

The Ancient Novel in Context
01:190:397
Tuesday and Thursday 3:55-5:15 in HSB 106

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2-3:30 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The ancient novels are action-packed adventure stories filled with romance, intrigue, and pirates. Written in both Greek and Latin, these works are primarily products of the world of the Roman Empire, though they have few direct references to contemporary political structures. In almost all of the novels, the characters travel widely through the ancient Mediterranean, moving from Sicily to the Near East, Egypt, and even the moon! The ancient novels also offer a unique picture of romantic love, as the hero and heroine undergo many sufferings and separations before their final reunion. This course will focus on reading the ancient novels and related works in translation, accompanied by select secondary sources, as we investigate the philosophical, romantic, and cultural background that gave rise to these unique works.

COURSE GOALS

Students will gain an understanding of the literary and social setting to the ancient novel by reading the ancient Greek and Latin novels in translation. They will become familiar with important issues including gender, class, race, and narrative technique. Students will learn to identify generic traits that define narrative prose fiction in antiquity and trace the development of this literary form. The class will also develop research and presentation skills.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Reardon, B. P. *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*. University of California.

Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*. Trans. J. Relihan. Hackett.

Petronius, *Satyricon*. Trans. S. Ruden. Hackett.

Other texts will be available on Sakai in the Resources folder as .pdf or link to an online source. Major collections of articles are on reserve in DOUGLASS to prevent research gridlock: a list can be found on the Ereserve section of Sakai.

COURSE FORMAT

Class time will be spent on a mixture of lecture, discussion, and student presentations. It is imperative that you do the reading: to encourage this, there will be 3 pop-quizzes. Discussion questions will be circulated each week, and you should look at these before/while you do the reading. Each student will also pick an area to focus on by the third week of the course: I will provide a list, but you are welcome to suggest your own. For the rest of the term, you will do research on this topic by first composing an annotated bibliography, then narrowing your area to a more focused research proposal for a final paper. Make sure you have a narrower theme than your focus: not just 'Smurfs in the novel' for example, but 'How Heliodorus' Smurfs represent his concept of bluer cultures' or 'Smurfettes in the novel show a greater degree of independence than in Greek society' or 'How novelistic Smurfs allude to Homeric Smurfs.'

EVALUATION

Attendance and participation: 10 %

Attendance is mandatory: there will be a daily sign-in sheet. This grade will fall by half a letter for every three unexcused absences. This grade also includes 3 pop quizzes on the primary reading and participation in class: discussion questions will be circulated via the announcements section on Sakai, and students should come to class prepared to discuss.

Weekly blog: 10 %

Each student must post a weekly blog on their topic. It need not be an in-depth analysis or involve secondary research: just write one paragraph (c. 150 words) on how you think your topic relates to the week's reading. This must be posted by Friday at 5 PM.

Commenting on another student's post will give you 5 points of extra credit. First due Feb. 3. The lowest grade will be dropped.

Article presentation: 10%

Each student will give a brief (c. 15 minute) presentation of an article with a handout. Guidelines will be distributed via Sakai. The articles will be chosen in consultation with the professor and will be suggested reading for the whole class, available on Sakai. It is your responsibility to check the announcements for these assignments.

Annotated bibliography: 10%

Description of the contents, usefulness and any flaws in four secondary or primary sources (including the article you present on) you will use for your final paper.

Draft of Paper: 10 %

Your draft should be relatively polished. I will grade on spelling, grammar, and organization of argument.

Paper: 20%

The paper will be due on the last day of class; c. 10 pages. The paper should be revised from comments made on the draft: even if you disagree with my remarks, respond to them in a footnote.

Midterm exam: 30 %

The exam will consist of three sections: Short answers on basic factual information; identification and brief discussion of passages; and an essay section on general themes.

I estimate that you should spend around 10 hours per week on the course: 3 hours in class; 3-4 hours doing the required reading; 2-3 hours on review, secondary reading and work for your topic, and blogging. As this is an advanced course, you will need to be motivated to organize your time and reading: the required blogging, article presentation and bibliography should give you a head start on your paper, but it is up to you to stay on track and build your research materials as we go.

