

Latin Poetry Selections: Catullus LA3200B/4904B, Winter 2027



Image: Johann Heinrich von Dannecker (1758-1841), German, Stuttgart, Dated 1836. Mädchen mit dem toten Vogel (Lesbia with her Sparrow).

<https://www.staatsgalerie.de/de/sammlung-digital/maedchen-dem-toten-vogel>

OVERVIEW

Course Information

Where/When

Instructor Il-Kweon Sir

E-Mail isir@uwo.ca

Office

Student Hours

Please come to student hours (i.e. “office hours”)! They exist to help you – both regarding this course and for your broader academic development. Drop in if you have questions, but also if you want to talk to me about something in class, in your reading, or even on TV that’s inspired you.

Course Description

Despite his reputation as a poet of love and sex (already in his own time), Catullus’ poems provide vivid snapshots of almost every aspect of a leisurely life in Rome in the 1st century BCE with characteristic wit and vigour. Through his musings on love, corruption, and social etiquette, Catullus brings us face to face with an ancient Roman’s views of love, marriage, masculinity, politics, and power. This course aims to improve students’ knowledge of Latin language, literature, and culture through an in-depth reading of Catullus’ shorter poems in the original language. Students will learn to apply linguistic, literary, historical, and cultural approaches together to the interpretation of Latin poetry. Special emphasis will be given to reading the text in the original and to understanding Latin poetic style.

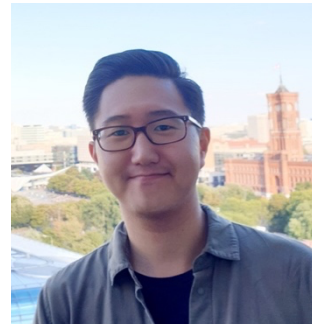
Learning Objectives

Students who complete this course will:

- be able to recognise, analyse, and explain the syntax and grammar of Latin;
- be able to translate original Latin poetic texts independently, accurately, and sensitively;
- be able to recognise, describe, and analyse the linguistic, stylistic, and literary features of the set text;
- be able to recognise and scan some common lyric metres found in Catullus;
- be able to comment sensitively on matters of linguistic, stylistic, and interpretative interest in the set text.

Instructor

Hello! I'm Il-Kweon Sir (my first name is pronounced in two syllables and rhymes with "one"; "Sir" is pronounced like the title). I hail from Korea via the UK and I joined Western in 2024 from the University of Cambridge, where I researched and taught since receiving my degrees from the University of Oxford. My teaching and research are closely aligned, focused on the study of the ancient Greek and Roman world through its languages and literature with a special interest in lyric poetry.



Prerequisites

Latin 2000 or the permission of the department.

If this course appeal to you, you might also enjoy the following courses in the Classical Studies department: CS2300-650 "Sport and Recreation in the Ancient World" (1.0), CS3150F "Roman Epic", CS4580G "Vindolanda Field School".

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Required Books

G. Lee, *Catullus. The Complete Poems*. Oxford. 2008. (Many second-hand copies are available for under \$10.)
<https://global.oup.com/ukhe/product/the-poems-of-catullus-9780199537570?cc=ca&lang=en&>

Suggested Books

A good Latin grammar book is essential to improving your Latin language. We will discuss options in Week 1, including ones online.

These commentaries will be helpful reading. Many second-hand copies are available:

- C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus. A Commentary*. Oxford. 1961.
- K. Quinn, *Catullus. The Poems*. London. 1970.

Technical Requirements

This course will be conducted in person. However, you will need access to a computer and internet access to access the course website for course materials and notices.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND EVALUATION

Grading Structure

Preparation and Participation	35% (including 10% for end-of-term presentations)
Weekly Quiz	10%
Mid-Term Examination	20%
Final Examination	35%

The evaluation is structured to reward both consistency and improvement.

Assessment Details

Preparation and Participation

The success of the class discussions depends largely on the level of your preparation. You are expected to attend all classes and participate fully in every class.

Preparation and participation are key to success in this class. Learning any language to a high level requires good time management, self-discipline, patience, and regular practice and revision: by making preparation a graded element, I intend to reward this necessary effort. Preparing for class will include completing homework assignments, revision of course materials, and memorising and practising new materials. Class time is limited and better used for explanations and reinforcement (when I am present and offer immediate feedback) rather than memorising; I expect you to dedicate some time to learning and revising the course materials every day. Participating fully in class will also offer you the best chance of mastering the language by practising and consolidating the material.

I expect to be generous with this element of the grade. Language learning is not always easy and the rewards of the effort invested may come sooner for some than others: because of this, I will take a holistic view of your preparation and participation for the two terms and take into account how consistent you have been, how much you have improved throughout the course, and how helpful/willing to participate in class you have been.

