

THE TROJAN WAR

Classical Studies 2225B, Winter 2027

Instructor: Dr. Jonathan Vickers

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Class hours: see OWL

Class location: see OWL

TA: TBD

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Athenian pot shard, 550-525 B.C.

Course Description

This course will examine the myths, archaeology, and reception of the Trojan War. Students will read and engage with selections of Homer's epic *Iliad* and its tales of Troy, as well as later Greek and Roman adaptations of the legendary war story. Students will also consider the physical remains of Troy in the context of other archaeological and historical evidence from the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, with a view to understanding the historicity of the Trojan War. The course will stand the transmission and reception of the Trojan War against the socio-political backdrops of ancient Greece and Rome generally, and will also consider its reception in the modern era.

Content Warning

This course will cover not only ancient material that includes graphic depictions of violence, but also material about sensitive topics including war crimes, racism, suicide, kin-slaying, sexual assault, incest, and gender-based violence. Understandably, some students may have difficulty with, or unexpected reactions to, these topics. If you believe that lecture material on some topic(s) may cause you harm, please let me know so that we can discuss possible support strategies.

Course Delivery

This is an in-person course with two lecture hours per week. Our course OWL site will host regular quizzes, links to some readings, and course announcements (<https://westernu.brightspace.com>).

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800. The instructor is not able to assist with technological difficulties.

This course requires you to have a reliable internet connection and a computing device that meets the technical requirements for writing online timed assessments (i.e., quizzes).

Please use your UWO email address for communication with the instructor. I will not respond to emails sent from other addresses, as I cannot verify your identity.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course a successful student should be able to:

1. express how the myth/history of the Trojan War conflates legend and fact, by accounting for a combination of literary and archaeological evidence.
2. understand the basics of ancient epic as it traces its development and evolution from oral poetry to refined literature, with particular emphasis on Homer's *Iliad*.
3. identify how the various receptions of the Trojan War myth are products of particular cultures, times, and locations, and how they demonstrate that heritage.
4. contextualize the Trojan War story among a larger tradition of Western art and literature.
5. demonstrate the methods of critically evaluating primary source material with a view to understanding the past.

Textbooks

[Fagles, R. trans. 1998. *Homer: The Iliad*. Penguin Classics. ISBN: 9780140275360.](#) (about \$28)

[Morwood, J. trans. 2009. *Euripides: The Trojan Women and Other Plays*. Oxford World Classics. ISBN: 9780199538812.](#) (about \$12)

NB: many, many different translations of the *Iliad* are available, which vary in quality, wording, and the presentation of the text (particularly line numbers). Since we aren't reading the original ancient Greek, *it doesn't matter what translation you read for this class*. That said, Fagles' translation will be the one I cite in lectures, quizzes, and exams. The same is true for *Trojan Women*; you can get any version you wish, but I'll cite Morwood's translation.

Readings from the *Odyssey*, *Aeneid*, and *Metamorphoses* will be posted online to OWL. Note that many versions of the *Iliad* and *Trojan Women* are available online, too. A good source for these is the Loeb Classical Library (<https://www.loebclassics.com/>), to which Western has a free subscription, or the Perseus Digital Library (<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>), but the translations here are often awkward by modern standards.

Evaluation

Online quizzes (9 quizzes, lowest 2 scores dropped): 20%

In-person Midterm Exam (in class, Feb. 23): 40%

Final Exam (April exam period): 40%

Further Information on Grade Components:**1. Online Quizzes (9 quizzes, lowest 2 scores dropped): 20%**

Quizzes cover the material noted from the previous week, including both lectures and readings. So, “Quiz 1 (covers week 1)” means that Quiz #1, which occurs in Week 2 (Jan 11-17) covers the lecture and readings of Week 1 (Jan 4-10). The quizzes are completely open book. You may use any tools you deem useful. Quizzes will remain open for the entire week in which they are offered (i.e., Monday-Sunday).

*Flexibility Statement: Please note that because the submission deadline for these Online Quizzes already includes flexibility in the form of the 1 week submission window, and not all elements of this assessment are required in the calculation of the final course grade (since the 2 lowest of the 9 quiz scores will be dropped), the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for these missed elements: in other words, **there will be no make-up quizzes for missed quizzes.**

2. Midterm Exam (in class, Feb. 23): 40%

The midterm exam will occur during our regular class time. No aids are permitted. No electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones, smart watches, etc.) are permitted.

