

# Classics Core Course: Literature



**The University of Western Ontario**

Classics 9000-III, Winter 2023

Randall Pogorzelski

## Welcome

Welcome to the literature module of the Core Course! Even though it is officially one part of a larger course, I would encourage you to approach this section as though it were a separate course, with its own expectations and requirements. We'll cover some basic approaches to studying literature broadly defined, aiming to professionalize your work in a core area of the discipline of Classics.

## Instructor



My name is Randall Pogorzelski, and I will be your instructor for this course. Please call me Randy. I've been working in Western's Department of Classical Studies since 2011. Before I came to Western, I was a Lecturer at Scripps College in Claremont, California, at the University of California, Irvine, and at the University of New England in Armidale, New South Wales. I teach mostly classical Latin language and literature courses, but I also have some experience with Greek language and literature courses as well as ancient history courses. My research focus is on the poetry of the early Roman Empire, most especially Virgil and Lucan. I also have an interest in the use of classical literature and myth in modern literature and culture. I wrote my Ph.D. thesis at the University of California, Santa Barbara on Virgil and James Joyce, and I've taught courses including texts like *Watchmen* and *Frankenstein*. There are few things I enjoy more than talking about classical literature and history, so please feel free to contact me any time with questions about the course or about ancient Greece and Rome in general.

## Contact

Email (rpogorze@uwo.ca) is the best way to get in touch with me, but I'm also happy to talk in person or by Zoom. Sometimes talking about things is easier and better than trying to type everything. I'm in my office (Lawson Hall 3205B) a lot, so feel free to drop by any time. Or you can send me an email and we can set up a time for a chat.

## Class Meetings

This course will have class meetings on Wednesdays 2:30-5:30pm, in Lawson Hall 3220.

## How to Study and Complete the Course

The course will have a regular, weekly structure. For each week there will be a reading assignment you will need to complete before class. Each class will then have three parts. First, we will take some time to talk about some professional tools (e.g. the TLG and TLL) and program requirements (e.g. the summer research paper for M.A. students and comprehensive exams for Ph.D. students). Second, I will give a short lecture including some literary history and an overview of the scholarly approach for the week. Third, we will have a discussion structured around informal, three-to-five-minute presentations (see below, page 6, under "Class Participation").

## Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, you will be familiar with some basic scholarly approaches to ancient Greek and Roman literature. You may not become an expert in any one area, but you will have a broad overview of the field.

If you are enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Western or are considering enrolling in the program in the future, this module will help to prepare you for the comprehensive examinations.

You will have read, evaluated, and critiqued both primary and secondary sources, communicating your views orally and in writing. In the process you will have developed your critical reading and thinking skills as well as your oral and written communication skills.

By practicing and advancing these skills, you will make studying Classics in general and literature in particular easier, increasing your enjoyment of reading classical literature, discussing it, and writing about it. This will encourage a lifelong interest in classical literature, whether you intend to become a professional specialist in the area or not.

## Required Texts

You do not need to buy any books for this module of the course. Secondary sources will be provided in pdf form. Primary sources are available in the Loeb Classical Library, to which Western maintains a digital subscription.

## Schedule of Readings and Class Topics

### Week 1 (Wednesday 2/8)

Reading Assignment: Feeney, “The Beginnings of a Literature in Latin” and Goldhill, “Literary History without Literature”

Practical Skills and Professional Development: Handbooks, glossaries, and literary histories

Lecture Topic: What is literature and why should anyone care about it?

### Week 2 (Wednesday 2/15)

Reading Assignment: Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* chapters 1-3 and Virgil, *Aeneid* 1

Practical Skills and Professional Development: How to read an apparatus criticus

Lecture Topic: Intertextuality

### Reading Week (Saturday 2/18 to Sunday 2/26)

### Week 3 (Wednesday 3/1)

Reading Assignment: Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature* chapters 1-3 and Cicero, *In Catilinam* 1

Practical Skills and Professional Development: Next steps in the program—summer research papers, comprehensive exams, and theses

Lecture Topic: Literature and Politics

**Week 4 (Wednesday 3/8)**

Reading Assignment: Dutsch, *Feminine Discourse in Roman Comedy* chapters 1 and 4 and Terence, *Adelphoe*

Practical Skills and Professional Development: Grammar/translation, comprehensible input, and extensive reading

Lecture Topic: Literature and Gender (plus a preview of psychoanalysis)

**Week 5 (Wednesday 3/15)**

Reading Assignment: Miller, *Postmodern Spiritual Practices* chapters 3 and 4 and Plato, *Symposium*

Practical Skills and Professional Development: Writing footnotes and finding sources, including using *L'Année Philologique*, TOCS-IN, BMCR, Google, Wikipedia, handbooks, and the UWO Library

Lecture Topic: Lacanian Psychoanalysis

**Week 6 (Wednesday 3/22)**

Reading Assignment: Porter 2008, "Reception Studies: Future Prospects," Wilson 2012, "Black Oedipus," Greenwood 2010, "Introduction to *Afro-Greeks*," and Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

Practical Skills and Professional Development: Originality and significance in scholarship

