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Syllabus of Rhetoric.

1886.

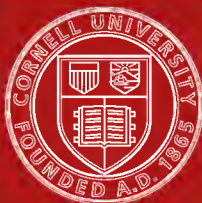
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A  
SYLLABUS  
OF  
Rhetoric and Composition

FOR THE USE OF THE FRESHMAN CLASS IN  
THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY

PREPARED BY

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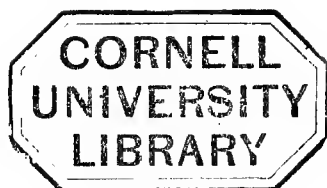
Half a dozen rules for evading the most frequently recurring forms of awkwardness, of obscurity, of misproportion, and of double meaning, would do more to assist a writer in practice . . . than volumes of general disquisition.  
—*Thomas De Quincey.*

ITHACA, N. Y.  
ANDRUS AND CHURCH  
1886



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It is the aim of this Syllabus to present in outline a systematic treatment of the elementary laws of discourse, with special reference to the needs of those students who have had comparatively little drill in the writing of English. The Syllabus is based upon Professor Hepburn's "Manual of Rhetoric," Professor D. J. Hill's "Science of Rhetoric," and Dr. Abbott's "How to Write Clearly"; the arrangement, however, is entirely different from that of any one of the books mentioned. The references to the above works will be supplemented by notes given in the class room. It is hoped that the student's note book, arranged in accordance with the scheme herewith presented, will prove a useful guide to him in the preparation of his written work. The construction of sentences, and the writing of paragraphs and themes, will accompany this study of the laws of discourse.

E. W. H.

THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY,  
September, 1886.

#### ABBREVIATIONS.

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- A. \ Abbott's "How to Write Clearly."
- H. D. J. Hill's "Science of Rhetoric."
- Hp. Hepburn's "Manual of English Rhetoric."
- † *See also.*
- N. Notes.

The references in Abbott are to the *paragraphs*; in the other two works, to the *pages*.



# Rhetoric and Composition.

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## INTRODUCTION.

### I. Rhetoric.

1. Definition. [Hp. 13 ; H. 37].
2. Difference of opinion as to what Rhetoric really is. [H. 3].
3. Rhetoric both a science and an art. [H. 37].
4. Relation of Rhetoric to certain other sciences. [H. 38].
5. The laws of Rhetoric.
  - a. Source. [Hp. 14-15].
  - b. Nature. [† N].
  - c. Application. [H. 264 ; Hp. 15-16].
6. The history of Rhetoric. [N].
  - a. Antiquity of the study.
  - b. Ancient schools of Rhetoric.
  - c. Original meaning of the term Rhetoric.
  - d. Modern meaning of the term.
  - e. Relation to invention and delivery.
7. Value of systematic Rhetoric. [Hp. 16].

### II. Composition, or Discourse.

1. Kinds of Discourse.
2. Difference between prose and poetry. [H. 33 ; Hp. 14].
3. Prose composition. [Hp. 17].
  - a. Different kinds. [Hp. 24].
  - b. Simple methods. [Hp. 18].
    - (1). Paraphrase and metaphrase.
    - (2). Abstracts and abridgments.
4. The elements of composition are, (1) The Sentence ; (2) The Paragraph ; (3) The Theme.

## THE SENTENCE.

### I. Grammatical definitions and relations.\*

1. The sentence : definition ; kinds of sentences ; terms of a sentence ; elements of a sentence.
2. Elements of a sentence.
  - a. Words.
  - b. Phrases : definition ; kinds of phrases.
  - c. Clauses : definition ; kinds of clauses.
3. Grammatical correctness. [Hp. 125].

