

## Greek 9903B Homeric Poetics

### Course Description

In this course students will be introduced to Homeric poetry through a focus on Homer's *Iliad*. In addition to reading select books of the *Iliad*, students will be introduced to the history of Homeric scholarship and current debates in the field. The topics of the course will be organized into three basic categories: poetic craft, specific literary and cultural themes, and history. Under the category of poetic craft, students will be introduced to the debates concerning oral poetry, narrative, intertextual relations between epic traditions, and other topics, which will allow students to focus on the details of Homeric language. Under the category of literary and cultural themes, we will discuss influential works on themes of war, politics, immortality, emotions, gender, human-divine interactions, and other pertinent subjects specific to the sections of the *Iliad* under consideration. Lastly we will discuss the problem of Homer and history, which include issues regarding the "Homeric world" and archaeology, as well as the history of debates on performance context and textualization of the Homeric epics. All three categories are inextricably intertwined, and so the process of introducing these topics cannot be hierarchical or linear. Nevertheless, classifying our analyses into these three categories will help in handling the hydra that is Homeric scholarship. Throughout the course, we will consider, in broader terms, the unique nature of Homeric poetics and its constitutive relationship to ancient Greek culture. Overall, therefore, students will gain a proficiency, if not fluency, in the reading and analysis of Homeric poetry, which will serve as a vital component for future work in Classical Studies.

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Date and time of course: Fridays 1:30-4:30 via Zoom.

### GRADE ASSESSMENT:

Class Participation/Preparation:	10%
Class Presentation	10%
Close Reading Assignment	20%
Final	30%
Research Paper	30%

### COURSE TEXTS:

*Iliad* Books 1-12, Oxford Classical Texts: Homeri Opera Volume 1

*Iliad* Books 13-14, Oxford Classical Texts: Homeri Opera Volume 2

Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect, Expanded Edition*

All other texts and readings for the course will be provided via library reserves and/or the course website.

CLASS COMMUNICATION: class will be notified of any class cancellations and other special announcements by e-mail (students should check their UWO e-mail account regularly).

**NOTE FROM THE DEAN OF ARTS and HUMANITIES:** You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as basis of appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

**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).

**POLICY ON ACCOMMODATION FOR MEDICAL ILLNESS:**

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

[downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> [under the Medical Documentation heading]

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Office of the Dean of their home faculty and provide documentation.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION CANNOT BE GRANTED BY THE INSTRUCTOR OR DEPARTMENT.**

**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/>

**Learning Objectives/Outcomes:**

Through successful completion of this course, students will become proficient in reading and interpreting Homeric Greek poetry and will gain a thorough knowledge of the major aspects and debates in Homeric Studies. Students will be introduced to specialized philological methods regarding orally derived poetry, along with interdisciplinary theories from linguistics and anthropology, in order to aid in the reading and exposition of Homeric poetry. In addition, students will also consider how the study of Homeric poetry may contribute to ongoing debates and provide further insights into the general research on poetics and cultural history within the field of Classics more generally.

**Class Participation/Preparation (10%):**

*Translation:* This class will require reading Homeric Greek poetry in the original and students should come prepared to read and translate texts in the original. It is expected that students will have access to primary Greek texts and will bring those texts to class.

*Discussion:* Students should come to class with at least two observations and one central question regarding the assigned reading for each class period and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings. In addition, for each class, students will be assigned secondary literature to present for discussion in class.

#### Reading Assignments:

Because one of the major aims of the course is to increase reading proficiency, the course reading assignments will remain flexible.

We will read a minimum of six books of the *Iliad* including, but not limited to:

Book 1, Book 6, Book 9, Book 16, Book 22, and Book 24.

In addition, we will read the entirety of the *Iliad* in English Translation.

A selection of secondary literature will be available for the course via OWL

#### Close Reading Assignment (20%):

In the course of the semester, deadline TBA, students will be asked to prepare one close reading on a passage of their choosing, five to ten lines or more in length. The close reading will consist of metrical analysis, formulaic and lexical analysis, discussion of relevant scholia and modern scholarship on issues relevant to the passage, and some preliminary original interpretive comments by the student. This close reading will introduce students to the multiple levels of analysis required in the interpretation of Homeric poetry and may serve as a foundation for the papers.

#### Class Presentation (10%):

The last two weeks of the course will be dedicated to student presentations. In these presentations, students will deliver a paper on their research topic to the class that is 15-20 minutes in length, followed by discussion. Students will be required to write an abstract for their presentation and provide either a handout or powerpoint, or both, along with relevant bibliography.

#### Final (30%): Date TBA

The final will consist of translation and commentary of select passages from the primary sources assigned during the course.

#### Research Paper (30%): Due Date TBA

The following grading criteria will be applied to all graduate student papers.

NB: 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/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

Writing clearly demonstrates: i) originality and high degree of critical engagement with primary sources (written or material) and the secondary scholarly literature, ii) writing is perceptive and probing in its conceptual analysis, iii) topic is focused, logically organized, and thesis effectively presented and argued, iv) majority of primary and secondary sources have been consulted, v) prescribed format of paper including proper citation of sources is followed; well developed prose style virtually free of grammatical error.

**70 – 79 / B**

Writing demonstrates: i) satisfactory attempt at analysis and critical thinking; arguments supported by reasonable evidence, ii) topic has been addressed in some depth and/or breadth, iii) somewhat limited selection of primary and secondary sources has been consulted, iv) text is generally well written; some problems with grammar and prose style.

**60 – 69 / C**

Writing demonstrates: i) inadequate engagement with topic, ii) factual errors regarding primary sources and lack of understanding of secondary literature, iii) few of key primary and secondary sources have been consulted, iv) prose style is difficult to follow, improper format for paper, incorrect citation of sources, many grammatical errors.

**Below 60 / F**

Writing demonstrates: i) failure to comprehend the topic, ii) topic is not clear, text is disorganized and/or unintelligible, iii) few or no relevant primary and/or secondary sources have been consulted, iv) writing skills do not meet the minimum university entrance-level standards.