In addition to preparing as usual for every class, you will prepare a 15-minute presentation towards the end of term (dates TBA). These presentations will answer a specific question and are intended to help you prepare for the themes relevant for the essay portion of the final exam.

Weekly Quiz

Every week from Week 2, there will be a quiz in our Friday class. These quizzes will be conducted orally in class, testing vocabulary and principal parts. Questions will be drawn from the “vocabulary list” and “principal parts list” available on OWL. These quizzes are Pass/Fail.

Please note that, because not all elements of this assessment are required in the calculation of the final course grade, I will deny academic consideration for these missed elements.

Mid-Term Examination

On Wednesday 24th February, we will have a 45-minute in-class mid-term examination. Tasks may include: translating and commenting on the language and interpretation of the text.

Please note that this assessment is central to the learning objectives for this course. 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 have a make-up examination.

Final Examination

The Final Examination will take place during the April Final Examinations period after all our classes. It will be a three-hour written examination and consist of two translations, one literary commentary, and one essay.

SCHEDULE

TBA

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Content Notice and Etiquette

Like any course, this course can only succeed in a safe and inclusive community that learns from the many different perspectives of its participants. Latin literature often treats many topics which affected the daily life of people (ancient and modern) – including death, violence, sex and gender, sexuality, race, and age – in ways that appear to us to be insensitive or offensive. A Latin language class that aims to equip students to read Latin literature on their own, therefore, will include texts that feature such topics in abundance; Catullus is representative of Latin literature in this respect. All participants must be respectful of others in the classroom. If you ever feel that the classroom environment is affecting your participation and learning in a negative way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Religious Accommodation

Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays: https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_16. 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 mid-term examination, 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.

Accessibility and Accommodation Policies

I am committed to teaching a course that is fully inclusive of all students. Please let me know as soon as possible if you foresee or encounter any barriers and we will determine if there are any adjustments or accommodations that can be implemented. I am open to creative solutions and to work with you.

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 contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf.

Academic Policies and Communications

The website for the Office of the Registrar is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

In accordance with policy (https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf), the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official

university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>) on a regular basis for news and updates. For assistance with the course OWL site, see the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800, or with a support ticket: [create an OWL Brightspace service ticket](#).

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity policies are about equity. Academic writing is a product of labour and so appropriating others' work without credit or attribution is theft. You can also see plagiarism as a form of censorship as incorrect citation or omission of authorship can amount to the silencing of scholarly perspectives and identity.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf. You, as the student, are responsible for knowing and avoiding misconduct.

I encourage you to make sure you understand and know how to avoid plagiarism before submitting any work for assessment. The University offers an Academic Integrity Tutorial for Undergraduate Students on OWL; students who complete the tutorial will earn a certificate: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/dc11302e-3b48-41b2-bdf6-05a2d96c86cc>. Western Libraries also offers resources on plagiarism: <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>.

Electronic Devices and the Use of AI

No electronic devices are permitted in tests or examinations.

However, in this course, the use of AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT) are strictly prohibited for the purposes of gathering information or generating ideas: not only do such uses of AI tools go against and hinder the aims of this course, but the issues of large language models fabricating (or “hallucinating”) facts and sources are also well known, making them unhelpful as sources of information in an academic setting. The currently available AI models are also not trained on Latin in any meaningful way and even asking grammar questions to AI often leads to wrong answers; please come to me to ask questions instead of using AI tools. (A very limited exception is the use of AI image tools to create images for illustrative purposes – for example, memes – in informal presentations, as long as the use of AI is acknowledged; these cases are clearly contributing to the presentation of your thinking and not replacing thinking.) All uses of AI tools contrary to this policy will be treated as cases of academic dishonesty.

Absences and Assessments Policies

Students must familiarise themselves 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.

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for attempted or completed work, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult Accessible Education.

In keeping with the policy, the Mid-Term Examination is designated as an assessment that requires formal supporting documentation in requests for academic consideration.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the

Office of the Registrar's webpage: https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html. All requests for Academic Consideration – including for class absence – must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline through the online “Student Absence Portal” found on the Registrar’s website (above).

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request without supporting documentation in this course. Remember: an Academic Consideration request without supporting documentation still has to be submitted through the Student Absence Portal. However, the following assessments are excluded from this and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- Mid-Term Examination (designated above)
- Final Examination (all examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar).

For these assessments that always require formal supporting documentation, a make-up examination will be offered in cases where Academic Consideration is granted. When a student misses the Final Exam and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

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: https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=5&Command=showCategory&Keywords=spc&SubHeadingID=70&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_70.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic Counselling

Your Home Faculty's Academic Counselling or 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/faculty_academic_counselling.html.

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://www.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 gender-based or sexual violence (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/student_support/survivor_support/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/>.