

Latin Poetry Selections: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3



The University of Western Ontario
Latin 3200B/4904B, Winter 2026
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Welcome

Welcome to “Latin Poetry Selections!” In this course we’re going to read the first 401 lines of the third book of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. That’s a little over half of the book. One of our goals will be to improve your Latin reading comprehension and speed, but we’ll also take some time to discuss some of the critical and interpretive issues relevant to the text we’re reading.

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. I will do my best to respond to emails within one business day, but I do not regularly check my email after 5pm, before 8am, on weekends, or on holidays.

How to Study and Complete the Course

The course will have a regular, weekly structure. For each week, you’ll have a reading assignment from our primary text (*Metamorphoses* 3) and another reading assignment of a secondary text, i.e. a book chapter or journal article about the *Metamorphoses*. We’ll start the week by giving everyone a turn to read some Latin aloud, translate it, and answer questions about morphology and syntax. I’ll call on students for this in a predictable order. In some weeks, I will take a turn myself to make sure we cover the entire assignment in class. This may become more frequently necessary as the translation assignments get longer later in the semester. In most weeks, we’ll finish translating the assignment in class early in the class period on Friday. We’ll spend the rest of the Friday class period discussing the *Metamorphoses*, using the assigned book chapters and articles to focus our discussions. I will expect the students in Latin 4904B to take the lead in these discussions.

In weeks 5 and 9, we will not follow our usual structure, but instead on Mondays we will work on meter and practice scanning lines of the poem. On Wednesday and Friday of those weeks, we will have midterm tests. For more information on those tests, see below (page 6).

Recommended Method for Translating

One of the main aims of this course is for you to develop independence in your reading and translation of Latin, and that means you should develop habits that allow you to continue reading and enjoying Latin after this semester is over, even if you never take another Latin class again. The following method is what I recommend you do both to complete the assigned reading for the course and as you keep up your Latin skills independently after the course is over.

Step 1: Choose a short passage of a few lines. Let the punctuation guide you to a good stopping place, and don't feel like you need to choose a complete sentence. Just find someplace that looks like a good stopping place. As you get more advanced and comfortable reading Latin, you will want to select longer chunks, but for now two or three lines is ideal.

Step 2: Read your passage on its own and try to translate it without the aid of any tools. No dictionaries, no commentaries, no parsing tools, no translations. Just spend some time seeing what you can get on your own. As you get more advanced and comfortable reading Latin, this step will become more important and you'll want to read your passage several times through, really emphasizing this step. For now, just give it a try, but don't stress about it too much.

Step 3: Use any tools you want except a translation. Look up the words you don't know in a dictionary. Identify the forms you're not sure about with a parsing tool. Read a commentary (or several) on the lines to get some help. Look up constructions you're unfamiliar with in a grammar book (e.g. if it's a condition and you can't identify which type, it's time to review your conditions).

Step 4: Look at a published translation to confirm that you've understood the passage correctly. It's important that you make a good-faith effort to complete steps 1-3 before doing this, but this step will help you to build confidence and independence. Once you're used to using a published translation to confirm or correct your own, you'll need a teacher a lot less.

Step 5: Write out a translation, but not in smooth or stylish English. This translation should be in a kind of code that reminds you of the morphology and syntax. It should be more a set of detailed notes than a smooth translation.

Step 6: Repeat and review. Once you've written out your translation notes, move on to the next chunk of text, but after you've done a few chunks or completed the assignment, go back to the beginning and reread from a clean copy of the Latin, referring to your notes on a separate page when you need a hint. Do this review several times, with increasing intervals between review sessions. Our tests and exam are designed to encourage you to do this kind of review, but it's a good idea to do it before class, too.

Schedule of Readings and Class Topics

Week 1 (Mon 1/5 to Fri 1/9)

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3 in translation (I'll post Lombardo's on the OWL site, but you can read any translation you like.)

Secondary Reading: This course syllabus

Week 2 (Mon 1/12 to Fri 1/16)

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3.1-27

Secondary Reading: Anderson 1997 "Introduction" (from our commentary)

Week 3 (Mon 1/19 to Fri 1/23)

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3.28-59

Secondary Reading: Braund 2006 “A Tale of Two Cities: Statius, Thebes, and Rome” (from *Phoenix*)

Week 4 (Mon 1/26 to Fri 1/30)

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3.59-98

Secondary Reading: Hardie 1990, “Ovid’s Theban History: The First ‘Anti-Aeneid’?” (from *The Classical Quarterly*)

Week 5 (Mon 2/2 to Fri 2/6)

Midterm Test 1 (lines 1.1-98)

Week 6 (Mon 2/9 to Fri 2/13)

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3.99-142

Secondary Reading: Janan 2009 “Introduction” (from *Reflections in A Serpent’s Eye: Thebes in Ovid’s Metamorphoses*)

Reading Week (Mon 2/16 to Fri 2/20)**Week 7 (Mon 2/23 to Fri 2/27)**

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3.143-193

Secondary Reading: Habinek 2002 “Ovid and Empire” (from *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*)

Week 8 (Mon 3/2 to Fri 3/6)

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3.193-252

Secondary Reading: Sharrock 2002 “Gender and Sexuality” (from *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*)

Week 9 (Mon 3/9 to Fri 3/13)

Midterm Test 2 (lines 1.99-252)

Week 10 (Mon 3/16 to Fri 3/20)

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3.253-315

Secondary Reading: Barchiesi 2002 “Narrative Technique and Narratology in the *Metamorphoses*” (from *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*)

Week 11 (Mon 3/23 to Wed 3/27)

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3.316-374

Secondary Reading: Hinds 1998 “Interpretability: Beyond Philological Fundamentalism” (from *Allusion and Intertext*)

Week 12 (Mon 3/30 to Wed 4/1—4/3 is a holiday for Good Friday)

Primary Reading: *Metamorphoses* 3.375-401

Secondary Reading: None for this week.