### II. Rhetorical relations and requisites.

#### A. *Introduction.*

1. The relation of the sentence to the paragraph and to the theme. [N].
2. The sentence changed by : (1) expansion ; (2) contraction ; (3) substitution ; (4) transposition ; (5) enlargement.
3. Sentences distinguished rhetorically as : (1) Periodic and Loose ; (2) Long and Short ; (3) Balanced. [Hp. 121].
4. Characteristics of the English sentence. [Hp. 122].
  - a. Effect of loss of inflections in English.
  - b. The "time relation" and the "truth relation." [H. 151].
5. Rhetorical requisites of a sentence : (1) Clearness ; (2) Unity ; (3) Strength ; (4) Elegance.

#### B. *Clearness.*

1. Definition. [Hp. 130].
2. A relative, not an absolute quality. [† Hp. 69].
3. Why difficult to secure in English. [N].
4. Quintilian's standard of clearness.
5. What is meant by "the law of proximity." [H. 181].
6. Faults arising from violation of this law.
  - (A). Ambiguity.
    1. Definition and examples. [H. 182].

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\* See any good English Grammar.

2. Occasioned by,—

- a. The uncertain reference of pronouns. [† Hp. 133].
  - (1). Personal pronouns.
    - (a). Rules for management of. [A. 5 ; N].
    - (b). Management of the pronoun *it*.
  - (2). Relative pronouns.
    - (a). The divisible relative. [A. 8].
    - (b). The indivisible relative.
    - (c). Substitutes for the relative. [A. 10].
  - (3). Demonstrative pronouns. [Hp. 133].
- b. The uncertain reference of adverbs. [H. 182].
  - (1). General rule for position of adverbs. [A. 20].
  - (2). Special rules for position of adverbs.
    - (a). Emphatic position. When to be avoided.
    - (b). The use of the negative. [A. p. 15].
    - (c). *At least, at all events*, and other adverbial adjuncts. [A. 23].
- c. The uncertain reference of adjectives. (Hp. 131).
- d. The uncertain reference of phrases and clauses. [Hp. 131].
  - (1). The squinting construction. [H. *Index*].
- e. The improper use of connectives.
  - (1). The conjunction *or*. [Hp. 134].
  - (2). *Not only—but also ; neither—nor ; either—*  
*or ;* and other correspondents. [A. 22].
- f. The improper use of infinitives. [A. 29].
- g. The improper use of participles.
  - (1). Introductory participial phrase. [N].
  - (2). Ambiguous participial phrases.
  - (3). Ambiguous participles. [A. 7].
- h. The non-repetition of,—
  - (1). The subject. [A. 35 and 38].
  - (2). A preposition after intervening conjunction. [A. 36].

- (3). A conjunction upon which several verbs depend. [A. 37].
  - (4). The verb after such conjunctions as “than,” “as,” etc. [A. 38].
  - (5). The antecedent. [A. 10a].
  - (6.) The article.
    - (a). Before adjectives connected with the same noun. [Hp. 134].
    - (b). Before one of two nouns used together. [N].
  - i.* The omission of,—
    - (1). The article before the antecedent of a restrictive relative. [N].
    - (2). The demonstrative, ditto.
  - j.* The confusion of,—
    - (1). Antecedent and consequent clauses. [A. 27].
    - (2). Dependent and independent clauses. [A. 28].
  - k.* The use of equivocal words. [Hp. 88].
    - (1). Ambiguous homonyms. [H. 168 ; A. 4a].
    - (2). The use of *that*. [A. p. 15].
- (B). Obscurity.
1. Definition and examples. [H. 185].
  2. Occasioned by,—
    - a.* Change of construction. [A. 40a].
    - b.* Improper ellipsis. [Hp. 134 ; H. 189].
      - (1). Through omissions.
      - (2). Through inversions.
    - c.* Long sentences. [Hp. 135 ; N].
      - (1). Not necessarily obscure if homogeneous.
      - (2). Heterogeneous sentences obscure from lack of unity. [† A. 43].
    - d.* Excessive suspense. [Hp. 135].
      - (1). The “principle of suspense.” [A. 30].
        - (a). When to be observed.
        - (b). How gained. [A. 33 and 34].

