

**HISTORY 1111/H01 - HISTORY FOR THE HONORS GREAT BOOKS
PROGRAM
THE EPICS OF HOMER AND VIRGIL**



Homer & Virgil, det. from Raphael's *Parnassus* (1509/10). Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican City

Spring Semester 2019

TTh 11-12:15; University College 202

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Office Hours: TTh 9:30-11, 1-3, or by appointment

NB: Students are responsible for the contents of this syllabus. The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus at any time during the semester - students are expected to keep abreast of any alterations to the syllabus and schedule announced by the instructor.

Description

As part of the Honors Great Books Program at KSU, this course examines the epic genre in world history. Specifically, it takes as its subject three epics from the ancient Mediterranean world (the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, both attributed to an author known as Homer, and the *Aeneid*, by the Roman Virgil) that are among the most enduring and influential works of literature ever created -

they have been read and reinterpreted countless times in the dozens of generations since they were first composed. They also remain among history's most rewarding texts to read, although they were originally composed to be heard, as manifestations of ancient poetic traditions.

Homer's tales, one of war, heroism, suffering and loss, the other of personal exile, longing and homecoming, are bewilderingly expansive in their scope and breathtaking in their dramatic power. Homer's tableau offers a rich pageant of human virtue and folly, of violence and compassion, of loyalty and treachery, of triumph and excruciating tragedy. It is impossible to read the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and not reflect on fundamental essences of human nature and how they are reflected in lives lived. One of the notable early efforts to interpret Homer was by Virgil, in his *Aeneid*, a retelling of the earlier epics for a Roman audience. Virgil engaged in creative borrowings from Homer that in places verge on plagiarism, but we see in his composition further considerations of essential features of human existence, now reframed within the setting of early imperial Rome. It is my deeply held belief that reading, and experiencing, these epics enrich one's life.

This course fulfills the core curriculum requirement for History 1111, Introduction to World History to 1700.

Course Objectives

- Read three of the most rewarding and influential texts of the Western tradition
- Acquire the marks of an educated human by reading these seminal works
- Learn of the historical contexts that inform these three great works
- Trace how literary and intellectual traditions are transmitted across texts and epochs
- Explore the epic genre and how it has evolved in different cultural contexts
- Gain valuable experience in close reading of original texts
- Gain experience at written exegesis of original texts
- Improve oral expression of ideas in a seminar-style setting
- Engage in self-exploration and reflection
- Read poetry

Texts: There are three required texts for this course. Please make sure you have these specific editions of the works, as we will want to work from identical translations and pagination.

Homer, *Iliad*. Translated by Stanley Lombardo. Hackett. ISBN 0872203522

Homer, *Odyssey*. Translated by Stanley Lombardo. Hackett. ISBN 0872204847

Virgil, *Aeneid*. Translated by Stanley Lombardo. Hackett. ISBN 0872207315

In addition, you may want to investigate getting hold of a critical companion to these texts. I recommend, for the *Iliad*, Caroline Alexander's *The War that Killed Achilles* (Viking ISBN 0670021123). For the *Odyssey*, see James Morrison's *A Companion to Homer's Odyssey* (Greenwood Press ISBN 0313318549) is a nice tool to have. Good works that deal with both are Barry Powell, *Homer* (Blackwell ISBN 0631233857) and R.B. Rutherford, *Homer* (Cambridge ISBN 9781107670017). The analogous work for Virgil in the Blackwell series is Alden Smith, *Virgil* (Blackwell ISBN 1405159499). A good companion to *Aeneid* is David Ross, *Virgil's Aeneid: a Reader's Guide* (Blackwell ISBN 9781405159739).

A note (and a request) about reading: I like technology and appreciate the possibilities it offers for teaching. But I am also aware that it has made students in your generation incredibly distracted and nigh unacquainted with focused, intimate encounters with single texts. For this course, I have a humble request regarding your reading. When you decide to do your reading, take the book and find a quiet place to read – don't take anything else, except a pen or pencil. Turn off your phone and leave your computer/tablet/smart device in a different room. If you want to take notes, write them directly into the margins of your book. Be alone with the text until you have completed the intended reading. Only then return to the wired world. Please endeavor to follow these guidelines, if only for this course – this is after all, a course on great books.

D2L - Brightspace: This course is supported by DESIRE2LEARN Brightspace (hereafter D2L), and students should consult the course's D2L site regularly. This syllabus is available at the course's site, as are additional readings, assignment guidelines, and discussion forums. D2L also hosts dropboxes at which you will hand in all of your written assignments. I will also post your grades on D2L. From time to time, I will post additional materials of interest to the class on the site. I will announce when I do this in class, but please

also check the class D2L site regularly. If you are not familiar with the D2L course management program, please spend some time getting to know it.

D2L-BS may be accessed at <http://d2l.kennesaw.edu/>

Required Work:

- **Regular attendance** and good cheer - you are allowed 4 absences without penalty. Each subsequent absence is penalized ½ a letter grade.
- **Participation and preparedness** in class discussions, including periodic leadership of class. As this is a seminar, it is essential that you complete the assigned reading by the time of the class meeting. Please note that if you come dutifully to every class but not participate in the seminar discussions, you will receive a D for this grade. If I find see evidence that students are not completing the reading in preparation for class, I will likely introduce regular in-class quizzes. I hope this will not be necessary. (25%)
- **Written comments** of about a paragraph in length posted on the discussion string at this course's D2L site as we read Homer and Virgil. These can be an original observation or query based upon your reading of the text assigned for that day, or it might be a response to something that the instructor, or one of your fellow seminarians, have posted. These posts must be written in grammatically correct language and should cite the text when appropriate. These reflections must be posted at least one hour before our class meets (i.e. 1pm), to permit me to consult them. (10%)
- **4 Short reflection papers** of 2-3 pages each. (25%)
- **Expository essay on a theme in Homer** of about 6 pages (20%)
- **Final examination.** More details on the format later in the semester. (20%)

All written work is due in class, in hard copy, and in the corresponding drop box in D2L. An assignment is considered complete only when I have received both a print and electronic copy of the document.