I am also happy to have a reading group for one hour each week to read a page or so of each text in the original with those students who know Greek and/or Latin. This would be voluntary, and no extra credit will be given. Please see me after class if you are interested.

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

- Week 1: Introduction to the ancient novel and its historical and geographical background
Jan. 18: Introduction and format of the course
Jan. 20: Selections from Herodotus' *Histories* & Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (Sakai)
- Week 2: Travel and History in Chariton
Jan. 25: Chariton 1-4 (Reardon 17-75)
Jan. 27: Chariton 5-8 (Reardon 75-124)
- Week 3: Generic markers and narrative prose
Feb. 1: Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale* (Reardon 125-169)
Feb. 3 *Apocolocyntosis* (Sakai) **Topics and articles must be announced**
- Week 4: Italian adventures and social commentary in Petronius, *Satyricon*
Feb. 8: Petronius 1-3 (Ruden 1-60)
Feb. 10: Petronius 4-6 (Ruden 61-127)
- Week 5: Erotic Philosophy in Greek
Feb. 15: Achilles Tatius 1-4 (Reardon 170-233)
Feb. 17: Achilles Tatius 5-8 (Reardon 233-284)
- Week 6: Love in the countryside
Feb. 22: Longus 1-2 (Reardon 285-318)
Feb. 24: Longus 3-4 (Reardon 318-348)
- Week 7: Erotic Philosophy in Latin
Mar. 1: Ps. Lucian, *The Ass* (Reardon 589-618); Apuleius 1-2 (Relihan 3-66)
Mar. 3: Apuleius 4-6 (Relihan 67-134)
- Week 8: Novel as conversion?
Mar. 8: Apuleius 7-9 (Relihan 135-206)
Mar. 10: Apuleius 10-11 (Relihan 207-254) **Annotated Bibliography due**
- SPRING BREAK**
- Week 9: Fragments of Greek novels: Fantasy and Utopia
Mar. 22: Lucian, *True Story* (Reardon 619-649)
Mar. 24: Summaries from Reardon (775-797)
- Week 10: Fiction and form
Mar. 29: Fragments from Reardon (797-827) and review
Mar. 31: **Exam**
- Week 11: Narrative technique
April 5: Heliodorus 1-3 (Reardon 349-424)
April 7: Heliodorus 4-5 (Reardon 424-472)
- Week 12: Cultural contact
April 12: Heliodorus 6-8 (Reardon 472-535)
April 14: Heliodorus 9-10 (Reardon 536-588) **Drafts due**
- Week 13: Historical Fiction?: Alexander and Apollonius
April 19: Ps. Callisthenes, *The Alexander Romance* (Reardon 650-735)
April 21: Apollonius of Tyre (Reardon 736-772)
- Week 14: The novel through the ages
April 26: Reception of the Greek novel in the Byzantine period and beyond
April 28: Greek Novel in Film: Petronius, Troy, and Alexander **Papers due**

Suggested topics

Magic, dreams, and prophecy
Religion and the gods
Philosophy
Women in the ancient novel
Men in the ancient novel
Heterosexual and/or homosexual love
Social class (country/city; free/slave)
Novel as part of the second sophistic
Audiences and readers
The poetics of the novel/Narrative construction/Language and style
Novel as genre in antiquity
Novels and other genres (allusion to Homer, lyric poetry, etc.)
Travel
Ethnography and foreign culture(s): Greece, Rome, Egypt, Phoenecia, Persia
Ekphrasis and art
Myth and/or history

You are encouraged to flip through the general studies in the *Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel* for further ideas; the *Oxford Readings* volumes may also be helpful for more specific articles appropriate for presentations. The Oxford Bibliography for the Greek Novel is on Sakai as 'obonovel' and is highly recommended for inspiration. As soon as you decide on a likely topic, please email me and we will work out an article and date. You may share a topic with another student.

Regardless of topic, the following are some overarching questions that may help guide you towards a final research project: How does your theme differ in various works? Between Greece and Rome? What is the connection (if any) with historical social life at the time of composition or earlier? Is there an influence from earlier literature? Do you see an influence or comparison in later periods or works?