- (c). How violated. [A. 30a].
  - (2). Suspense must not be excessive. [A. 31].
  - (3). Principle underlying this rule. [H. 186].
  - e. Accumulation of negatives. [Hp. 136].
  - f. Unskillful use of imagery.
    - (1). The true purpose of imagery. [H. 204].
    - (2). How figures aid clearness. [A. 13].
    - (3). Figures produce obscurity,—
      - (a). When incongruous or vague. [H. 210].
      - (b). When mixed. [H. 215 ; A. 14 ; Hp. 103].
      - (c). When far-fetched or “learned.” [Hp. 102].
      - (d). When excessive. [N].
  - 7. Clearness the first requisite. [A. 56].
  - 8. The law of economy of attention.
    - a. Herbert Spencer’s statement.\* [Hp. 70].
    - b. Application to the interpretation of a sentence. [H. 146].
  - 9. General rules for securing clearness.
- C. *Unity.*
- 1. Unity of idea.
    - a. Definition. [Hp. 126].
    - b. May be preserved in long sentences. [H. 195].
    - c. Principle underlying this quality.
    - d. How violated. [Hp. 127].
    - e. Rules for securing unity.
  - 2. Unity of structure. [H. 196].
    - a. Classification.
      - (1). Periodic sentences.
      - (2). Loose sentences.
      - (3). Balanced sentences.
    - b. Advantages and disadvantages of each kind.
      - (1). Relation to unity of idea.
      - (2). The principle of variety.

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\* See any edition of Spencer’s Philosophy of Style.

D. *Strength.*

1. Definition. [N].
  - a. What it is not.
  - b. Defined by use of synonyms.
  - c. Various known as Force, Energy, Vigor, Vivacity, Power, etc.
2. Its relation to the so-called "qualities of style." [Hp. 139].
3. Compositions in which strength is least important. [N].
4. Strength depends upon,—
  - I. Number of words.
    1. The general law. [H. 173].
    2. Violations of this law.
      - (A). Tautology.
        1. Definition.
        2. Why so common in English. [† N].
        3. Sources.
          - a. Coupling of synonyms. [Hp. 136]. When justifiable. [N].
          - b. Unnecessary repetition of the same word. [A. 54].
          - c. Unnecessary repetition of same meaning in different words. [A. 54].
      - (B). Redundancy. (Pleonasm).
        1. Definition. [Hp. 137].
        2. Sources.
          - a. Expletives.
          - b. Epithets. When to be avoided. When justifiable. Literal and figurative epithets. [† Hp. 144].
          - c. Superlatives.
          - d. Connectives. [A. 9].
      - (C). Verbosity.
        1. Definition. [Hp. 138].
        2. How different from tautology and redundancy. [N].

3. Remedy for this fault.
  4. Special forms of verbosity. [Hp. 138].
    - a.* Prolixity. Definition and examples.
    - b.* Circumlocution.
      - (1). Definition and examples.
      - (2). Sources.
      - (3). Relation to "fine writing."
      - (4). When justifiable.
    - c.* Paraphrase.
      - (1). Definition. (2). Purpose. (3). Effect.
- II. Kind of words.\*
1. Diction as an element of strength. [N].
  2. Want of strength not easily localized.
  3. General law as to kind of words.
  4. Principles of choice.
    - a.* Long and short words. [H. 160].
      - (1). Disadvantages of long words.
      - (2). Advantages of long words.
      - (3). Relation to "fine writing."
    - b.* Saxon and Latin words.
      - (1). The general rule. [Hp. 90].
      - (2). The true meaning of this rule. [H. 163].
      - (3). Relation to "fine writing."
    - c.* Specific and general words. [H. 164].
      - (1). Difference between — .
      - (2). Why specific terms are more forcible.
      - (3). Value of general terms.
      - (4). Euphemisms.
        - (*a.*) Definition.
        - (*b.*) When justifiable.
        - (*c.*) Caution against improper use.
    - d.* Poetic words. [N].
      - (1). Difference between the diction of prose and poetry.
      - (2). Effect of employing poetic words in prose.

