

Lucretius
01:190:522 Spring 2014
Tuesday 2:00-4:40 pm
Ruth Adams Building 003, D/C



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Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2 pm (and by appt.)

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Course Description

In this seminar, we will read all of Lucretius' only known poetic work, the *De Rerum Natura*, a beautiful exposition of Epicurean philosophy in verse (with a heavy focus on Epicurean physics). Lucretius is often overlooked by Classicists, who are put off by the technical detail of Epicurean natural philosophy, and he is also frequently ignored by philosophers, who may mine his poetry for supporting evidence of Epicurean doctrine but not much else. But to ignore Lucretius is to ignore a crucial figure in Roman poetry and the intellectual life of the Late Republic, as well as a highly influential thinker on central figures in intellectual history, such as Galileo, Thomas Jefferson, Darwin, Marx, Freud, and Einstein. In this course, we will attempt to understand Lucretius as both a poet and philosopher and come to grips with why he chose to present Epicurean philosophy in verse and how the poetic form interacts with and shapes the philosophical content. We will also attempt to place Lucretius in his cultural milieu and discuss his possible engagement with other contemporary figures like Catullus, Cicero, Philodemus, Calpurnius Piso, and Gaius Memmius, as well as with important poetic predecessors like Homer, Empedocles, Callimachus, and Ennius.

Course Learning Goals

- Gain a sophisticated understanding of Lucretius: how to read him, how to translate him, and how others have read him, with a particular focus on Lucretius as a poet
- Increase facility with reading large amounts of Latin poetry and practice with dactylic hexameter
- Learn about the philosophy of Epicureanism and its place in Late Roman Republican society
- Learn about where Lucretius fits in the history of Roman literature and his influence on later Roman poets
- Gain practice with public presentation skills through in-class presentations
- Develop research/writing skills in preparation for in-class presentations and final paper
- Prepare for Masters and PhD translation and oral exams by learning about a crucial author and time period on the reading list

Course Website

The course website is accessible through the Sakai homepage. Go to <https://sakai.rutgers.edu> and follow the instructions for logging in as a student.

Texts

Available at RU Barnes & Noble Bookstore, New Brunswick

1. *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura* Ed. Cyril Bailey. Oxford Classical Texts (Req)
2. *De Rerum Natura: The Latin Text of Lucretius*. Ed. William Ellery Leonard, Stanley Barney Smith, University of Wisconsin Press. (Rec)

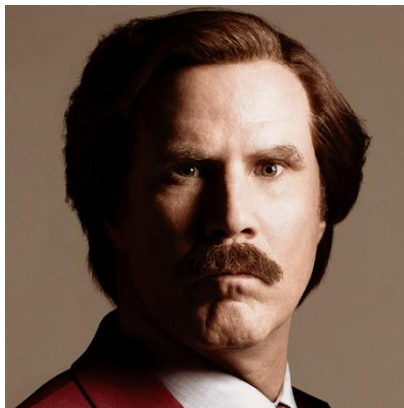
Other Recommended Books (available online for purchase)

1. *Lucretius: On the Nature of Things*. Loeb Classical Library. Latin text and trans Rouse and Martin F. Smith
2. Latin text and translation with commentary on Books 1 (Brown), 3 (Brown), 4 (Godwin), 5 (Gale) and 6 (Godwin) published by Aris & Phillips
3. Text and commentary of Book 3 in the Cambridge Greek and Roman Classics series (Kenney)

Note: many older texts and commentaries are also available for free on google books

Grading and Evaluation

1. Class participation	10%
2. Midterm (Tues Mar 11)	20%
3. 2 Presentations	30%
4. Final Paper (10-15 pages) (Mon May 12)	40%



“The world is made of strands of particles and atoms that commingle without meaning, taking form momentarily, decaying, finding new form--- senseless activity without a guiding center.”

“I came to recognize a kind of fluidity to life that has stayed with me from those early days. Every man takes a beating and every man gets dumped back into the earth . . .so why cry about it? Right?”

--Ron Burgundy, Anchorman...Epicurean?

