

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL STUDIES
Classics 9000: Core Course
Course Outline: Greek Literature
Fall 2015 (Second Quarter)
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The purpose of Classics 9000 (The Core Course) is to introduce graduate students to a selection of the major scholarly methods and questions in the discipline of Classics. In the section on Greek literature we will survey the range of genres in Greek literature, and discuss some exemplary interpretative approaches. We will read selections from the primary Greek texts as well as scholarly approaches to them.

Students are not required to read the ancient texts in Greek, but discussion in class may often refer to issues of language. For the purposes of this class it is unimportant what translations are used, and students are encouraged to make use of on-line resources, such as the Perseus database. The scholarship will be made available electronically.

Evaluation

The grade for the Greek Literature section (worth 25% of the final mark for the Core Course) will be derived from:

A. Class Participation (25%)

Students should come to every class prepared to discuss both primary and secondary readings. Your contributions should demonstrate a critical engagement with the material and with discussion in class. The quality of your comments in each class will be weighted more heavily than the quantity. You should also aim to be carefully attentive to what others have to say and to respond always with respect.

B. Test (75%) to be scheduled in the exam period

The test will be composed of passages for commentary. On this test you will have the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the major genres of Greek literature, their many and various contexts, and some of the important scholarly approaches to interpreting them. Passages will be provided both in Greek and in English translation. You will identify the author and work from which the passage is drawn as specifically as possible, briefly describe the context of the passage in the work and/or the literary tradition, and write a short essay analyzing the significance of the passage, including as much as possible citations of relevant scholarship.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1: (November 4) Orality and the Composition of Homeric Epic

Discussion Questions: What is the relationship between the received Greek literary canon and performed oral culture? What special problems of interpretation does the oral tradition present?

Ancient Texts: *Iliad* 9, *Odyssey* 23

Modern scholarship:

Foley, J.M. 1997. "Oral Tradition and its Implications," in I. Morris and B. Powell (eds), *A New Companion to Homer*. Leiden 1997. 146-173

Foley, Helene P. 1978. "Reverse Similes and Sex Roles in the *Odyssey*," *Arethusa* 11 (spring/fall). 7-26.

Week 2: (November 11) Archaic Cosmologies

Discussion Questions: what is the world order expressed in the divine cosmology of Hesiod's Theogony and in the praise of the gods in the Homeric Hymns? What was the function of these texts and what is their relationship to social and religious rituals?

Ancient Texts: Hesiod, *Theogony*; *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*

Modern Scholarship:

Clay, Jenny Strauss. 2003. *Hesiod's Cosmos*. Cambridge. 12-30.

Foley, Helene. ed. 1994. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: translation, commentary, and interpretive essays*. Princeton. 103-149.

Week 3: (November 18) Greek Lyric: Performance and Context

Discussion Questions: what were the various contexts of performance of early Greek lyric poetry? What identities are constructed for the poets in each of these works? How do they respond to the received poetic tradition and to their own contemporary contexts?

Ancient Texts: Sappho 16; Theognis 19-39; Pindar *Olympian* 1

Modern Scholarship:

Kurke, Leslie. 2013. *The Traffic in Praise: Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy*. Berkeley, California. Ch. 7, "Adorning the City" 141-68.

Parker, Holt. 1993. "Sappho Schoolmistress" *TAPA* 123. 309-51.

Pratt, Louise. 1995. "The Seal of Theognis, Writing and Oral Poetry," *AJP* 116. 171-84.

Week 4: (November 25) Greek Drama: Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis

Discussion Questions: Greek Drama and Athenian Democracy seem to have emerged almost simultaneously. Is there an explanation for this? What is their relationship to one another?

Ancient Texts: Aeschylus *Agamemnon*; Aristophanes, *Frogs*

Modern scholarship:

Goldhill, Simon. 1987 "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107. 58-76 = J. J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin (eds), *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama and its Social Context* (Princeton 1990) 97-129.

M. S. Silk, 2000. "Serious Issues and 'Serious Comedy,'" in *Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy*. Oxford. 301-349

Week 5: (December 2) Eros and Rhetoric

Discussion Questions: Can a distinction be drawn between rhetoric and philosophy in the time of the early Sophists? How does Plato contribute to this discussion? What is the contribution of myth to the evolving intellectual climate of Classical Athens, and to emerging philosophical thought? How does Platonic philosophy reflect and respond to the historical and social context from which it arose? What has been its enduring influence?

Ancient Texts: Plato, *Symposium*; Gorgias *Helen*

Modern Scholarship:

Schiappa, Edward. 1995. "Gorgias' *Helen* Revisited," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 310-24.

Hunter, R. 2004. *Plato's Symposium*. Oxford. Ch. 4, "The Morning After". 113-36.

Week 6: (December 9) Post-Classical Greek Literature: Literacy, Love and Art in Greek Pastoral

Discussion Questions: In the literary world of the post-Classical Greek literature, what use is made of the inherited traditions? How does this literature reflect on its own status as artistic production? How does the artifice of the pastoral landscape contribute to this reflection?

Ancient Texts: *Theocritus 7*; Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* Books 1 and 4.

Modern Scholarship:

Hunter, Richard. 2007. "Reflecting on Writing and Culture: Theocritus and the Style of Cultural Change" in Harvey Yunis, ed. *Written Texts and the Rise of Literate Culture in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge. 213-34.

Zeitlin, F. 1990. "The Poetics of Eros: Nature, Art, and Imitation in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*." In D. Halperin, J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin eds., *Before Sexuality*. Princeton. 417-64.

UWO Policies and Resources

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

UWO Accessibility Policy

Western has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social and academic needs of students with disabilities. For more information and links to these services: <http://accessibility.uwo.ca/>

Mental Health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a list of options about how to obtain help.