

Graduate Seminar: Homer 16:190:557
Syllabus Part I (weeks 1-7)
Wed 5:30-8:10pm; RAB 003, Douglass Campus

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Office Hours: Mondays 11:30-13:30 (and by appt.)

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“Everyone who now reads and writes in the West, of whatever racial background, sex or ideological camp, is still a son or daughter of Homer.”
- Harold Bloom, *A Map Of Misreading* (1975)

Course Description

For more than twenty-five hundred years, Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have profoundly influenced literature, art and thought in the Western world and beyond. Yet such central questions as the identity of the poet(s) behind the epic poems and the establishment of a Homeric “text” have led to passionate discussion and disagreement among scholars since the Hellenistic grammarians, who struggled with the establishment of any one Homeric “edition.” The controversy continues to this day.

The goal of the present course is to provide the advanced Greek student with an opportunity to read the Homeric epics extensively and reflect on a variety of topics central to our understanding of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and their poetic specificities. Themes addressed will range from the literary to the cultural: in addition to a close linguistic commentary, students will deal with broader topics ranging from questions of e.g. gender and religion to the reception of Homeric epic poetry across various genres from Antiquity to the present day.

Note: The course will also entail regular exercises in translation, commentary and discussion of focus passages, with particular emphasis on those Homeric books which feature in the Classics MA and PhD reading lists.

Learning goals:

- to give students an appreciation of the importance and continued influence of the Homeric epics in literature and art up to the present day
- to enable students to practice close readings and informed literary analysis and criticism, including considerations of character, plot, and overarching structure in the archaic epics
- to provide students with the requisite tools to read (and enjoy) Homeric poetry with ease;
- to improve students’ grasp of Greek morphology, syntax, and meter (hexameter), and increase their knowledge of Greek vocabulary
- to give students a better understanding of the mechanics of oral composition (and an appreciation of the “Homeric question”) with particular attention paid to formulae, type-scenes, similes, and other significant forms of repetition

Course Website: The course website is accessible through the Sakai homepage. Go to <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/> where you can log in with your NetID and password. The website will likely be used for communication purposes and for posting of any digital materials. You will receive an e-mail notice whenever a new item is posted.

Homeric Bibliography: A select bibliography will be handed out at the first meeting.

Some useful web links:

<https://perswww.kuleuven.be/~u0013314/pinaxonline.html> : general resource for online bibliographies

Specific to Homer:

<http://132.229.7.185/letteren/opleiding/klassieketalen/index.php3?m=79&c=92>

Though somewhat dated, is conveniently organized by rubric, including "analysts" vs. "unitarians," work on formulas, etc.

1978-1992: searchable as well - an excellent resource, though you cannot limit yourself to it: <http://www.oeaw.ac.at/kal/fbhomer/>

1991-1997 searchable (but only with specific words):

<http://w3.u-grenoble3.fr/homerica/md/bibliographie/homerique.html>

Also useful, though not comprehensive:

Diotima, "Homer:" <http://www.stoa.org/dio-bin/diobib?homer>

Another (select, very general) bibliography online - ends in 2005:

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/classics/resources/homer/CLAS2700_Bibliography.html

Listen to Homer being recited:

http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~classics/poetry_and_prose/homer/homer.html = sound files of Gregory Nagy reciting Homeric Greek

http://zeus.chsdc.org/chs/homer_the_papyri_introduction

To tackle the "text:" The Chicago Homer

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/homer/> : a very useful site. It offers a multilingual database that uses the search and display capabilities of electronic texts to present, in addition to all the texts of ancient Greek epic in the original Greek, some English and German translations (e.g. Lattimore's translation of the *Iliad*; German translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by Johan Heinrich Voss). Also explore the associated web site Eumaios, whereby you can also access pertinent *Iliad* Scholia and papyrus readings to each line of the poem.

Required Texts

Stanford, W. 1996. *Odyssey: books I-XII*. London.

Stanford, W. *Odyssey: books XIII-XXIV*. London.

Willcock, M. 1996. *Iliad. Books I-XII*. London.

Willcock, M. 1999. *Iliad. Books XIII-XXIV*. London.

Recommended translation: R. Lattimore.

Regular consultation of Allen and Munro's OCT texts (*Homeri Opera*) as well as Kirk's Cambridge commentary is also expected. These materials are on reserve at Alexander Library. For your convenience, overnight borrowing is available. Please consult the reserve list for our course on the RUL website for additional recommended readings.