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\* This topic is more fully discussed under the subject of Diction.

(3). When poetic words may be used in prose.

(4). Relation to "fine writing."

*e.* Onomatopoeic words. [N.]

(1). Definition. (2). Value. (3). Caution.

### III. Arrangement of words.

1. More important than either number or choice.

2. The general law. [H. 178].

3. The ideal arrangement. How far possible in English. [N].

4. The natural order of thought. [H. 178].

*a.* The adjective and substantive.

*b.* Attendant circumstances.

*c.* Explanation.

5. Inversion. [Hp. 139; † A. 18].

*a.* How it aids emphasis.

*b.* How emphasis economizes attention. [† H. 177].

*c.* Limit to inversion in English.

*d.* Principal forms of inversion.

*e.* When inversion may properly be employed.

X 6. Connection of parts. [Hp. 141].

*a.* Value of connectives.

*b.* Asyndeton. Definition. Purpose. Examples.

*c.* Polysyndeton. Definition. Purpose. Examples.

*d.* Rules for use of connectives. [N].

7. Periodic and loose sentences. [Hp. 142].

*a.* The Periodic Sentence. Advantages and disadvantages.

*b.* The loose sentence. Rules for the use of — .

8. Parenthetical expressions. [H. 186].

\* *a.* Parentheses. When admissible. Rules for — . [† Hp. 129].

† *b.* Ellipses. Danger of — . When forcible.

*c.* Foot notes.

9. Unemphatic words. [A. 15].

*a.* Their true position.

*b.* Reason for this rule. [H. 181].



10. The splitting of particles. [H. 185].
11. Figures of emphasis.\* Why forcible. [Hp. 116-20]. (1). Interrogation. (2). Repetition. (3). Exclamation. (4). Hyperbole. (5). Irony. (6). Climax. (7). Antithesis. [† A. 41].
5. Discussion of "fine writing." [N].
6. Bombast.
7. Grotesqueness.
8. Bathos.
9. Strength in variety.
10. General rules for strength.

E. *Elegance.*

1. Definition.
2. Relation to clearness and strength. [Hp. 145].
3. Principle of "Economy of the feelings." [H. 244].
4. How variety aids elegance.
5. How elegance may be promoted.
  - (A). By attention to the collocation of,—
    - a. Letters. [H. 246].
    - b. Words and syllables. [H. 248].
      - (1). Tautophony. When offensive. When justifiable. (a). Alliteration. (b). Punning.
      - (2). Repetition of same word in two senses.
    - c. Phrases and clauses. [N].
      - (1). Ease of arrangement necessary.
      - (2). Ease violated by,—
        - (a). Careless and loose arrangement.
        - (b). Excessive precision in arrangement.
        - (c). Excessive inversion.
        - (d). Disjointed arrangement.
    - d. Sentences.
      - (1). Length. (2). Structure.
  - (B). By attention to,—
    - a. Figures.
      - (1). Necessity of variety. [H. 255].
      - (2). Kind, number, and source. [H. 261].

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\* More fully discussed under the subject of Figurative Language.

- b.* Harmony between sound and sense. [H. 256-60].
    - (1). Principle underlying onomatopœia.
    - (2). Extent and character of imitative words.
    - (3). Caution regarding onomatopœia.
  - c.* Melody in construction. [N].
    - (1). Placing the accent. Rule. Caution.
    - (2). Closing cadence.
    - (3). Weakness of "metrical prose."
  - d.* Inelegant expressions.
  - e.* Fine writing.
6. How far elegance should be consciously studied.
7. Composition in which elegance is most important.

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### THE PARAGRAPH.\*

#### I. Introduction.

1. Definition.
2. Relation to sentence and to theme.
3. Importance of careful paragraphing.
4. General neglect of this subject.