Lecture Topic: Classical Reception Studies

**Week 7 (Wednesday 3/29)**

Reading Assignment: Foley, "Oral Tradition and its Implications," De Jong, *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature* introduction and chapter 1, and Homer, *Odyssey* 1

Practical Skills and Professional Development: How to be a good graduate student

Lecture Topic: Oral Tradition and Narratology

**Week 8 (Wednesday 4/5)**

Exam

## Expectations

Graduate programs in Classics can be hard. They require a lot of work, and it can be difficult to adjust to a new program and to figure out how the expectations of your new program are different from what you're used to. All the work and stress mean that often students who decided to go to graduate school in Classics because they loved reading about and talking about ancient Greece and Rome find that love disappearing. Graduate school is very good at taking something that you love and making it into stressful and unpleasant work.

The reason we have the Core Course at Western is not only to offer an introduction to the major subfields of Classics, but also to try to alleviate some of the stress of the first year of graduate school and to smooth the transition to a new program. Ideally, it should help to remind you why you wanted to do this in the first place. In my module, I aim to alleviate stress in three ways:

First, this is a course for which you are asked to translate very little Latin and Greek (in my module, there won't be any translation), and for which you don't have to write a paper. That doesn't mean the course isn't important or doesn't require work, but it does mean that when you're busy and stressed at the end of the semester trying to write papers, you have one fewer paper to worry about.

Second, we'll take class time to discuss the program and graduate school in general. I'll talk about and answer questions about program requirements and what's coming up in the summer and in your second year, and we'll also take time to talk more generally about graduate school and how it's going. If you feel like you're not getting clear enough communication or feedback about something, we can talk about that. If you're just frustrated and want to vent about some aspect of the program, this class is a place where that can be productive.

Third, the texts I've chosen for us to read are ones that I'm excited to talk about. The point is not to cover any kind of basic or essential material, but to offer examples of approaches to studying classical literature that are cool and interesting. If any particular approach is not your cup of tea, that's not a problem at all, but I hope there will be something in this section that speaks to you and reminds you that this field is supposed to be energizing and exciting. If I can convince you or remind you why studying Classics is fun, that can help you get through the parts of graduate school that are not so fun.

## Assessment

Your grade in this course will be the average of your grades in the three modules (History, Archaeology, and Literature), equally weighted. Your grade in this module will be determined by class participation and a final exam. Having your performance in a course assessed and graded can be stressful, but please try to keep in mind that grades are an important part of your university experience. You're here not only to learn, but also to have your level of success in learning assessed. Think of having your work graded as an opportunity to show what you've learned. Also, remember that your grades are a measure of your academic performance and not a judgment of you as a person.

## Percentage Breakdown

Class Participation: 25%

Final Exam: 75%

## Class Participation

Each week, you should come to class prepared to give a three-to-five-minute presentation on the aspect of the primary or secondary reading you found most interesting. You do not need to have any slides or a handout prepared. Just have something to say. This can be a close reading of a short passage, an idea for a research project, a comparative analysis of something from outside the assignment, an argument for a textual emendation, or any other thing you think will be interesting and relevant. I will call on students in alphabetical order by last name, and the one who goes first will rotate alphabetically each week so that we don't always have the same student going first. I will go last. There will be time for discussion after each presentation, and after everyone, including me, has had a turn, there will be a chance for general discussion as well.

Your participation grade will be based on your informal presentations as well as your participation in the discussion of other participants' presentations, and, generally, I will give you full credit if you make a good-faith effort to be engaged in class.

## Final Exam

**Final Exam: Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2:30-5:30pm in Lawson Hall 3220**

The final exam will consist of passages from Greek and Latin literature for you to identify and comment on. The format will be similar to the format of Western's Ph.D. comprehensive exams in literature. If you are enrolled or will enroll in the Ph.D. program, the comprehensive exams will ask you to translate and comment on passages in Greek and Latin. For this exam, I will provide the Greek/Latin and an English translation. You will as specifically as possible identify the author and work from which the passage is drawn, briefly describe the context of the passage in the work and/or the literary tradition, and write a very short essay analyzing the significance of the passage, including as much as possible citations of relevant scholarship.

The purpose of this exam format is to test your ability to participate in scholarly discussions without books or notes on topics that may or may not be in your area of research specialization. This skill is useful for participation in discussions at conferences and in the classroom. Moreover, the broad knowledge you will have in the back of your mind will help to shape and inform your research projects.

## Mental Health

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.

## Accommodation Policy

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 <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>. Please contact the Graduate Chair if you have any concerns about health or wellness interfering with your studies.

If academic consideration 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](http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/14.html)).

## Accessible Education

Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Accessible Education arranges academic accommodation for classes, exams, internships and other course or program activities. Accessible Education also provides digital and Braille textbooks, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction for students with learning disabilities, access to computer labs that are equipped with assistive technology, referrals for assessments and other services, and bursaries for students who meet OSAP's eligibility criteria. You may wish to contact Accessible Education at 519 661-2111 x 82147 or visit their website:

**[http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)** for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

**[www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)**