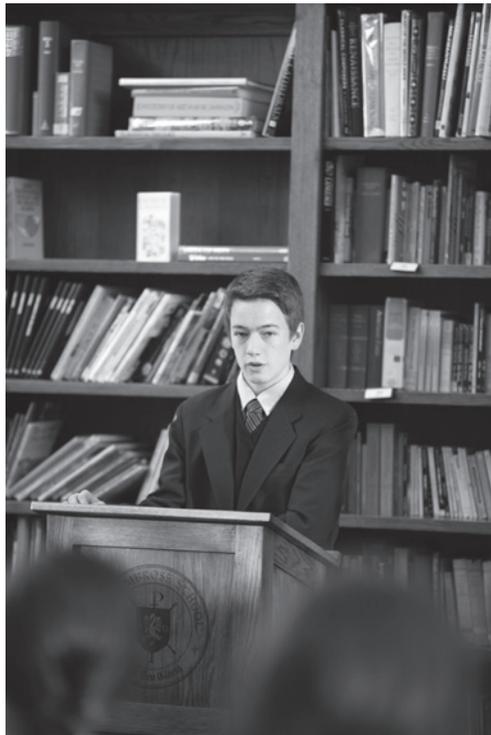
- Consult with an adult mentor with particular expertise in the area of research. This person may give input on the outline, suggestions on how to narrow/expand the thesis statement, and recommendations for quality resources.
- Participate in a classroom discussion (or an evening symposium, if your school holds one) devoted to discussion of thesis topics.
- Complete a 12- to 15-page research paper utilizing appropriate scholarly sources and following MLA style, with 12–15 sources, including books and scholarly journal articles. Other semipopular sources may be used as well.
- Deliver a 20-minute oral presentation to a faculty panel and audience from the school community; presentation should not be read from a manuscript.
- Participate in a 20-minute question-and-answer session with the panel and audience.
- Submit the final revision of the paper to the instructor, showing careful attention to the corrections and revision input provided by thesis advisors, by the end of the term.

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1. This sample syllabus is an adaptation of a syllabus by Carolyn Still, senior thesis teacher at Live Oak Classical School. Used with permission.

### EXPECTATIONS

- Select a manageable topic and craft an arguable thesis statement. The topic should be one of public concern that lends itself to a closing call to action; appeal should be made to some of the elements valued by our school audience (for example: the virtue tradition; classical liberal arts tradition; the transcendentals of truth, goodness, and beauty; Charlotte Mason; key works or authors studied at our school).
- Demonstrate familiarity with the history of the existing scholarship about the topic.
- Identify and use 12–15 quality sources to research the topic and support the issue, using libraries and research tools appropriately.
- Develop adequate reading, research, and note-taking skills for utilizing sources; use MLA format correctly; archive notes, drafts, and source materials.
- Demonstrate preparedness for and productive use of class meetings.
- Utilize the common topics of invention, the elements of the canon of organization, and the elements of the canon of style.
- Show initiative outside of class meetings in obtaining resources and in speaking with teacher(s), writing mentor, and subject expert.



## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Weeks 1–3	Find and explore general topic [chapters 1 and 2]	25 points
Week 4	Find specific issue [chapter 3]	25 points
Week 5	Explore specific issue [chapter 4]	25 points
Week 6	Find and meet with an outside expert [chapter 5]	50 points
Weeks 7–10	Research the issue [chapter 6]	100 points
Week 11	Write the background ( <i>narratio</i> ) [chapter 8]	50 points
Weeks 12–14	Write the argument ( <i>confirmatio</i> ) [chapter 9]; check in with expert	100 points

[If possible, at this point your class will host a symposium for discussion of the various topics.]

Week 15–16	Write the counterargument ( <i>refutatio</i> ) [chapter 10]	100 points
Week 17	Write the introduction ( <i>exordium</i> ) [chapter 11]	25 points
Week 18	Write the conclusion ( <i>peroratio</i> ) [chapter 12]	25 points
Week 19	Choose a brilliant title [chapter 13]; check in with expert	25 points
Week 20	Put together all the pieces [chapter 14]	25 points
Week 21	Add stylistic elements [chapter 15]	25 points
Week 22	Adapt the thesis into a speech [chapter 16]	25 points
Week 23	Memorize the overall form of the presentation [chapter 17]	25 points
Week 24	Plan and practice gestures [chapter 18]	25 points
Week 25	Practice eye contact [chapter 19]	25 points
Week 26	Mark the draft for delivery [chapter 20]	25 points
Week 27	Prepare for thesis presentation day [chapter 21]	25 points
Week 28	Present thesis	250 points
Weeks 29–30	Make revisions* to final written draft and submit**	

\* Final score may be raised up to one letter grade for improvements to written draft.

\*\* Diploma and transcript will be held until the final draft is submitted.

900–1000 points = A

800–899 points = B

700–799 points = C

600–699 points = D

599 and below = F