#### II. Construction of Paragraphs.

1. The paragraph a miniature theme.
2. Importance of analysis.
3. Principal methods of construction.
  - a.* By expansion and enlargement.
  - b.* By passing from general statement to specific, and from specific to individual.
  - c.* By stating topic and then proving and illustrating it.
  - d.* By hinging each sentence upon some word in the preceding sentence.
4. Examples from various authors.

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\* See Hepburn, 146-155. This subject is so much neglected in the Rhetorics that it will be thoroughly discussed in the class-room. The student is also referred to Bain's Rhetoric, pp. 142-152, and to Angus's Hand-Book of the English Tongue, pp. 401-413.

### III. Properties of the Paragraph.

#### A. *Unity.*

1. Definition.
2. Analogy with unity in the sentence.
3. Importance of subordinating everything in the paragraph to one topic.
4. Statement of the topic.
  - a. In opening sentence.
  - b. In closing sentence.
  - c. In both opening and closing sentences.
  - d. Repetition of the topic.

#### B. *Continuity.*

1. Definition.
2. Why difficult to secure.
3. Obscurity and ambiguity result from lack of — .
4. How secured.
  - a. By conjunctions and conjunctive phrases.
    - (1). Cumulative. (2). Adversative. (3). Illative.
  - b. By certain phrases used for,—
    - (1). Stating opposition.
    - (2). Returning to topic after digression.
    - (3). Summing up.
    - (4). Showing transition.
  - c. By structure of sentence itself.
    - (1). Importance of this method.
    - (2). Danger of the method.

#### C. *Proportion.*

1. Definition.
2. Principle underlying this quality.
3. How violated.
  - a. By subordinating important thoughts.
  - b. By magnifying subordinate thoughts.
4. The principal thought may be made prominent, (1) by stress ; (2) by repetition ; (3) by position.
5. Treatment of subordinate clauses.

D. *Variety.*

1. Definition.
2. The general law.
3. This law violated by,—
  - a. Uniformity.
    - (1). Definition.
    - (2). Why objectionable. •
    - (3). Sources.
  - b. Symmetry.
    - (1). Definition.
    - (2). When to be observed.
4. Rules for securing variety.

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THE THEME.\*

I. The subject.

1. Choice of a subject.
2. Qualities of a good subject,
3. Relation to the writer.
4. Relation to the reader.
5. Limiting the subject.
6. Stating the subject.

II. Invention.

1. Definition.
2. How far related to Rhetoric.
3. The sources of materials.
  - a. Observation. Methods of —.
  - b. Reading. Methods of —.
  - c. Reflection.
4. The importance of method.
5. The question of plagiarism.

III. Disposition.

1. Nature and importance of —.
2. The organic parts of a discourse.

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\*Hepburn, pp. 25-65 ; notes.

3. Importance of analysis.
  4. "Topics." Their relation to the paragraph.
  5. The Introduction.
    - a.* Purpose.
    - b.* What it may properly contain.
    - c.* Qualities of — .
    - d.* Structure of — .
  6. The Discussion.
    - a.* Analytic and synthetic methods. Comparative advantages.
    - b.* Selection.
      - (1). Importance of careful selection. Schiller's maxim.
      - (2). What to omit.
    - c.* Caution against false symmetry.
    - d.* Caution against too fine a division.
  7. The Conclusion.
    - a.* Nature and importance of — .
    - b.* Qualities of — .
- IV. Special qualities of the theme.
1. The theme an expanded paragraph.
  2. Necessity of observing Unity, Continuity, Proportion and Variety.
  3. Continuity especially difficult to secure.
    - a.* Transition between paragraphs and parts of the discourse.
    - b.* Qualities of a good transition.
  4. Caution against mechanical structure.
- V. Amplification.
1. Nature and importance of — .
  2. Processes of — .
  3. Rules for — .
-

DICTION, OR THE CHOICE OF WORDS.

