

# Latin Manuscript Studies and Textual Criticism



The University of Western Ontario  
Latin 9903A, Fall 2023

## **INSTRUCTOR**

Hello! I'll be your instructor for this course. 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). My research has typically centred on Roman epic poetry of the Flavian period, especially Statius' *Thebaid*. But recently I've begun to expand my focus to include earlier poets (Virgil and Seneca) as well as various receptions of Classical poetry in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and early modern period. Most relevant to this course is my 2022 edition and translation of John of Garland's *Integumenta Ovidii*, a 13<sup>th</sup>-century poem that reinterprets the Greco-Roman mythology of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for a medieval Christian audience. This project has taught me a lot about manuscript studies and textual criticism, and I look forward to continuing to learn about these topics with you this semester. 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.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

In this course, we'll learn the basics and practice the techniques of manuscript studies, palaeography, and textual criticism. Our focus will be on Classical Latin texts, but we'll also consider some medieval Latin, in particular for the term project, which will ask you to work with several manuscripts to prepare a basic edition of a section of John of Garland's 13<sup>th</sup> century *Integumenta Ovidii*. Throughout the course, we'll consider the basics of manuscript production and use, palaeography (in particular, learning to read the most important Classical and medieval scripts used in Latin manuscripts), and textual criticism (skills such as: reading an apparatus criticus, evaluating textual variants and making/assessing conjectures, and understanding and applying stemmatic analysis). We'll have the opportunity to visit the Rare Books Room at Weldon Library and examine Western's modest collection of medieval manuscripts in person. And we'll also spend every class session getting acquainted with a variety of fascinating manuscripts available as high-quality scans online: indeed, one of the themes of this course will be how the extensive and growing collection of scanned manuscripts online has the potential to expand and democratize the traditionally elitist world of manuscript studies and textual criticism.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE AND RESOURCES**

We'll use a Google Doc for this course, which you can consult in preparation for each class meeting. I also plan to use the Doc extensively during class. Here's the link (you will note that the document is a work in progress):

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Zi25R7mR\\_vxPd04hCo17Jo6yn3wUU4zt9VyzL9TamZA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Zi25R7mR_vxPd04hCo17Jo6yn3wUU4zt9VyzL9TamZA/edit?usp=sharing)

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment is as follows, with fuller explanations below:

- 40% Term Project (due December 14)
- 30% Three tests (October 5, November 9, and December 7)
- 10% One short *Texts and Transmission* presentation
- 20% Preparation and Participation

### Term project (40%)

\*\*The following is the “default” term project for this course, but I’m open to suggestions from you for different projects, in particular projects that would take advantage of our collection of manuscripts and leaves here at the library. If you suspect you might want to pursue something different than what is described below, please talk to me within the first couple weeks of class.\*\*

You’ll prepare an edition and brief textual critical notes for a section of John of Garland’s *Integumenta Ovidii*. This won’t quite be a *critical* edition, because you won’t have the requisite experience with John of Garland’s poem to make fully informed choices between textual variants. Rather, you’ll start with a previous editor’s text (F. Ghisaberti, [\*Giovanni di Garlandia, Integumenta Ovidii: poemetto inedito del secolo XIII\*](#). Messina, 1933).<sup>1</sup> You’ll build on this text by collating five of John’s manuscripts (see week 4 of the Google Doc) to produce an apparatus criticus. You’ll also write a series of brief notes on various textual issues in your section of the poem in order to demonstrate your grasp of the palaeographical and textual critical skills we’ve been learning in the course. Finally, you’ll write a brief discussion of potential relationships between the five manuscripts (you won’t have nearly enough information to produce a definitive stemma, but you will be able to tentatively characterize the manuscripts’ relationships to one another).

### Tests (30%)

There will be a short (about 45 minute) test on October 5, November 9, and December 7. These tests will each focus primarily on the material from the previous four weeks of the semester. They’ll be an opportunity for you to demonstrate your familiarity with the theories and practices of palaeography and textual criticism. The test will focus on: transcribing a few lines of a manuscript, identifying the script used in several manuscripts, defining terminology, explaining some entries in an apparatus criticus, commenting on textual variants and/or conjectures for a few lines of the edition we’ve been working with (*Aeneid*, *Hercules Furens*, *Thebaid*), at summarizing the transmission history of one of the authors that we’ve discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> I’ve directed you to his text as given on thelatinlibrary.com. If you were to track down a copy of the original edition, you’d find a small apparatus criticus that includes readings from two of the manuscripts we’ll use (P and V). But Ghisaberti doesn’t record every reading from his manuscripts, and the readings that he does record aren’t accurate in every case. So I wouldn’t recommend trying to use Ghisaberti as a shortcut to get the readings of these two manuscripts (which, in any case, are two of the easier ones to read).

### Short presentations (10%)

Each student will choose ONE author in Reynolds' *Texts and Transmission*, give a short presentation on the content of the chapter and be prepared to answer questions from me and/or the class. *We'll draw up the schedule of presentations in the second week of classes.*

### Preparation and Participation (20%)

I'll expect you to be present and prepared to participate at every class meeting. We have a small class this year, and so each student will have ample opportunity to participate in our various class activities (palaeographical discussions of manuscript images, textual critical discussions of the assigned readings each week, discussion of any assigned scholarly articles, and engaging with other student's presentations). 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.