Policy on late work: Work handed in late without a medical excuse will be penalized one letter grade for each class period that it is late i.e. a B essay that is a day late will receive a grade of C. I do not accept work that is more than a week late. Assignments that are not completed receive a grade of '0' (not F).

Ethical considerations: I take instances of academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism very seriously - proof of such activity will result in a failing

grade for the semester and a referral to the Office of Student Affairs. The bottom line about cheating and plagiarism is this: do not do it. It is not worth it – you can seriously damage your reputation among the faculty, your academic standing at this and other universities and your viability in the professional world. Please read the discussion of academic integrity that follows this syllabus – it includes relevant definitions and discussions of applicable penalties. Ignorance of the guidelines does not excuse violations.

Research has indicated that 40-60% of American college students reported cheating on examinations in college. Over half of the students who reported cheating in college were repeat offenders who used a variety of nefarious techniques to achieve their objective. While we assume the best of all students, we are also well aware of these realities.

Please read the statement on Academic Honesty in the Kennesaw State University Undergraduate Catalog. Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement.

I have questions about the integrity of your work, I will ask to meet with you. If outstanding questions remain, I will adhere to the policies above. **I reiterate: the penalty for cheating and/or plagiarism in this course is a failing grade for the semester. I will report all incidents of plagiarism to the Office of Student Affairs, and the incident will become part of your official record.**

Accommodations for Disabled Students: A number of services are available to aid disabled students with their academic work. In order to make arrangements for such services, students should visit the Office of Disabled Student Support Services (Student Center 286A) and arrange an individual

assistance plan. This must be done at the very beginning of the semester in order for proper accommodations to be made. Please note that appropriate documentation will be required.

Electronic equipment in class: I do not allow the use of laptops in class, unless you have a documented medical reason to use one. This is not because I am an old-fashioned Luddite who hates technology; it is because I know from experience that access to cyberspace inevitably leads to distraction. I want us to focus on the text before us and pay attention to the insights of our colleagues. I have no objection to the use of recording devices in class – just please let me know if you intend to use them. Text messaging and other use of your phone in class is strictly *verboden* – if I see you doing so, I will ask you to leave for the rest of the class session. Similarly, should your cell phone ring, I will ask you to leave for the remainder of the class session. If a phone is needed for emergency use, please let the instructor know before class and set it to silent or pulse.

Student Deportment: I want my classroom environment to be rooted in a spirit of mutual respect. While I encourage disagreement and debate, I will not tolerate *ad hominem* critique or abuse. In striving to create a scholarly, collegial and efficient classroom environment for my students, I cannot and will not abide social chatting, texting, reading of extraneous material, sleeping, and other activities unrelated to the course. Please do not continue in this course if you intend to do any of these.

Class and reading schedule

This course is designed to run as a seminar-style discussion course. There will be a small number of lectures by the instructor, designed to provide historical context for the texts in question. The reading listed below should be completed ahead of the class meeting. Bring the text to class.

Date	Subject	Reading	Work Due
Tuesday, 8 Jan	Homer: The Bible of the Greeks		
Thursday, 10 Jan	<i>Iliad</i>	Book 1	
Tuesday, 15 Jan	<i>Iliad</i>	Books 2-4	
Thursday, 17 Jan	<i>Iliad</i>	Books 5-6	
Tuesday, 22 Jan	<i>Iliad</i>	Books 7-8	
Thursday, 24 Jan	<i>Iliad</i>	Book 9	Reflection Essay #1
Tuesday, 29 Jan	<i>Iliad</i>	Books 10-14	
Thursday, 31 Jan	<i>Iliad</i>	Books 15-17	

Tuesday, 5 Feb	<i>Iliad</i>	Books 18-21	
Thursday, 7 Feb	<i>Iliad</i>	Book 22	
Tuesday, 12 Feb	<i>Iliad</i>	Book 23-24	
Thursday, 14 Feb	Film: <i>Achilles in Vietnam</i>		Reflection Essay #2
Tuesday, 19 Feb	<i>The Odyssey: Exile and Return</i>	Book 1	
Thursday, 21 Feb	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 2-4	
Tuesday, 26 Feb	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 5-7	
Thursday, 28 Feb	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 8-10	
Tuesday, 5 Mar	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 11-14	Reflection Essay #3
Thursday, 7 Mar	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 15-18	
Tuesday, 12 Mar	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 19-21	
Thursday, 14 Mar	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 22-24	
Tuesday, 17 Mar	Film: <i>Brother Where Art Thou?</i>		Paper on Homeric theme due
Thursday, 19 Mar	Troy Redeemed: <i>Aeneid</i>	Book 1	
Tuesday, 24 Mar	<i>Aeneid</i>	Book 2	
Thursday, 26 Mar	<i>Aeneid</i>	Book 3	
	SPRING	BREAK	
Tuesday, 9 Apr	<i>Aeneid</i>	Books 4-5	
Thursday, 11 Apr	NO CLASS		
Tuesday, 16 Apr	<i>Aeneid</i>	Book 6	Reflection Essay #4
Thursday, 18 Apr	<i>Aeneid</i>	Books 7-8	
Tuesday, 23 Apr	<i>Aeneid</i>	Books 9-10	
Thursday, 25 Apr	<i>Aeneid</i>	Books 11-12	
Tuesday, 30 Apr	Final Examination	10:30 AM	