

LATIN EPIC:

The *Aeneid* and its Reception



The University of Western Ontario
Latin 9903B, Winter 2023
Dr. Kyle Gervais

INSTRUCTOR

My name is Kyle Gervais and I'll be your instructor for this course (you can try "Dr. Gervais", "Professor", or "Kyle" on for size, and see which you like best). I moved to UWO in 2014 after completing my Ph.D. in Latin literature at Otago University in New Zealand. Before that, I studied at Queen's (that other great university in Ontario). In my research I focus on Roman epic poetry of the Flavian period, especially Statius' *Thebaid*. I've also spent the last few years working on some 13th-century poetry that reinterprets the Greco-Roman mythology of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for a medieval Christian audience. I've recently become interested more directly in the *Aeneid* (rather than approaching it indirectly through its successors), and am in the early stages of a book project on the poem and its reception. Teaching is both my job and my pleasure, so please contact me in or out of class if you have any questions or thoughts about any topic in this course.

CONTACT DETAILS

Office: Lawson Hall 3226

Email: kgervai2@uwo.ca

Office Hours: please drop by my office, stop me in the hallway, or schedule a meeting

CLASS TIMES

Thursday, 2:30-5:30pm

Lawson Hall 3220

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we'll explore some of the reception of Virgil in Latin poetry. I'll expect you to have read (in English) and be able to discuss the entire *Aeneid*, but our focus will be on a selection of well-known and less well-known Latin texts from the Classical period, Late Antiquity, and Renaissance, in particular: excerpts from Ovid's *Heroides*, Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, and Statius' *Thebaid*; a set of late antique verse summaries of the *Aeneid*; Maffeo Vegio and Pier Candido Decembrio's *Supplements* to the *Aeneid* from the Renaissance; and Hosidius Geta's *Medea*, a Virgilian "cento" (these are virtuoso creations that produce a new story by stitching together lines and half-lines from Virgil's poems). But the reception of the *Aeneid* is an extremely broad field of research, and for your term paper I'll accept proposals for topics on any area of Virgilian reception, broadly conceived.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course I expect you will have gained or improved: an advanced ability to understand and translate Latin poetry; knowledge of various issues important to modern Latin literary criticism; confidence in public speaking; skill in scholarly research and writing; skill in analyzing both ancient literature and modern arguments about that literature; organized study habits.

TEXTS

Dropbox

For this course, I'll make files available to you in a dropbox folder [here](#).

Latin

The *Musisque Deoque (MQDQ)* database has reliable editions of all our primary texts (except for Decembrio) along with *apparatus critici* (except for Vegio). You can find the texts here:

[Virgil, *Aeneid*](#)

[Seneca, *Hercules Furens*](#)

[Ovid, *Heroides/Epistulae*](#)

[Statius, *Thebaid*](#)

[Pier Candido Decembrio, *Ad Aeneida principium decimi tercii libri additum*](#) (read in English)

[Maffeo Vegio, *Supplementum ad Aeneida*](#)

[\[Ovid\], *Argumenta Aeneidos*](#)

[Hosidius Geta, *Medea \(Anth. Lat. 17\)*](#)

English translations of Latin works

Translation can be valuable tools for learning and research, and I have no objections to you consulting them. There are good translations of Virgil, Seneca, Ovid, and Statius in the Loeb series (available in the Classics main office and online at www.loebclassics.com), and I've included a translation with my edition of Decembrio. I'll make translations of Maffeo Vegio and the *Argumenta Aeneidos* available to you in our Dropbox. You can find a loose poetic translation of Hosidius Geta online [here](#).

Secondary sources for class

There are several articles and chapters that I'll expect you to be ready to discuss in class and use as base knowledge for the commentary section of the tests. You'll find copies in the Dropbox, along with copies of commentaries or translations of some of the poems.

Other resources

In addition to resources tailored specifically to our texts, you'll need access to a good dictionary, grammar, and other reference tools. I'll suggest some options (most of them freely available) at the beginning of the course.

