



Department of Classical Studies

Latin 9150A: Caesar

Course Outline

Course Details

We will read in Latin selections from Caesar's *Bellum Civile*, which recounts – from Caesar's perspective – the onset and initial stages of the Civil War of 49-46 BCE. The focus of the course will be less on military affairs and constitutional details and more on representation of characters, motives, and episodes. That is, the text will be treated (at least to a large extent) as literature rather than history, with some introduction for students to the tools and methods of narratology. Students can expect (1) to read a substantial amount of Latin prose each week, with a rotating focus on various approaches to literary Caesar; and (2) to develop their skills in scholarly reading, critical analysis, and research methods.

Contact Details

Office: Lawson 3206 (next to the main office)
Email: dnousek@uwo.ca
Phone: 519-661-2111 x87481
Office Hours: TBA

Class Meetings

The course meets Fridays from 1:30-4:30 in Stevenson Hall 2166.

Course Texts and Resources

I recommend the Oxford Classical Text (OCT) of Caesar's *Bellum Civile* (ed. Cynthia Damon, 2015) available at your favorite bookseller. This is the most recent and accurate edition of the text. Use other editions at your own risk – the manuscript tradition is sufficiently complex that other editors have taken widely different approaches to establishing the text. It's simply easier if we are all on the same page.

I will also upload to OWL a couple of out-of-copyright school commentaries of the text to assist you with grammatical and historical details.

Grade Assessment

Class engagement and blogging	20%
Midterm (October 26; [2 hours])	20%
In-class presentation	20%
Research Paper (due December 17)	20%
Final Exam (to be scheduled)	20%
Sight reading (potential bonus):	10%

Course Policies

Attendance and Assigned Readings

Students are expected to prepare the Latin assignment for each week in advance. By ‘prepare’ I mean that students should read the Latin sentence-by-sentence, looking up any unfamiliar words or forms and making notes about these for future reference, or for asking questions regarding syntax or usage in the seminar meeting. Once students have mastered the Latin grammar of the assigned passage, they should go over it again with an eye to identifying elements of interest with regard to style, content and/or literary and thematic patterns. Students should likewise come prepared to discuss the historical content and literary aspects of the Latin assignment. For assignments of secondary literature, students should come prepared to contribute actively to the discussion: a good rule of thumb is to have prepared in advance at least two observations and one question about the scholarly text and its relationship to Caesar. These contributions will be noted and count towards the participation grade (see below).

Class Procedure

At the beginning of each class meeting we will review lingering problems or questions from the previous session. We will then take up the content and interpretation of the current assignment, spending time on selected passages from the assignment. We will not be able to translate the entire assignment during our seminar meetings; rather, I will call upon individual students at random to render the Latin into English for the passages on which we will focus our analysis. Students will nevertheless be expected to have read, absorbed and analyzed the whole of the Latin assignment. We will, in addition, spend some time in each seminar meeting working through some Latin at sight (this is good for the soul!).

During the discussion segments of our seminar meetings, we will concentrate on the ways in which Caesar has composed the narrative, using the principles of narratology as a key approach to understanding the text. Because Caesar’s *Commentarii* are unique in their portrayal of a character in the third person who is, in some respects, coterminous with the author and narrator, I hope that a careful study of just how Caesar accomplishes this feat, and the effects it has on the literary and rhetorical purpose of the texts, will be fruitful. Students are naturally welcome to explore other approaches to Caesar’s text in accordance with their interests.

Course Objectives

The overall goal of this course is to provide an opportunity for students to become familiar with the characteristics of Latin historiography as practiced by Caesar. Through completion of reading assignments in Latin, students will develop their speed and comprehension in reading Latin prose. In addition, this course will acquaint students with the historical period of the late republic, in particular with the decades of the 50s and 40s BCE, and the events of the Civil War. Students will become familiar with various scholarly interpretations of Caesar’s *Commentarii*, and will engage in close reading of passages to identify connections and parallels between different segments of the text. Finally, students will gain or improve their understanding of the principles of narratology (focalization, embedded narratives, etc.).

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will be familiar with Caesar’s account of his military campaigns and the events of the Civil War from 49-46 BCE. Students will have practiced and improved their ability to read Latin, gaining familiarity with the literary features of Caesar’s prose style and the characteristics of the genre of historiography. Students will have developed their skills at scholarly research and writing, learning to read and analyze critically both primary and secondary sources. Students will practice and develop their skills in organizing, researching and communicating their ideas and arguments in a logical and persuasive manner. More broadly, students will have sharpened their skills in analytical and critical thinking.

Exam Information

The midterm and the final exams are designed to test your skills in two crucial areas for reading Latin literature: (1) your knowledge of the Latin language (diction, morphology, syntax) and (2) your ability to interpret and analyze the literary, thematic and stylistic elements of the works that form the content of our reading. The exams will ask you to translate passages from our readings and to comment on the literary significance of each, in the context of our work with narratology and other scholarly approaches to the text.

Classroom Engagement and Blogging

One of the best aspects of graduate seminars is the fact that they foster a community of scholars and the exchange of ideas in a lively and respectful environment. Each participant brings to the table a unique set of interests and experiences in ancient language and culture; together we will develop these established interests and uncover new ones. To a large extent, this will happen in our seminar meetings. Another avenue for discussion and the exploration of ideas in a relatively unformed state will be the weekly blog posts and responses that each student is expected to contribute via OWL. The expectations for the content and form of these blog posts are explained in a separate document.