Grading and Evaluation

Class participation and presentation: 30%

Details regarding what you should aim for in your class presentations will be given separately.

Translation exams (regular quizzes: 15% + a longer midterm: 20%): 35%

Final Research Paper (10-12 pages, Times New Roman, double-spaced): 35%

Tentative schedule

The following is merely indicative; we will adapt the syllabus to your needs, interests, and comfort level with Homeric Greek as we go.

Organization of the seminar:

Each class meeting will roughly follow the following format:

- a brief (20 minute) **translation exam** on the readings for the previous session.
- We will also examine (and translate) the **focus passages** assigned for that day, with an eye to the commentaries, considering various aspects of the poetics (including language and meter), while also opening the discussion to broader considerations. Each focus passage should be prepared in careful, regular consultation with commentaries and lexica (along with any other tools the student deems useful.)
- Following our close reading, **a student will offer a presentation of 45 minutes** to an hour on a topic related to the primary reading assigned for that day. The topic is to be determined in consultation with me, and should ultimately serve as the basis for the writing of a **final research paper**.
- After a collective discussion of the presentation, we will address the **secondary readings** for the day. One student will be responsible for each of the secondary readings (article or chapter) for any given meeting; another will provide a (5-10 minute) response.

I. Wednesday, Jan. 20th: Introduction. Organizational meeting.

II. Wednesday, Jan. 27th: The Homeric Question and the Homer Multitext.

1. (a) Read *Iliad* I in Greek; focus passages: I.1-52; I.188-244; I.345-427; use Willcock's and Kirk's commentary (in departmental library). (b) Read Willcock's introduction pp.xxii-xxx: from "the language of Homer" to "the text of the *Iliad*." (c) *Iliad* I-IV in English.
2. Nagy, *Homeric Questions*, introduction and chapter I. Available online: see under <http://www.stoa.org/chs/>
3. H. Pelliccia NYRB article, "As Many Homers As You Please." Available on course Sakai.
4. Parry, A. 1971:1-23: on reserve at Alexander.

Additional (optional) reading:

1. Nagy, Rev. of West 1998. *BMCR* 2000.09.12: <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2000/2000-09-12.html>
2. Nardelli, Jean-Fabrice. 2001. Rev. of West 2000a. *BMCR* 2001.06.21: <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2001/2001-06-21.html>
3. West, "West on Nagy and Nardelli on West." *BMCR* 2001.09.6: <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2001/2001-09-06.html>
Also of interest: Rengakos on West: <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2002/2002-11-15.html>
and West on Rengakos and Nagy on West: <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2004/2004-04-17.html>

III. Wednesday, February 3rd: Homeric Traditions: Gods and Mortals.

Michael S. presents.

5. (a) Read *Iliad* V in Greek; focus passages: V.115-145; 318-442; 814-end; use Willcock's and Kirk's commentary (in departmental library). (b) Read Kirk's introduction pp.38-43: on "Aristarchus and the scholia."
6. Kearns, E. 2004. "The Gods in the Homeric epics" in Fowler's *Cambridge Companion to Homer*. 59-73. On reserve at Alexander.
7. Burkert, W. 1991. "Homer's Anthropomorphism: Narrative and Ritual," in *New Perspectives in Early Greek Art*. (D. Buitron-Oliver, ed.) 81-91. Washington. Available in the Art Library (non-circulating): N386.U5S78 v.32.
8. Vermeule, E. 1979. "Immortals are mortal, Mortals immortal," in Vermeule, E. (1979). *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*. 118-144. Berkeley. Available on course Sakai.
9. Nagy, G. 1979. "On the antagonism of God and Hero," in *The Best of the Achaeans*: 288-297. Baltimore. Available on course Sakai.

10. *Optional, recommended*: J. P. Vernant 1991. "Mortals and Immortals: the Body of the Divine," in *Mortals and Immortals. Collected Essays*. (ed. F. Zeitlin) 27-49. Princeton. Available on course Sakai.

IV. Wednesday, February 10th: Snow Day. Class cancelled.

V. Wednesday, February 17th: Epic and Lament.

Kate W. presents.