I. INTRODUCTION.

1. Importance of this subject. [Hp. 74].
2. The English vocabulary.
  - a. Its extent.
  - b. Its composite character.
  - c. Difficulties occasioned by these characteristics.
3. Faults arising from a small vocabulary.
4. Ways in which a large vocabulary may be acquired.

II. PURITY.

1. Definition. Used in figurative sense. [N].
2. The law of use. [H. 159].
  - a. Horace's dictum.
  - b. Campbell's law. Words must be : (1) National ; (2) Present ; (3) Reputable.
3. Violations of this law lead to Barbarisms and Solecisms.
4. *National use*. [Hp. 75].
  - a. Importance of this law.
  - b. May be violated by,—
    - (1). Foreign words and phrases.
      - (a). How far such words may be used.
      - (b). Three classes of foreign words.
      - (c). In what ways a foreign word is naturalized.
      - (d). What foreign words are barbarisms.
      - (e). Caution against foreign words and phrases.
    - (2). Foreign idioms.
      - (a). Examples.
      - (b). How these solecisms creep into English.
    - (3). Provincialisms.
      - (a). Definition.
      - (b). Three classes of Americanisms.
      - (c). When provincialisms become good English.
      - (d). Provincialisms, as such, may be good English.
    - (4). Technical words and phrases. [H. 158].

5. *Present use.* [Hp. 79].

a. Meaning of this law.

b. Violated by the use of, —

(1). Obsolete words.

(a). Definition.

(b). Uncertainty in determining obsolete words.

(c). The subjective test.

(d). What words naturally become obsolete.

(e). When obsolete words may properly be used.

(2). Neologisms. [† H. 159 ; N].

(a). Definition. Why necessary.

(b). May be new words or new formations from old words.

(c). Four requisites of such words.

(d). Hybrids : definition ; examples.

(e). Who may introduce new words. [N].

(f). When such words may be adopted. Pope's rule.

6. *Reputable use.*

a. Meaning of this law.

b. Violated by the use of vulgarisms.

(1). Colloquialisms.

(2). Slang.

(3). Cant.

III. PROPRIETY.

1. Definition. [Hp. 86].

2. Its relation to usage.

3. Violated by,—

a. The misapplication of words similar in sound.

*Examples to be studied* :—Neglect, negligence ; predict, predicate ; contemptible, contemptuous ; falsehood, falseness, falsity ; sewage, sewerage ; healthy, healthful.

(1). Malaprops.

(2). Class of words most frequently misapplied.

b. The use of words in an unauthorized sense. [N].

*Examples to be studied* :—Aggravate, irritate ; couple, two ; character, reputation ; mutual, common ; demean, debase ; verbal, oral.

*c.* Lack of congruity. [Hp. 90].

#### IV. PRECISION.

1. Definition. [N].

2. How it differs from propriety and from perspicuity.

3. Violated by,—

*a.* Improper use of synonyms. [Hp. 87].

(1). Character of English as regards synonyms.

(2). Synonyms strictly defined.

(3). Synonyms to be distinguished.

*Examples to be studied* :—Commendation, praise ; enough, sufficient ; avow, acknowledge, confess ; industrious, laborious, diligent ; hasten, hurry ; pride, vanity ; force, strength ; truth, veracity ; distrust, suspicion ; difficulty, obstacle ; opportunity, occasion ; example, instance ; also, likewise, too, besides ; farther, further.

*b.* The use of equivocal terms. [Hp. 88 ; H. 168].

*c.* Misuse of particles. [N].

*d.* Excessive conciseness. [N].

*e.* Excessive redundance. [N].

#### V. SIMPLICITY.

1. Definition.

2. A relative quality.

3. Violated by the use of,—

*a.* Technical and other unfamiliar terms. [H. 155].

*b.* General instead of specific terms. [H. 164].

*c.* Abstract instead of concrete terms.

*d.* Fine writing. [Hp. 91].

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### FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

[For an excellent discussion of the subject of Figurative Language the student is referred to Professor Hill's Science of Rhetoric, pp. 203-243. See also Hepburn, pp. 92-120.]









