

Rhetorical and Topical Outline of Tertullian's *Apologeticum*
Church History 272a: Out of Africa, Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine
 The Duke Divinity School
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Chapter	Rhetorical Division	Topical Summary
1	<i>exordium</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address to magistrates of Roman Empire. Injustice of hatred of Christian name. • What sort of evil is it when the “criminal” is glad of the accusation?
2	<i>narratio</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When charged, Christians are not allowed to defend themselves, which is unjust. • No investigation is done, which is unjust. Correspondence of Pliny the Younger and Trajan. • Torture used to induce Christians say that they are not what they are. • Christians treated differently from all other criminals.
3	<i>narratio</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General hatred for Christian name • Sarcasm: “ut quisque hoc nomine emendatur, offendit”(3:4) “When someone has been reformed by this name, he offends”¹ • “Oditur itaque in hominibus innocuis etiam nomen innocuum” (3:5) “Thus, even a harmless name in harmless men is hated”. • Christians are condemned by Empire out of ignorance, and Christians are convicted simply because of a name, not because they have done anything wrong.
4	<i>propositio</i>	<p>“iam de causa innocentiae consistam, nec tantum refutabo quae nobis obicuntur, sed etiam in ipsos retorquebo qui obiciunt”: “My stand is that we are innocent of the charge. Not only will I refute the charges that are brought against us, but I will also turn them against those who make [them]”(4:1)</p>
4	<i>partitio</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will make a detailed reply to the crimes we are accused of committing in secret, and show that you commit them openly. (4:2) • Making our existence unlawful is unjust. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ If I can show that our existence is good, then your law is bad. • Unjust laws should be reformed. • If you charge that I am incestuous or murder babies, it is unjust of you not to investigate the truth of the matter.

¹ All Chapter:Section references refer to, and all Latin quotations are drawn from, Tertullian's *Apologeticum*, ed. E. Dekkers, *Corpus Christianorum Latinorum*, vol. 1 (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1953-). English translations are the author's.

40	<i>narratio</i>	<p>The name 'faction' ought to be applied to those who come together in order to persecute the honest and good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various calamities that are blamed on Christians • "si terra mouit, si fames, si lues, statim Christianos ad leonem adclamantur. Tantos ad unum?" (If there is an earthquake, if there is famine, if a plague, at once they shout 'Christians to the lion'! So many to one [lion]?") (40:2). • Where were the pagan gods when various catastrophes happened in Italy? Moreover, no one back then complained about the Christians when, for example, Hannibal invaded Italy, or the Gauls sacked the Capitolium. • The troubles of the world are lighter today due to the intercessions of the Christians, but Jupiter, not us or our God, gets the credit. (40:14-15).
41	<i>confutatio</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the pagans who are, in fact, the real danger to mankind. • Either our God is angry, or your gods. • If the pagan gods injure their own worshippers, as well as the Christians, they are unjust. • If you argue that the Christians' God injures His own worshippers, you ought to realize that He treats everyone the same on earth, because He is waiting for the end of the world to impose the final judgement. • Natural disasters come from God to chastise you, but to warn us. • In any event, we know that nothing matters in this life. We are merely anxious to get on to the next.
42	<i>narratio</i>	<p>Tertullian turns to another charge: we Christians are not good business people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertions that Christians perform the trades just as well as pagans. • Refutation of charges that Christianity hurts temple revenue. The counter argument is that alms should be given to people, not the pagan gods.
43	<i>narratio</i>	<p>The people who really should complain about the Christians hurting trade are pimps, assassins, magicians, astrologers and their ilk.</p>
44	<i>narratio</i>	<p>Tertullian points out that the thieves and various no-goods who are haled into court are never accused of the crime of being Christian, and that the Christians who are brought into court are never accused of being thieves.</p>

49	<i>narratio</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tertullian asserts that it is in no ones' interest to call ideas false or silly (as the philosophers do) if it is in the interests of all that these ideas be true. • Even if the Christian ideas are false and silly, they harm no one. • Your power over me depends on my will, since it is I who claim to be a Christian. Thus you have no real power over me.
50	<i>peroratio</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cruelty of the punishments against the Christians only proves their innocence. • Your cruelties simply help us gain adherents: "Semen est sanguis Christianorum" ("The blood of Christians is seed") (50:13). • Many pagans preach endurance of pain and death, but our deeds attract more disciples than their words. • Who would not want to join us, since we offer the grace of God? • Tertullian closes with "Ut est aemulatio diuinae rei et humanae, cum damnatur a uobis, a deo absoluihur" ("There is a rivalry between the divine way and man's; when we are condemned by you we are absolved by God.")