11. (a) Read *Iliad* VI in Greek; focus passages: VI.392-502; all passages in Greek from Dué chp. (below); and all three women's laments at the end of book XXIV: 718-781. Use Willcock's and Kirk's commentary (in departmental library) for VI and MacLeod's for XXIV.
12. Nagy, G. 1996. "Mimesis, models of singers, and the meaning of a Homeric epithet," in *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond*: 39-58. Available on course Sakai.
13. Dué, C., *Homeric Variations on a Lament by Briseis*: Introduction (1-20) and chp. 5: "Wife:" 67-81. Available on course Sakai.
14. Martin, R.P. "Keens from the absent chorus" in *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond* (A. Suter, ed.): 118-138. Available on course Sakai.

15. *Optional, recommended*: Alexiou, M. 1974 (2nd ed. 2002). *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*: 4-23. Available on course Sakai.

Note:

<http://chs75.chs.harvard.edu/manuscripts/imageviewer?folio=326r&ms=msA&image=>

VI. Wednesday, February 24th: Homeric Interpolations?

16. (a) Read *Iliad* X in Greek; focus passage: X.349-531; use Willcock's and Kirk's commentary (in departmental library). (b) all passages in Greek from Dué-Ebbott chp, "The Poetics of Ambush" (below). (c) *Iliad* VII-X in translation.

17. Burgess, J. 2001. "The Epic Cycle and Homer," chp. 3 of *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle*: 132-171. Available on course Sakai. Note that there are two separate files. *Many thanks to Lyndy for making these pdf versions available to us!*
18. Dué, C. and Ebbott, M. "Oral Poetics and the Homeric *Doloneia*." Available at: <http://chs.harvard.edu/wa/pageR?tn=ArticleWrapper&bdc=12&mn=1557#nt-id167424560>
19. The previous (short) reading will serve as a useful introduction to the fruit of Dué and Ebbott's work: their forthcoming monograph entitled *Iliad 10 and the Poetics of Ambush*, which is about to be published. I have obtained permission from the two to share the following chapter with you pre-publication (hence plate and fig. numbers unspecified, as you will see): "The Poetics of Ambush," 1-49. Available on course Sakai. Please do not reproduce or circulate beyond seminar.

VII. Wednesday, March 3rd: Death and the Hero.

20. (a) Read *Iliad* XVI in Greek; focus passages: XVI.1-100; 419-505; 777-end (l. 867); use the Willcock and Kirk commentaries. (b) *Iliad* XI-XVI in translation, and XXII (relevant to 21 and 22, below). *Time allowing, rereading XVII-XXI in translation recommended.*
21. Allan, W. 2005. "Arms and the Man: Euphorbus, Hector, and the Death of Patroclus," *CQ* 55:1-16. Available on course Sakai.
22. Fenik, B. 1968. "Book II," chp. 4 in *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad: Studies in the Narrative Techniques of Homeric Battle Description*. Available on course Sakai.

Translation Quiz 4.

VIII. Wednesday, March 10th: In-class translation exam.

Wednesday, March 17th: SPRING RECESS. NO CLASS.

IX. Wednesday, March 24th: Structural questions in the *Iliad*.

Misty K. presents.

23. (a) Read *Iliad* XXIV in Greek; focus passages: XXIV, 1-54; 93-142; 188-227; 440-620; use the Willcock and Macleod commentaries. (b) If you haven't yet, read Macleod's introduction to book XXIV (at least 1-35). Finish re-reading *Iliad* XVII-XXIV in translation.
24. Crotty, K. (1994) "*Eleos* and Book 24 of the *Iliad*," chp.1 of *The Poetics of Supplication: Homer's Iliad and Odyssey*: 3-23. Available on course Sakai.
25. Rutherford, R. (1991-3) "From the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey*," *BICS* 38: 37-54. Available on course Sakai.

Translation Quiz 5.

X. Wednesday, March 31st: *Iliad* to *Odyssey*; register and tone.

Brian M. presents on Homer and humor.

26. (a) Read *Odyssey* I in Greek. Focus passages: I.1-43; 325-444. Use the Heubeck and West commentary. (b) *Odyssey* I-V in translation.
27. Ford, A. (1992) "The Poet: Tradition, Transmission, and Time," Chp. 3 in *Homer: The Poetry of the Past*: 90-130. Available on course Sakai.
28. Slatkin, L. (1996) "Composition by Theme and the *Métis* of the *Odyssey*," in *Reading the Odyssey: Selected Interpretative Essays* (ed. S. Schein): 223-238. Available on course Sakai.

Translation Quiz 6.