*Formal Documentation Designation Statement: Please note that this assessment is central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with the opportunity to make up this work by writing a make-up exam. The make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test. **All requests for consideration must be made via the Student Absence Portal.**

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html

3. Final Exam: 40%

The final exam will occur during the April exam period. No aids are permitted. No electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones, smart watches, etc.) are permitted. The final exam is *not* cumulative. It only covers material from *after* the midterm (i.e., including Week 8, lecture 2: “The Fall of Troy” and everything following).

Statement on the Use of Generative AI

For both the midterm and final exam, students may not use any digital tools, including any artificial intelligence tools. These are in-person exams, and no books, notes, or digital devices are permitted. For other course evaluations (including quizzes), or for studying, students may use any tools they deem helpful.

That said, generative AI is an atrociously inadequate replacement for exercising your own mind. I strongly discourage its use.

Course Schedule

Per the schedule below, there will be two lecture hours per week. Our reading schedule typically covers two ‘books’ of an ancient epic per week. One ‘book’ is roughly equivalent to a single chapter of a novel. Aim to read the assigned portions of the texts before the lectures. Readings will usually parallel and/or complement weekly lecture topics.

Week (dates)	Quiz	Reading	Lectures
Wk. 1 (Jan. 4-10)	none	<i>Iliad</i> 1, 3	Jan. 5: Introductions
			Jan. 7: Mythic Prelude to the Trojan War
Wk. 2 (Jan. 11-17)	Quiz 1 (covers week 1)	<i>Iliad</i> 5, 6	Jan. 12: Homer and Epic
			Jan. 14: Gods and Heroes in the <i>Iliad</i>
Wk. 3 (Jan. 18-24)	Quiz 2 (covers week 2)	<i>Iliad</i> 9, 16	Jan. 19: Was There Really a Trojan War?
			Jan. 21: The Archaeology of Troy: Part 1
Wk. 4 (Jan. 25-31)	Quiz 3 (covers week 3)	<i>Iliad</i> 18, 19	Jan. 26: The Archaeology of Troy: Part 2
			Jan. 28: The Archaeology of Troy: Part 3
Wk. 5 (Feb. 1-7)	Quiz 4 (covers week 4)	<i>Iliad</i> 20, 21	Feb. 2: Trojan Warfare
			Feb. 4: Helen of Troy
Wk. 6 (Feb. 8-14)	Quiz 5 (covers week 5)	<i>Iliad</i> 22, 23, 24	Feb. 9: Achilles in Wonderland
			Feb. 11: Ancient Athletics & <i>Iliad</i> 23
Wk. 7 (Feb. 15-21)	none	none	Reading Week
Wk. 8 (Feb. 22-28)	none	none	Feb. 23: Midterm Exam (in class)
			Feb. 25: The Fall of Troy
Wk. 9 (Mar. 1-7)	none	<i>Odyssey</i> 1, 4	Mar. 2: Odysseus and the <i>Odyssey</i>
			Mar. 4: Around the World in Eighty Lies
Wk. 10 (Mar. 8-14)	Quiz 6 (weeks 8&9)	<i>Trojan Women</i> 1-705	Mar. 9: From Bronze Age to Dark Age
			Mar. 11: Receptions of the Troy Myth in Greek Literature
Wk. 11 (Mar. 15-21)	Quiz 7 (covers week 10)	<i>Trojan Women</i> 706-end	Mar. 16: The Trojan War in Greek Art
			Mar. 18: Alexander the Great & the Trojan War

Wk. 12 (Mar. 22-28)	Quiz 8 (covers week 11)	<i>Aeneid</i> 1, 2	Mar. 23: Rome and the Trojan War
			Mar. 25: The <i>Aeneid</i> , Roman heroes, and Gladiators
Wk.13 (Mar.29-Apr.4)	Quiz 9 (covers week 12)	Ovid <i>Met.</i> 12	Mar. 30: Troy in Roman Art and Literature
			Apr. 1: Trojan Wars: Medieval and Modern
Wk. 14 (Apr. 5-9)	none	None	Apr. 6: Course Conclusions
			Apr. 8: No class

*This schedule is subject to revision if necessary.

University Policies

Academic Consideration: Students should become familiar with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/scholasticdisciplineundergrad.pdf>.

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays: Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Religious Accommodation requests for final exams should be submitted via the Student Absence Portal.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education: Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Accessible Education at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students”

https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

Special Examinations: A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Academic Advising: Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence: Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success: Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC: Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

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