Overview of 400 level Latin and Greek courses

The Department offers a year long sequence of courses in Latin and in Greek at the 400 level that are designed to allow students to explore the major periods and authors of Classical antiquity. Faculty work together each year to provide a varied and cohesive mix of authors and activities that provide students with a satisfying one year sequence. Authors chosen for each course in the sequence vary from year to year, so students have the option to take courses in the sequence up to three times without repeating material.

2020-21

Sp 21 Latin 463: Latin Literature of the Empire: Horace, Persius, Juvenal  (Dr. Michael Ritter)

Wi 20 Latin 462: Latin Literature of the Augustan Age: Sallust and Virgil  (Prof. Stephen Hinds)

Au 20 Latin 461: Latin Literature of the Republic: Caesar, Lucretius, and Civil War (TTh 2:30-4:20)  (Prof. Alain M. Gowing)

Although not typically mentioned in the same breath, Lucretius (ca. 99 BC – 55 BC or later) and Julius Caesar (100-44 BC) were contemporaries and both major, late Republican authors. They are, moreover, linked by a common interest: civil strife. In this class we will pursue this theme via readings in the first few weeks of the quarter in Lucretius' poem, the De Rerum Natura (pub. early to mid- 50s BC), focusing especially on Book 5's description of the 'real world', its history, and its degeneration. The second half of the quarter will be devoted to readings in Caesar's account of the civil war between himself and Pompey the Great, focusing in particular on selections from Books 1-2 of the Bellum Civile and the so-called 'Curio tragedy' in Bk. 2 (pub. after 46 BC). Among other issues, we will consider in what ways Lucretius' poem intersects with or illuminates Caesar's account of the civil war, the seeds of which had already been planted when Lucretius began his poem and which the poem itself may anticipate…and fear. Midterm and final quizzettini, 3-5 page paper.

Sp 21 Greek 463: Hellenistic Greek Literature: Lucian's True History  (Prof. James Clauss)

Wi 21 Greek 462: Classical Greek Literature: Sophocles' Ajax  (Prof. Ruby Blondell)

Au 20 Greek 461: Early Greek Literature: The Odyssey (MW 2.30-4.20)  (Prof. Olga Levaniouk)

This course will introduce the students to the Odyssey in the original. We'll read and discuss our favorite parts of the poem, some by instructor's choice, some by the students', aiming for the best poetic, mythological, and cultural adventure we can have in ten short weeks. As we read, we'll pursue two practical goals. The first one is to continue— or begin—introducing students to the grammar and vocabulary of Homeric language. We will look at the dialectal, traditional, and historical aspects of Homeric language and properties of Homeric poetry as spoken word. The second goal is to get a taste of the Odyssey as a work of poetry in general and oral traditional poetry in particular. Apart from translation, the work for the course will involve learning to enjoy the Odyssey in a new way, some hard
thinking, a very modest amount of secondary reading, a brief class presentation, and a short essay, which may take the form of a commentary on a passage.

2019-20

**Sp 20 Latin 461: Latin Literature of the Republic: Cicero's *Pro Caelio* and Catullus (TTh 2:30-4:20) (Prof. Alain M. Gowing)**

The Roman orator and statesman Cicero (106-43 BC) and the poet Catullus (ca. 84-54 BC) were close contemporaries if not acquaintances. This class entails a reading of Cicero’s famous speech for Caelius Rufus (delivered 56 BC), in which he defends his client against Publius Clodius Pulcher, the brother of Clodia, the woman often identified as Catullus’ ‘Lesbia’. Against this speech, with its vivid portrayal of the (allegedly) debauched activities and lifestyle of Clodia, we will juxtapose a number of Catullus’ poems, especially the so-called ‘Lesbia’ poems, that offer a different sort of window onto the characters and behavior captured in Cicero’s speech.