XI. Wednesday, April 7th: Questions of Gender.

Aaron H. presents on the reception of the *Iliad*

29. (a) Read *Odyssey* VI in Greek. Focus passages: the entire book (short: 331 lines total); note: you can leave out ll.71-101 if you like. Use the Heubeck and West commentary. (b) *Odyssey* I-VIII in translation.
30. Foley, H. (1978) "'Reverse Similes' and Sex Roles in the *Odyssey*," *Arethusa* 11: 7-26. Available on course Sakai.
31. Segal, C. (1962) "The Phaeacians and the Symbolism of Odysseus' Return," *Arion* 1: 17-64. *Start early; Segal is... prolix.* Available on course Sakai.

Translation Quiz 7 on focus passages from Odyssey I.

XII. Wednesday, April 14th:

Double-presentation

- **Lane W. presents on similes**
- **Eleanor J. presents on gender**

32. (a) Read *Odyssey* IX in Greek. Focus passages IX.252-479. Use the Heubeck and West commentary. (b) *Odyssey* VII-IX in translation.
33. Schein, S. (1970) "Odysseus and Polyphemus in the *Odyssey*," *GRBS* 11: 73-83. Available on course Sakai.
34. Reinhardt, K. (1960) "The Adventures in the *Odyssey*" [Die Abenteuer der *Odyssee*"], *Tradition und Geist: Gesammelte Essays zur Dichtung*, ed. C. Becker: 47-124 [originally in Reinhardt (1948) *Von Werken und Formen*: 52-162] repr. in in *Reading the Odyssey: Selected Interpretative Essays* (ed. S. Schein).
Read 63-73 and 77-87. Available on course Sakai.

Translation Quiz 8 on focus passages from Odyssey VI.

XIII. Wednesday, April 21st: The Underworld.

Brian K. presents on epic parody.

35. (a) Read *Odyssey* XI in Greek. Focus passages XI.1-203, 385-537. Use the Heubeck and West commentary. (b) *Odyssey* X-XII in translation.

36. Heath, J. (2005) "Blood for the Dead: Homeric Ghosts Speak Up," *Hermes* 133.4: 389-400.
37. Tsagarakis, O. (2000) *Studies in Odyssey 11*. (*Hermes Einzelschriften* 82). Read introduction: **11-17**, and chps. 1+ 2: **19-69**. Available on course Sakai.

Translation Quiz 9 on focus passages from book IX.

XIV. Wednesday, April 28th: The Song of the Sirens.

Lyndy D. presents on ancient reception of Homer: the *Batrachomyomachia*.

38. (a) Read *Odyssey* XII in Greek. Focus passages: XII.1-307. Use the Heubeck and West commentary. (b) Read *Odyssey* XII-XV in translation.
39. Pucci, P. (1979) "The Song of the Sirens," *Arethusa* 12: 121-32. Available on course Sakai.
40. Crane, G. (1987) "The "Odyssey" and Conventions of the Heroic Quest," *Classical Antiquity* 6.1: 11-37. Available on course Sakai.

Translation Quiz 10 on focus passages from Odyssey IX and/or XI.

XV. Make-up session for Snow Day: Wednesday, May 5th. Conclusion.

Misty K. presents on iconographic depictions of scenes from the Trojan Cycle

41. (a) Read *Odyssey* XVI and XVII in Greek, and a brief focus passage from *Odyssey* XX. Focus passages XVI.60-145; 181-224; 409-451; XVII.290-327 (*optional*); 415-465; XX.284-358. Use the Heubeck and West commentary. (b) Read *Odyssey* XVI-XXIV in translation.
42. Hoelscher, U. (1996) "Penelope and the Suitors" in *Reading the Odyssey: Selected Interpretative Essays* (ed. S. Schein): 133-40. Available on course Sakai.
43. Hunter, R. (2004) "Homer and Greek literature" 235-253 and Porter, J. "Homer: The History of an Idea" 324-343, both in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (ed. R. Fowler). Both available on course Sakai.

Final Paper due Sunday, May 9th at midnight. Deadline is firm. No incompletes.

Future topics for presentation:

- Gods and mortals: Michael S.
- Death and the Hero: Rachel.
- Structural questions in the *Iliad*: Misty K.
- gender: Eleanor
- Homer and humor: Brian M.
- epic similes: Lane.
- epic parody: Brian K.
- Homeric intertextuality ()
- ancient reception of Homer: Lyndy
- ancient + modern reception: Aaron H.