

The University of Western Ontario

CLASS 3903G: Hellenistic Poetry (Winter 2024)

Course Outline

Course Information

Time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 2:30-3:20 PM

Location: (T.B.D.)

Course Description

In this course, we will be reading a variety of Hellenistic poets in translation, and attempting to use that poetry to learn more about the period and cultural contexts that produced it. Our lectures will consist of various topics concerning historical and cultural details of the Hellenistic period, and investigations of how those topics find an expression in the poetry of the time. We will examine the lives of kings and fishermen, queens and weavers, old-fashioned heroes and new-fangled antiheroes, scholars, poets, and scholar-poets in this big, exciting, multifaceted period that we call “Hellenistic.”

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students can expect to have gained or improved:

- An appreciation of Hellenistic poetry and its literary concerns.
- A basic knowledge of a variety of Hellenistic poets, their lives, and their works.
- A better understanding of the history of the Hellenistic period.
- A better understanding of Greek culture generally, and the changes that Greek culture experienced in different parts of the Hellenistic world.
- Skill in scholarly research and writing.
- Skill in analyzing ancient literature and modern arguments about that literature.

Course Schedule (tentative)

The course schedule below is tentative and subject to change. A finalized schedule with assigned readings will be available in December 2023.

Week 1	What is “Hellenistic”? History from Alexander through the wars of the diadochi
Week 2	The successor kingdoms and intersections of Greek and non-Greek culture
Week 3	Hellenistic scholars, poets, and the Greek literary tradition
Week 4	Religion in the Hellenistic world
Week 5	Religion in the Hellenistic world (continued)
Week 6	Hellenistic epigrams
Week 7	Hellenistic women & women poets
Week 8	Hellenistic epyllia
Week 9	Hellenistic epic
Week 10	Hellenistic epic (continued)
Week 11	Bucolic poetry
Week 12	Bucolic poetry (continued)
Week 13	Roman reception of Hellenistic poets

Required Texts

Apollonius of Rhodes: Jason and the Golden Fleece (The Argonautica). A New Translation by Richard Hunter. Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780199538720 (224 pages, Paperback)

Theocritus: *Idylls* Translated by Anthony Verity with an Introduction and Notes by Richard Hunter. Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN: 9780199552429 (144 pages, Paperback)

I will also be supplementing these texts with other primary and secondary readings delivered by OWL.

Evaluation (To be updated with due dates in December 2023)

Written Responses: 20%

Essay proposal and annotated bibliography: 10%

Essay: 35%

Final Exam: 35%

Written Responses (20%)

For these assignments, students will be presented with two sides of an argument about some aspect of one of the texts we read in the previous week(s). Students must choose a side to defend, search the texts for evidence to help support the argument, and compose a short (less than 500 words) defense of their position. Students may choose to elaborate on an argument that I discussed in class (providing additional evidence of their own), or they may choose to take their argument in a completely different direction. Secondary sources may be useful in completing these assignments but are not required. Students should focus on presenting a clear, well-reasoned argument or interpretation as concisely as possible, and using appropriate evidence in support of their perspectives. Students should use these assignments as opportunities to help discover their own opinions about a particular aspect of the text, which may also help provide ideas for essay topics.

Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (10%)

Students will submit a proposal for their essay topic, along with a brief bibliography that they plan to use in researching their topic. The essay proposal should contain a brief outline of a working thesis (which I expect may change or evolve as you continue your research) as well as a short bibliography of scholarly works that you plan to use in your paper, with a brief description of the work's scholarly argument and how the work might figure into your own paper.

Essay (35%)

The major evaluation component of this course will be a research paper on a topic of your choosing. If your essay topic is very different than what you discussed in your essay proposal, I strongly recommend that you speak with me to make sure that the project is feasible and appropriate to the class. Your essay should have a well-defined central thesis, and you should plan to make reference to at least 5 scholarly sources in your essay.

We will be covering a wide range of topic in this class, and it is not necessary that your essay consist solely of literary interpretation; you may instead choose to use poetry as a lens into history, politics, warfare, religion, etc. But even if you are not interested in 'literary' questions, the poetry itself (however you engage with it) should remain prominent in your essay.

Final Exam (35%)

The final exam will be scheduled by the registrar at a time to be determined. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Important Policies

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).

Scholastic Offences

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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Academic Consideration for Absences

Please note that Western's policy on academic consideration is currently being reviewed and may change before this course begins. The policy as it is now can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf.

Students seeking academic consideration for any missed tests, exams and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Office of the Dean (i.e., an academic counsellor) of their home faculty and provide documentation. Academic consideration cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

In addition to applying to the Office of the Dean of their home faculty, students seeking academic consideration must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Student Medical Certificate, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Counselling office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

Western 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/>

Accessibility Options

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 SAS at 519 661-2111 x 82147 or visit their website: 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

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.

Note

The course requirements and/or grade weighting might change if the course has to be offered remotely.