SCHEDULE

Class	Date	Latin [line count]	Secondary	Assignments
1	January 12	Verg. <i>Aen.</i> 1.1-123 [123]	Hardie 2014 (ch 1) [DCC commentary] AND THE <i>AENEID</i> IN ENGLISH	
2	January 19	Sen. <i>HF</i> 1-124 [124]	Trinacty 2014 [Bernstein-Gervais commentary]	
3	January 26	Ov. <i>Her.</i> 7.1-140 (141-96 in English) [140]	Casali 2004-05 [Knox commentary]	
4	February 2	Stat. <i>Theb.</i> 12.665-819 (1-664 in English) [155]	Gervais 2017 [Pollmann commentary]	
5	February 9	Vegio <i>Suppl.</i> 1 st Argum. + ll. 1-141 [153]	Putnam 2004 [Putnam translation]	Midterm
6	February 16	<i>Suppl.</i> 142-300 [159]	Rogerson 2013	
	February 23	READING WEEK		
7	March 2	<i>Suppl.</i> 301-460 [160]	Buckley 2006	
8	March 9	<i>Suppl.</i> 461-629 [169] Decembrio (read in English)	Gervais forthcoming	
9	March 16	[Ov.] <i>Arg. Aen.</i> all [130]	McGill 2018	
10	March 23	Hos. <i>Med.</i> 1-147 [147]	McGill 2005	
11	March 30	Hos. <i>Med.</i> 148-312 [165]	Shumilin 2015	
12	April 6	Hos. <i>Med.</i> 313-461 [149]	Hardie 2007	
	April 13			Essay due
	DATE TBD			Final exam

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is as follows, with fuller explanations below:

- 40% Essay (April 13)
- 15% Midterm (Feb. 9; sight and prepared translations)
- 20% Final exam (April exam period; sight and prepared translations, commentary)
- 25% Preparation and Participation

Essay

Submit a complete, polished, and proofread essay of 3000-4000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography) on some aspect of the *Aeneid* and/or its reception. I value clarity and good presentation in writing, so please leave yourself adequate time to proofread your essay. You may use any bibliographic style you wish, as long as you do so consistently.

- Although I don't require you to submit an essay proposal or preliminary draft, if you would like to submit either of these I would be happy to read and comment on them (please allow me about a week to provide comments). And I am of course happy to discuss your essay in person at any point. In particular, if you have any concerns about choosing a topic, please get in touch with me sooner rather than later.

Midterm test and Final exam

Two tests will assess your comprehension of the Latin texts we read. The tests will comprise two or three sections (in descending order of importance):

- 1) translation of prepared passages from the assigned readings for Jan. 12 – Feb. 2 (midterm) or Feb. 9 – Apr. 6 (final)
- 2) (final only) literary commentary on some of those passages, drawing from assigned secondary sources, class discussions, and your own reading
- 3) sight translation of passages from the *Aeneid* (some vocabulary and grammatical notes will be given)

Preparation and Participation

I'll expect you to be present and prepared to participate at every class meeting. I'll ask you to translate passages of Latin (although we won't translate all of the required reading in class), identify forms, and explain syntax. In addition to this language work, we'll discuss critical and theoretical issues arising from both primary and secondary reading. I'll assess both the quality and the quantity of your participation. If at any time you would like to know how you are doing in this area, please ask.

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/>

Health and Wellness

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: <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 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: <https://grad.uwo.ca/administration/regulations/14.html>).

CAN I HELP?

It's important to me that you meet your goals in this course, and I'm eager to help either in or out of class with any academic matters. Moreover, I'm especially aware that there are many challenges (physical, cognitive, emotional, or personal) that can prevent students from performing to their full potential. In some cases, I may be able to make accommodations; in some cases, formal accommodations made at the level of the department or SGPS may be the right decision. No matter how big or small the problem, the sooner you speak to me (or the appropriate person), the more likely it is that we'll be able to find a good solution.