Reading Schedule

	Date	Primary Text	Secondary Reading
Week 1	Tues Jan 21	Introduction (snow day)	Emailed lecture notes
Week 2	Tues Jan 28	Book 1 Focus: 1-158	Presentation 1: Monica Gale, "The Proem and the Plague," <i>Myth and Poetry in Lucretius</i> (1994) 208-228
Week 3	Tues Feb 4	Book 1 Focus: 250-264; 398-417; 464-483; 635-644; 714-741; 921-950; 1102-1117	Presentation 2 (Rick): Robert Brown, "Lucretius and Callimachus," <i>ICS</i> 7 (1982) 77-97
Week 4	Tues Feb 11	Book 2 Focus: 1-79; 112-124; 142-183; 216-271; 308-332; 342-370; 500-514; 541-580	Presentation 3 (Alex): Phillip De Lacy, "Distant Views: The Imagery of Lucretius 2," <i>CJ</i> 60 (1964) 49-55; Sydnor Roy, "Homeric Concerns: A Metapoetic Reading of Lucretius, <i>De Rerum Natura</i> 2.1-19," <i>CQ</i> 63 (2013): 780-84; Jane M. Snyder, "The Significant Name in Lucretius," <i>CW</i> 72 (1978) 227-30
Week 5	Tues Feb 18	Book 2 Focus: 589-660; 688-717; 886-901; 944-1104; 1144-1174	Presentation 4 (Brian): J. Jope, "Lucretius, Cybele and religion," <i>Phoenix</i> 39 (1985); 250-62
Week 6	Tues Feb 25	Book 3 Focus: 1-97; 136-160; 231-257; 288-358; 487-547	Presentation 5 (Ian): Charles Segal, "The Wind-Scattered Soul," <i>Lucretius on Death and Anxiety</i> (1990) 46-73
Week 7	Tues Mar 4	Book 3 Focus: 624-656; 830-1094	Presentation 6 (Bernard): Tobias Reinhardt, "The Speech of Nature in Lucretius' <i>De rerum natura</i> 3.931-971," <i>CQ</i> 52.1 (2002): 291-304
Week 8	Tues Mar 11	Midterm	
Week 9	Tues Mar 18	SPRING BREAK	
Week 10	Tues Mar 25	Book 4 Focus: 1-44; 379-386; 453-521; 524-614; 706-767; 779-817; 823-57	Presentation 7 (Brian): P. Friedländer, "Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius," <i>AJP</i> 62 (1941) 16-34
Week 11	Tues Apr 1	Book 4 Focus: 907-915; 962-1036; 1037-1287	Presentation 8 (Alex): W. Fitzgerald, "Lucretius' Cure for Love in the <i>De Rerum Natura</i> ," <i>CW</i> (1984) 78: 73-86.
Week 12	Tues Apr 8	Book 5 Focus: 1-125; 146-180; 195-234; 324-350; 396-415; 795-883	Presentation 9 (Rick): Z. Packman, "Ethics and Allegory in the Proem of the Fifth Book of Lucretius' "De Rerum Natura,"" <i>CJ</i> 71 (1976) 206-212; C. Castner, "De Rerum Natura 5.101-103: Lucretius' Application of Empedoclean Language to Epicurean Doctrine," <i>Phoenix</i> 41 (1987): 40-49
Week 13	Tues Apr 15	Book 5 Focus: 925-1240	Presentation 10 (Ian): A. Schiesaro, "Lucretius and Roman politics and history," in <i>The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius</i> (2007) 41-58
Week 14	Tues Apr 22	Books 5 and 6 Focus: 5.1241-1457; 6.1-95; 379-422	Presentation 11 (Bernard): J. Jope, "The Didactic Unity and Emotional Import of Book 6 of "de Rerum Natura","" <i>Phoenix</i> 43 (1989) 16-34
Week 15	Tues Apr 29	Book 6 Focus: 639-711; 738-768; 1090-1286	S. Commager, "Lucretius' Interpretation of the Plague," <i>HSCP</i> 62 (1957) 105-118