Week 13 (Mon 4/6 to Wed 4/8)

Primary Reading: None for this week.

Secondary Reading: None for this week.

Final Exam (covering lines 1.1-401) as Scheduled by the Registrar

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course you will have improved your command of Latin grammar and syntax as well as your Latin reading speed and comprehension.

You will have gained some familiarity with the stylistic features of Roman poetry in general and of Ovid in particular.

You will have been introduced to some of the critical and interpretive issues surrounding the *Metamorphoses*, in the process improving your understanding of Augustan Rome.

Improving your understanding of Latin grammar and syntax will also improve your understanding of grammar and syntax in general, which is useful in a variety of fields of study as well as professional employment.

By improving your Latin language ability, you will have increased your enjoyment of reading Latin texts, encouraging a lifelong interest in Latin. This course will be work, but also fun.

Required Texts

There are no required texts for this course. We'll use William S. Anderson's commentary on books 1-5 of the *Metamorphoses*. We'll read little enough of it that I can provide a pdf of the portion we'll need on the OWL site, so you don't need to buy it, and I haven't ordered it for the bookstore. If you'd like to buy it, The University of Oklahoma Press wants \$34.95 USD for it, and Amazon wants \$47.95 CAD.

Assessment

Your final grade in this course will be determined by class participation, two midterm tests, 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: 15%

Midterm 1: 25%

Midterm 2: 25%

Final Exam: 35%

Test and Exam Dates

Midterm 1: Part 1-Wednesday, February 4th; Part 2-Friday, February 6th

Midterm 2: Part 1-Wednesday, March 11th; Part 2-Friday, March 13th

Final Exam: A scheduled by the registrar

Class Participation

You must be in class and prepared to participate in our discussions at every scheduled class meeting. I will ask you to read Latin aloud, translate into English, identify forms, and answer questions regarding grammar and syntax. Please do not read from a prepared translation, but instead retranslate from the Latin in class. If you have a translation in front of you when you are translating in class, your participation grade will be lower than if you are translating from a Latin text without looking at a translation. In

addition, we will have more general discussions about Latin and about Ovid. I will assess both the quality and the quantity of your class participation. If at any time you want to know how you are doing in this area, please ask.

Midterm Tests and Final Exam

The midterm tests and final exams will ask you to translate passages from *Metamorphoses* 3 as well as identify forms and explain syntax. For the midterm tests, Part 1 (on Wednesday) will ask you to translate passages we have covered in class, and to identify forms and explain syntax from those passages. For Part 1, I will provide only the Latin text and you will not be allowed any books, notes, or electronic devices. Students in Latin 4904B will also be asked to write a brief essay analyzing the significance of one of the passages on the test. Part 2 (on Friday) will ask you to translate a passage from the *Metamorphoses* that we will not cover this semester, and to identify forms and explain syntax. For this passage, I will provide vocabulary that is not in the Dickinson College Commentaries Latin Core Vocabulary, but you will be responsible for knowing the words not glossed, i.e., the DCC Latin Core Vocabulary (<http://dcc.dickinson.edu/latin-vocabulary-list>). The final exam will be just like the midterm tests, except that you will have two hours total to write both parts. You will write Part 1 of the exam first and hand that in, and after you have handed in Part 1, you will be allowed to begin Part 2. Part 1 of the final exam will be cumulative, covering lines 1.1-401, but emphasis will be placed on lines 1.253-401.

Identification of Forms and Explanation of Syntax

Both in class and on the tests and exam, I will ask you to identify forms and explain syntax. On the tests and exam, I will not tell you the information you need to provide. You will need to know what information will constitute a complete identification. The following is a list of the information I would like you to provide for various parts of speech:

Finite Verbs form: person, number, tense, voice, and mood syntax: In what kind of clause or construction is the verb being used? Identify the sequence of tenses if applicable.

Infinitives form: tense, voice, and that it's an infinitive syntax: In what kind of construction is the infinitive being used?

Participles form: gender, case, number, tense, voice, and that it's a participle syntax: What noun does the participle modify (or is it being used substantively)? Why is it in that case?

Nouns form: gender, case, and number syntax: Why is it in that case?

Pronouns form: gender, case, and number syntax: What is the antecedent/referent? Why is the pronoun in the case it's in?

Adjectives form: gender, case, and number syntax: What noun does it modify (or is it being used substantively)? Why is it in that case?

Gerunds form: case and that it's a gerund syntax: Why is it in that case?

Gerundives form: gender, case, number, and that it's a gerundive syntax: What noun does it modify (or is it being used substantively)? Why is it in that case?

Supines form: case and that it's a supine syntax: No information required.

Adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections Just name the part of speech.

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

Artificial intelligence tools these days are very good, but not perfect, at translating, analyzing, and explaining Latin texts. I encourage you to experiment with these tools so you can learn about their capabilities, but please do not trust them completely. It is also important that you not come to rely too much on any digital tools. To encourage your independence, I will not allow you to have access to any digital tools at all during the tests and exam for this course.

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, here:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/scholasticdisciplineundergrad.pdf>.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays

(https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_16). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students” https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

Academic Consideration

Western’s full Policy on Academic Consideration for undergraduate students in first-entry programs can be found here:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty’s Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic consideration for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western University is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events (https://www.provost.uwo.ca/plans_and_initiatives/projects_and_initiatives/gbsv/). If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.