**Wi 20 Latin 463: Latin Literature of the Empire: From Virgil to Lucan: how epic wars begin (TTh 2.30-4.20pm) (Prof. Stephen Hinds)**

Aeneas has arrived in Latium in central Italy, but his mission is only at its half-way point: the start of *Aeneid* 7 marks a new beginning for Virgil’s epic. War flares up between the newly-arrived Trojans and the local Latins, who are, however, destined to come together as a single people once hostilities are over: in retrospect, then, a kind of civil war.

Julius Caesar, an irresistible force of nature, is no longer prepared to share power with Pompey, who, with his best years behind him, is a mere shadow of the great man he once was: such is the set-up of Lucan’s *De Bello Civili*, unlike the *Aeneid* an epic grounded in history rather than in myth and legend, but written a good century after the events it describes. Lucan is a young Neronian poet in a hurry: is the epic genre big enough for him, and how will he confront the Augustan classic that is the *Aeneid*?

**Au 19 Latin 462: Latin Literature of the Augustan Age (Prof. Sarah Levin-Richardson)**

We will read Book 1 of Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita*, which covers the founding of Rome and the regal period (753-510 BCE), including the stories of Romulus and Remus, and the Sabine Women. While the majority of class time will be spent translating the text and discussing points of grammar and style, we will also look at some examples of scholarship on early Livy.

**Sp 20 Greek 463: Hellenistic Greek Literature: Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautica* (Prof. James Clauss)**

We will read all of Book 3 of Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautica* (famous for featuring Medea falling in love with Jason) and the rest of the epic in translation (Books 1, 2, 4). We will focus on the intertextual nature of the narrative; that is, how Apollonius engages with Archaic (Homer) and Classical (especially Euripides) texts. The Hellenistic epic was especially influential for Vergil in his depiction of the relationship of Dido and Aeneas, among many other details. There will be two exams (midterm and final), an oral presentation on an article or chapter of a book, and a final paper (8-10 pages, double spaced) on a topic of interest.

**Wi 20 Greek 462: Literature of Classical Athens: pseudo-Demosthenes’ *Against Neaira* (Prof. Deborah Kamen)**

In the fourth-century BCE law-court speech *Against Neaira*, a freed-slave prostitute named Neaira is charged with posing as an Athenian citizen in order to secure citizen rights for her children. Preserved in the corpus of Demosthenes’ speeches but written and delivered by a man named Apollodoros, this speech provides a lively model of Greek oratorical prose, as well as delivering insights into issues of gender, sexuality, and status in classical Athens. In this class, students will read all of *Against Neaira* in Greek and write three short response papers. We will be using the Dickinson Classical Commentary on *Against Neaira* (available for free online).
Au 19 Greek 461: Early Greek Literature (MW 2.30-4.20)  (Prof. Alexander Hollmann)

Story-teller, ethnographer, geographer, natural scientist—and historian!—Herodotus is the earliest Greek prose writer whose complete work we still have. The Histories provide a fascinating look into the world of Greeks and barbaroi (Lydians, Persians, Thracians, Egyptians, and Scythians among others) in the archaic and early classical periods. Known for his charm, humanity, and fascinating narrative, Herodotus is often our best or only source for this period and for these peoples. We will read selections from Book One, one of the longest and most varied books in the work.  (Prof. Alex Hollmann)

2018-19
Latin 461 Long poems of Catullus (Hinds)
Latin 462 Cornelius Nepos' Life of Atticus and related texts of Cicero. (Stroup).
Latin 463 Metamorphoses in Apuleius and Ovid (Connors), in the context of imperial power, with an emphasis on literary techniques.
Greek 461 Hesiod, Works and Days and Theogony in the context of oral tradition (Levaniouk)
Greek 462 Aristophanes Lysistrata (Blondell), in the context of Athenian politics
Greek 463 Menander (Clauss), in the context of Athenian culture

2017-18
Latin 461: Lucretius (Clauss)
Latin 462: Livy (Gowing)
Latin 463: Seneca (Stroup)
Greek 461: Homeric Hymn to Demeter (Hollmann)
Greek 462: Euripides (Blondell)
Greek 463: Life of Aesop (Kamen)