Presentation and Research Paper

Presentation: students will present their preliminary research at seminar meetings beginning November 2, 2018. The presentations will be ca. 15 minutes in length, followed by discussion. Presenters will assign in advance materials to be read by the rest of the class (at least one article or book chapter, together with a focused reading of at least one passage from Caesar), and supply questions to direct and focus the class's reading of these materials. ***This assignment must be sent to the class (via email or OWL) at least one week prior to the student's presentation.*** Students will be required to provide (and submit electronically to the instructor) either a handout or a PowerPoint, or both, along with relevant bibliography. Non-presenters must be prepared to contribute to the discussion by asking questions and offering feedback to the presenter. The comments and feedback received in the discussion period should be incorporated into the final research paper.

Research Paper: The research papers submitted in April (**due December 17, 2018 by email**) are expected to be more fully developed versions of the preliminary ideas sketched out and given a test-run in the seminar presentation. The length of these papers should be approximately 4000-5000 words. You will thus have more room in the research paper to address the contributions of previous scholarship as well as to examine more closely the evidence for your arguments from the texts we've studied (and comparable texts, where appropriate). You should make sure to include your own translations into English of all passages of Greek and Latin used in your paper. For formatting and stylistic guidelines, please adhere to the guidelines set forth in the "Notes to Contributors" and "Style Sheet" sections of the website for the journal *Phoenix*. For any other aspects of formatting, please consult the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Important Policies for all Western Courses

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

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).

Policy on Accommodation

If academic accommodation should become necessary at any point, students should contact their course instructor(s) and/or supervisor, as appropriate. Students should also contact the Graduate Chair in most cases, and especially if accommodation is needed for:

- more than one course
- more than one week
- any tests, exams, and/or assignments worth 10% or more of a final grade
- any program milestone (comprehensive exams, thesis, etc.)

In these cases, the Graduate Chair may request that a student work with Student Accessibility Services (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>) to arrange a plan for accommodation (see SGPS Regulation 14: http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/14.html).

Staying healthy – physically and mentally – is an essential part of achieving your academic goals. There are many resources on campus available to help you maintain your health and wellness (start here: <http://wec.uwo.ca/> and <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>). Please contact the Graduate Chair if you have any concerns about health or wellness interfering with your studies.

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/students/index.htm>

Schedule of Readings and Seminar Topics

(Note: primary and secondary readings must be completed in advance of each class meeting)

Week 1 (September 14)

Latin Assignment: 1.1-7

Seminar Topic: Introduction to Caesar, Caesarian prose; Narratology

Seminar Readings:

1. Kurt Raaflaub 2009. "Bellum Civile," in *A Companion to Julius Caesar*, ed. M. Griffin, pp. 175-91.
2. Christopher B. Krebs 2017. "More than Words: The *Commentarii* in their Propagandistic Context," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar*, eds. Christopher B. Krebs and Luca Grillo, pp. 29-42.

Week 2 (September 21)

Latin Assignment: 1.8-18

Seminar Topic: Roman Politics and the Rhetoric of 'Civil' War

Seminar Reading:

1. John Henderson 1996. "XPDNC/Writing Caesar ("Bellum Civile"), *Classical Antiquity* 15.2: 261-68.
2. Christopher B. R. Pelling 2009. "Seeing through Caesar's Eyes: Focalisation and Interpretation," in *Narratology and Interpretation: The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature*, eds. J. Grethlein and A. Rengakos, pp. 507-26.

Week 3 (September 28)

Latin Assignment: 1.19-23; 2.23-25

Seminar Topic: Caesar is Everywhere (even when he's not)

Seminar Reading:

1. Luca Grillo 2011. "Scribere ipse de me: the Personality of the Narrator in Caesar's *Bellum Civile*," *American Journal of Philology* 132: 243-71.

Week 4 (October 05)

Latin Assignment: 2.26-33

Seminar Topic: The Tragedy of C. Scribonius Curio Part I

Seminar Reading:

1. Cynthia Damon 1994. "Caesar's Practical Prose," *Classical Journal* 89: 183-95.

Week 5 (October 19)

Latin Assignment: 2.34-44

Seminar Topic: The Tragedy of C. Scribonius Curio Part II

Seminar Reading:

1. Galen O. Rowe 1967. "Dramatic Structures in Caesar's *Bellum Civile*," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 98: 399-414.

Week 6 (October 26)

Latin Assignment: 3.1-8

Seminar Topic: The (Roman) World at War

MIDTERM TEST (Readings from BC, books 1 and 2)

Week 7 (November 02)

Latin Assignment: 3.9-15

Seminar Topic: A Tale of Two Generals

Seminar Reading: Student Presentation Assigned Readings

Week 8 (November 09)

Latin Assignment: 3.16-23

Seminar Topic: Roman Politics Redux

Seminar Reading: Student Presentation Assigned Readings

Week 9 (November 16)

Latin Assignment: 3.24-30

Seminar Topic: Super-Natural: Fate, the Elements, and Caesar

Seminar Reading: Student Presentation Assigned Readings

Week 10 (November 23)

Latin Assignment: 3.81-89

Seminar Topic: The Road to Pharsalus

Seminar Reading: Student Presentation Assigned Readings

Week 11 (November 30)

Latin Assignment: 3.90-99

Seminar Topic: '*Hoc voluerunt*' (Suet. *Iul.* 30)

Seminar Reading: Student Presentation Assigned Readings *plus*

1. Andreola Rossi 2000. "The Camp of Pompey: Strategy of Representation in Caesar's *Bellum Ciuile*," *Classical Journal* 95: 239-56.

Week 12 (December 07)

Latin Assignment: 3.100-106

Seminar Topic: Ending Pompey or Ending Caesar?

Seminar Reading: Student Presentation Assigned Reading(s)