

Instructor: Professor Deborah Beck (deborah.beck [at] mail.utexas.edu)
Office location and hours: WAG 223, Tue 3:45-5:15 p.m., Th 9:15-10:45 a.m.,
and by appointment

Description

This course will cover the most important epic poems of Greece and Rome and several post-classical epic or epic-influenced texts. In the first half of the semester, we will read Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as well as *Jason and the Golden Fleece* by Apollonius of Rhodes. After spring break, we will read Vergil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, ending the course with selections from Dante (*Inferno*), Milton (*Paradise Lost*), and Tennyson. We will consider

- * the **IMPORTANT CHARACTERS AND EVENTS** depicted in these texts (particularly the Trojan War and its aftermath);
- * **key elements of the epic genre**, such as subject matter, treatment of the gods, common poetic conventions (meter, epic similes), how epic depicts events from both the distant past and the present;
- * the **social and historical context** in which the individual texts were produced;
- * the wide range of **responses to these plays**, starting with Apollonius of Rhodes as a response to Homer and going through modern scholarly approaches to classical epic.

Course goals

To become familiar with several texts that have central importance for both classical literature and western intellectual history, and by means of these texts, to work on both written and oral analytical skills. During the course, our main aims will be:

- ✓ read a lot (to cover the breadth and scope of classical epic poetry)
- ✓ read particular passages in detail (to practice close reading and analytical skills)
- ✓ become familiar with the topics, characters, and modes of thought of classical epic poetry (factual knowledge tested via quizzes and exams)
- ✓ practice oral communication and analytical skills (primarily through class participation)
- ✓ practice written skills, both analytical (final paper) and creative (ungraded assignments)

Components of course grade: overall, your grade is made up of several different kinds of activities (speaking in class, writing both for a grade and more informally, taking tests and quizzes). This is designed to give you several different ways to show your mastery of the material.

1. *Class attendance and participation* 20%
Each student gets 2 “free” absences. Your attendance grade then drops for each

additional unexcused absence (a little bit for one additional absence, quite a lot for consistent skipping). In order to get full credit for participating as well as attending, you should come to class having done the reading and ready to discuss it. You should contribute regularly to class discussion by knowing the answer, by framing good questions about things you do not know, and/or by reacting to other students' comments. *Knowing the answer all the time is neither expected nor desirable.*

2. *Posts to class discussion board* 5%

Every student is expected to regularly (about ten times during the semester) post thoughts and ideas for discussion to the course discussion board in advance of class meetings, and to be prepared to speak briefly in class about the topic of their posts.

3. *Regular unannounced quizzes* 10%

4. *Two midterm exams* 10% each

Exam #1, Thursday 2/11

Exam #2, Tuesday 4/6 (not cumulative: covers material since exam #1)

5. *3-5 ungraded written assignments* [generally due on a Tues] 10%

These short (1-2 page) assignments will include short analytical essays on passages from the text we are reading, analysis of images and other materials found on the Web, creative assignments in which you assume the voice of a particular character, etc. These will also include required work to prepare you for the final paper.

These ungraded assignments will be announced in class and then posted on Blackboard; marks will be primarily for completing the assignments on time rather than the quality of the work done.

6. *Final paper*, due Fri. 4/23 at 4 p.m. 15%

One paper 3-5 pages long in which you do a close reading of a 15-20 verse passage of your choice from any text we have read during the semester. A close reading does *not* require a thesis or argument about the passage.

7. *Final exam*, date and time TBA 20%

The exam will be cumulative but weighted toward the material covered in the last third of the class.

Plus/minus grades will be used according to the following scale:

98-100, A+

93-97, A

90-92, A-

87-89, B+ [and so forth]

Assigned texts

The classical texts below are available at the Co-op; modern scholarly articles will be available electronically on Blackboard. Assigned texts are also on reserve at PCL. Both the electronically available readings and a link to PCL reserves can be found at the "assgs and readings" tab on Blackboard. The Dante, Milton, and Tennyson readings will be accessed on line; links to the suggested URLs will be available on Blackboard.

assigned texts at the Co-op

Homer, *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (transl. S. Lombardo)

Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Golden Fleece* (transl. R. Hunter)

Virgil, *The Aeneid* (transl. A. Mandelbaum)

Ovid, *The Metamorphoses* (transl. R. Humphries)

If you already own a different translation of one of these texts, please come talk to me about whether your translation is appropriate for this course.

Course Web site is on Blackboard

COURSE SCHEDULE

Tuesday	Thursday	tests and papers due
1/19, intro (no reading due)	1/21, Homer <i>Iliad</i> books 1-3	
1/26, Homer <i>Iliad</i> 4-6	1/28, <i>Iliad</i> 9, 11	
2/2, <i>Iliad</i> 14-16	2/4, <i>Iliad</i> 18-19	
2/9, <i>Iliad</i> 22-24	2/11, TEST #1	test #1, Th. 2/11
2/16, Homer <i>Odyssey</i> books 1-4	2/18, <i>Od.</i> 5-8	
2/23, <i>Od.</i> 9-12	2/25, <i>Od.</i> 13 & 16	
3/2, <i>Od.</i> 19-22	3/4, <i>Od.</i> 23-24	
3/9, Apollonius <i>Jason</i> books 1-2	3/11, <i>Jason</i> 3-4	
3/23, Vergil <i>Aeneid</i> books 1-3	3/25, Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 4, 6	
3/30, <i>Aen.</i> 7-9	4/1, <i>Aen.</i> 10 & 12	
4/6, TEST #2	4/8, Ovid <i>Metamorphoses</i> books 1-3	test #2, Tue. 4/6
4/13, Ovid <i>Met.</i> 4-7	4/15, <i>Met.</i> 8-10	
4/20, <i>Met.</i> 11-15	4/22, Dante	final paper due: Fri. 4/23, 4 p.m.
4/27, Dante	4/29, Milton	
5/4, Milton	5/6, Tennyson	

Policy statements

If you have a disability or special needs: UT Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present documentation to me as close to the beginning of the semester as possible. For more information, contact SSD at 471-6259, or go to <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

UT Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Academic dishonesty: Cheating, plagiarism, or any form of academic dishonesty on any assignment will result in a zero on the assignment with no make-up work permitted, a maximum semester grade of C in the course, and a report of the incident to the Student Judicial Committee. Scholastic dishonesty includes any kind of cheating or collaboration on tests, or submitting work that is a) is not your own and/or b) not accurately attributed to its source. It does *not* include informally talking to other students about assignments, but make sure that whatever you write down and hand in as your work is either a) your own work or b) properly attributed to the source you got it from (me, a classmate, a Web page, a book). If you are not sure whether or how to cite something, ask! For more information, contact Student Judicial Services at 471-2841, or go to <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis.php>

Religious holidays: If you need to miss a class or other required class activity for the observance of a religious holiday, you must notify me at least 14 days in advance so that we can make alternative arrangements.
Note: the University's Religious Days Policy is online:
http://www.utexas.edu/provost/policies/religious_holidays/

Late work: I do not accept late work for ungraded assignments. For graded assignments, your work must be handed in at the date and time due to be considered on time. It will be docked five points for each day late, including weekends. Make-up tests are not normally rescheduled except for a religious holiday, unavoidable family absences, or severe illness. Talk to me as far ahead of time -- or as soon after you get sick -- as possible.

Cell phones: Please turn off your cell phone before the start of class each day. If your phone rings or you use it during class, I will count that class as an unexcused absence.