2016-17
Latin 461: (Clauss)
Latin 462: Epic and Lyric Poetry: Virgil's Aeneid and Horace's Odes (Hinds)
Latin 463: Tacitus (Gowing)
Greek 461: Homer (Levaniouk)
Greek 462: Greek Oratory (Kamen)
In the year 63 BCE, a young man named Catiline plotted to overthrow the Roman Republic. The only thing that stood between Roman and destruction was Cicero, or so Cicero tells us. In four speeches Cicero denounces Catiline's conspiracy and foiled the plot. Through extended readings in each of Cicero's four speeches against Catiline, we studied the political and social background of these exciting events. We came away with a strong understanding of Roman rhetorical practices and devices, and how speech becomes more powerful when the speaker carefully calculates the effect his words will have on their audience. It was fun to delve deeply into the language and strategies that Cicero used too.

Ovid is one of the world's most intelligent and mischievous poets, and at the height of his powers he was exiled by the emperor Augustus. Building on what we had learned about Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in earlier courses we read selections from his works in the elegiac meter. His poems on how to succeed in love allowed us to step into day to day life in Rome's streets, theaters, race course, dinner parties and parks. It was exciting to see how Ovid used the Latin language to create vivid and powerful scenes of love and life in Rome. We had a lot of choice in writing short and compelling reviews of Ovid's most captivating scenes and in designing paper topics.

Apuleius was too curious for his own good. Accused of bewitching his college friend's mother into marrying him he was tried for his life. His novel, the *Metamorphoses*, which tells of how a young man is turned into a ass because of a misunderstanding about magic, is one of the earliest pieces of fiction in the western tradition. It is cool because it is full of playful and surprising descriptions of all kinds of households in the Roman world and lots of stories within the story. The tale of Cupid and Psyche, the original Beauty and the Beast, combines philosophical and allegorical ideas with sharp and funny slices of Roman life. We were encouraged to explore creative interests to produce a final project in our choice of format.

The Odyssey is one of the foundational poems of the Greek literary tradition, and through translating selections from book one and all of book six, we studied the linguistic history behind the fusion of the different Greek dialects for metrical reasons within the text. We observed literary patterns as evidence of the Odyssey's evolution as an oral epic during discussions on the existence of "Homer." Professor Levaniouk pushed us to think critically about how the Odyssey opens windows into the early Greek past. She provided to her students the tools needed to do close commentaries of certain passages of the text, ranging from an examination of how the epithet is indicative of how it could have been from a displacement of a prior pre-Greek religious cult concerning the epithet of Hermes as the slayer of Argus, to the comparison of the sacrificial scene in the Underworld to actual Greek cult practices in regards to sacrifices made to Underworld gods.
We read the history of the Peloponnesian War as detailed by Thucydides, the first Greek historian to attempt an objective account of the war with precision of facts (τηχμερίον). We read key passages from the important junctures of the war, such as Pericles' funeral oration, the Athenian plague, the Melian dialogue, the mutilation of the herms, and the invasion and disaster of the Syracuse expedition. Professor Hollmann led us in discussions of history, culture, and especially the geo-politics of the war concerning the differences between Sparta, Athens, and the ways in which these two powers interacted with their allies/subjects and with each other. We were encouraged to engage with the text by examining the arguments made by opposing sides as presented by Thucydides, making detailed observations and conclusions about who we thought Thucydides was highlighting as the “correct” view of geo-politics and diplomacy.

Greek 463: Hellenistic Poetry (Clauss SP 2016)

We read a selection of Hellenistic poets including Callimachus, Aratus, Theocritus, as well as other prominent neoteric poets. The Hellenistic literary tradition was essential for the development of Roman literature as we know it today, providing new ground-breaking ideas about genre, subjects, art versus imitation and realism versus idealism, the importance of words and allusion, and the reflection and reuse of traditional stories in novel perspectives. The culture and politics of the period supported and shaped the authors in their endeavor to redefine Greek literature.

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