

Rhetoric and the Art of the Story
Course Description and Reading List
Worldview Academy Bridge Year 2014-15

This two-semester course focuses on the importance of rhetoric for Christians (Proverbs 12:6-7, 25:11-13), and specifically on crafting persuasive stories. Because Christ often relied on parables (Mark 4:1-34, for example) and Nathan used story to rebuke King David for his sin (2 Samuel 12:1-13), Christians should understand that story is a powerful means for influencing individuals and the culture at large. Students will read essays by noted authors about the craft of writing, as well as some of the classics within the genre. In addition, students will hone their own writing skills.

Students will earn their grades based on class participation, tests, and writing assignments. Various types of short stories will be explored, including science fiction, mystery, realism and fantasy. This course will emphasize (1) the objectivity of aesthetics, since it is grounded in the character of God; (2) the imperative for Christians to model excellence; (3) the power of story to affect people not just intellectually but emotionally; and (4) the uniqueness of language and the significance of the Word.

[NOTE: Students will only read excerpts from works marked with an asterisk; these will be provided as handouts so students need *not* purchase the book.]

Reading List

The Art of the Short Story ed. by Dana Gioia and R.S. Gwynn

“The Queen of Spades” by Alexander Putin

“The Fall of the House of Usher” by Edgar Allan Poe

“The Importance of the Single Effect on a Prose Tale” by Edgar Allan Poe*

“The Bottle Imp” by Robert Louis Stevenson

“Before the Law” by Franz Kafka*

A Sound of Thunder and Other Stories by Ray Bradbury

“Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut*

“The Diamond as Big as the Ritz” by F. Scott Fitzgerald

“Bartleby the Scrivener” by Herman Melville

“The Man in a Case” by Anton Chekhov*

“Alyosha the Pot” by Leo Tolstoy*

“The Open Boat” by Stephen Crane

“Araby” by James Joyce

“To Build a Fire” by Jack London*

“The Nose” by Gogol*

“The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” by Mark Twain*

“The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy” by P.G. Wodehouse*

“The Breaking Up of the Winships” and “A Couple of Hamburgers” by James Thurber*

Mystery and Manners by Flannery O'Connor

“The Simple Art of Murder” by Raymond Chandler*

“The Third-Floor Flat” by Agatha Christie

“The Blue Cross” by G.K. Chesterton

“I’ll be Waiting” by Raymond Chandler

“The Lesson of the Master” by Henry James

“A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” by Ernest Hemingway*

“The Harness” by John Steinbeck*

“The Gospel According to Mark” by Jorge Luis Borges*

“The Berry Patch” by Wallace Stegner*

“A Jonquil for Mary Penn” by Wendell Berry*

“On the Teaching of Writing” by Wallace Stegner*

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