



Department of Classical Studies

Latin 9902A: Caesar

(Preliminary) Course Outline

Course Details

We will read substantial extracts from the *Corpus Caesarianum* (selections from *Bellum Gallicum*, and *Bellum Civile*) with a view towards considering it in its cultural, political and literary context. For the most part class periods will be spent in close reading of the text; a certain amount of energy will be expended on grammatical and philological matters. Some likely topics for discussion will include: the presentation of geography and topography; the portrayal of the enemy leaders vs. the portrayal of Caesar himself; strategies of narration and narrating strategy; the presence or absence of Rome; Caesarian style and the third-person narrative; order and disorder; the political purpose of the compositions. 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

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Office Hours: TBA

Class Meetings

The course meets Fridays from 1:30-4:30 in Lawson Hall 3220.

Course Texts and Resources

The standard scholarly editions of Caesar's *Commentarii* are the Teubner editions, which you can [access via Western Libraries](#) and download as pdfs (search for "Caesar"). There *is* a newer edition of Caesar's *Bellum Civile* in the OCT series (ed. Cynthia Damon, 2015), which I would recommend for serious study of that work, since the text is problematic in places. However, you need not purchase any books for the course; it's totally fine to use the pdfs recommended above. I will upload what resources I can find (school commentaries, links to online resources, etc.) to OWL.

Grade Assessment

Class discussion	20%
Midterm (October 21)	20%
Research Paper (due December 17)	25%
Final Exam (to be scheduled)	25%
Sight reading	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 always 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, taking as our basic approach the idea that Caesar created *literary* narratives, not just political or self-serving texts. 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.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will be familiar with Caesar’s account of his military campaigns in Gaul 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 (on the final exam) to comment on the literary significance of each, in the context of our work with Caesarian scholarship and other scholarly approaches to the text.

Classroom Discussion

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. It is possible, as well, to comment on readings in advance of the seminar (as a ‘seed’ for in-class discussions) via the readings using the Hypothesis tool in OWL.

Research Paper

Research Paper: The research papers submitted in December (**due December 19, 2022 by email**) are expected to be more fully developed versions of the preliminary ideas sketched out and discussed with the instructor in one-on-one meetings in the last four weeks of the course. The length of these papers should be approximately 3000 words. You will thus have 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 16)

Latin Assignment: BG 1.1–11

Seminar Topic: Introduction to Caesar, Caesarian prose; *BG* overview.

Seminar Readings:

- Kraus, Christina S. 2009. “*Bellum Gallicum*,” in *A Companion to Julius Caesar*, ed. M. Griffin, pp. 159–74.
- Torigian, Catherine. 1998. “The *logos* of Caesar’s *Bellum Gallicum*, especially as revealed in its first five chapters,” in K. Welch and A. Powell, *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter: the War Commentaries as Political Instruments*. London: Duckworth and Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, pp. 45–60.

Week 2 (September 23)

Latin Assignment: BG 1.12–26

Seminar Topic: Caesar and the North

Seminar Reading:

- Schadee, Hester. 2008. “Caesar’s construction of Northern Europe: inquiry, contact, and corruption in *De Bello Gallico*,” *Classical Quarterly* 58: 158–80.

Week 3 (September 30)

Latin Assignment: BG 1.27–38

Seminar Topic: Caesar’s Prose Style

Seminar Reading:

- Gotoff, Harold. 1984. “Towards a Practical Criticism of Caesar’s Prose Style,” *Illinois Classical Studies* 9: 1–18.
- Damon, Cynthia 1994. “Caesar’s Practical Prose,” *Classical Journal* 89: 183-95.

Week 4 (October 07)

Latin Assignment: BG 1.39–46

Seminar Topic: Speech-making in Caesar

Seminar Reading:

- James, Bryan. 2000. “Speech, Authority, and Experience in Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 1.39-41,” *Hermes* 128: 54–64.

Week 5 (October 14)

Latin Assignment: BG 1.47–54

Seminar Topic: Caesar’s ‘command’ of military narrative

Seminar Reading:

- Pelling, C.B.R. 1981. “Caesar’s Battle Descriptions and the Defeat of Ariovistus,” *Latomus* 40: 741–66.

Week 6 (October 21)

Latin Assignment: none

Seminar Topic: none

MIDTERM TEST (Translation and syntax knowledge covering BG 1)

Week 7 (October 28)

Latin Assignment: BC 1.1–7

Seminar Topic: Roman Politics in Absentia

Seminar Reading: Batstone, W.W. and Damon, C. 2006. “Structure as Argument in *Civil War I*,” in id. eds., *Caesar’s Civil War*. Oxford: OUP, pp. 33–88

Fall Reading Week (Oct. 31 to Nov. 6): No Class Nov. 4

Week 8 (November 04)

Latin Assignment: 1.8–17

Seminar Topic: Truth-telling and Literary Historiography

Seminar Reading:

- Raaflaub, Kurt 2017. “The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda,” Web Essay JJ in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*, ed. and trans. K. Raaflaub, 246-54.
- Morstein-Marx, R. 2021. “Taking Sides,” in *Julius Caesar and the Roman People*, 320–352.

Week 9 (November 11)

Latin Assignment: BC 1.18–23; BC 3.73–75

Seminar Topic: Civil War Battles

Seminar Reading:

- Brown, R.D. 1999. “Two Caesarian Battle Descriptions: A Study in Contrast,” *Classical Journal* 94: 329–57.

Week 10 (November 18)

Latin Assignment: BC 3.76–83

Seminar Topic: The Road to Pharsalus

Seminar Reading:

- Lendon, J.E. 1999. “The Rhetoric of Combat: Greek Military Theory and Roman Culture in Julius Caesar’s Battle Descriptions,” *Classical Antiquity* 18: 273–329.

Week 11 (November 25)

Latin Assignment: BC 3.84–93

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

Seminar Reading:

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

Week 12 (December 02)

Latin Assignment: BC 3.94–99; 102–104

Seminar Topic: Ending Pompey or Ending Caesar?

Seminar Reading:

- Batstone, W.W. and Damon, C. 2006. “Mastering Victory,” in id. eds., *Caesar’s Civil War*. Oxford: OUP, pp. 117–42.