**Some key terms and ideas for understanding this work:**

1. Leisure and work: *otium* and *negotium*
2. *Ars, exercitatio, ingenium*: learning/art, practice, inborn talent
3. Rhetoricians, Philosophers, the *Orator*
4. The New Academy
5. Discussing *in utramque partem*: “each side of an issue”
6. *advocatus diaboli* (“devil’s advocate”)

**Major Themes and Issues:**

1. What is the *orator* (ideal, practical, a combination)?
2. The acquisition of Greek culture: bringing it to Rome
3. The sceptical reader
4. The Roman ‘statesman’ and the need for *eloquentia*
5. Political upheaval
6. The conflict of philosophy and rhetoric (Plato!)
7. The conflict between practical requirements of daily life and the need for learning in order to succeed in those practical requirements (according to Cicero) (cf. 1.20-21)

**The De Oratore as a Piece of Literature:**

1. The de oratore is a “rhetorical dialogue.”
2. How do we read it? Individuals, structure, parallels, repetition, climax.
3. Individuals and the “main” character
4. Who is the “main” character?
5. Authorial opinion and the protagonist(s): does this form allow us to search for “Cicero’s opinion”?
6. There is a theory of “waves” about the De Oratore: that is, as the work progresses, especially in Book III, Crassus’s “maximalistic” take on oratory becomes increasingly prominent. To what extent is this true? What are the underlying assumptions in reading the De Oratore this way?

**Technical Terminology and Background of Rhetoric and Oratory:**

1. Plato: *Gorgias*, *Phaidros*; Socrates; [“know thyself”]; the problems of rhetoric and truth; the opposition of philosophy to rhetoric. What is Cicero’s take on philosophy vs. rhetoric? How does he overcome this opposition (if at all)?
2. Aristotle: *Rhetoric*
3. Isocrates: Formalized Rhetorical Education; “epideictic” oratory
4. Philosophical Schools: Epicureanism (Epicurus), Stoicism (Zeno of Citium), The (New) Academy (founded by Plato; C, The Peripatetics (Aristotle).
5. Stoics, Academy, Peripatetics all traced their origins back to Socrates.
6. Competition between rhetorical and philosophical schools