

# From Homer to Hollywood

Welcome syllabus assignments



Syllabus University of Houston, Fall 2009

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Office hours: 11am-1pm Thursdays or by appointment, Agnes Arnold Hall room 454. MCL Dept. phone number: (713) 743-3007, but e-mail is always preferable.

Course WebCT Page And Language Acquisition Center: This course is being taught as a hybrid (this concept will be discussed further on the first day of class), and important components of the course are delivered through WebCT Blackboard Vista. You should log in to the WebCT site regularly to participate in on-line discussions, watch film clips, and check for email and announcements. To get full credit, every week you must post at least once to that week's on-line discussion (10 postings total). Most weeks you are also required to watch a film outside of class. All of the films we will discuss in this class will be on reserve at the Language Acquisition Center on the 3rd floor of Agnes Arnold Hall.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course. If you have never taken a Classics course, however, or if you have never read any Greek literature before, you will need to put in extra effort in order to succeed in this class. In the early weeks, it will be essential for you to devote a significant amount of time to reading (and rereading!) the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. This course is best suited to those with some experience in Classics or reading Classical literature.

Required Reading: (This seems like a lot but four of these readings are quite short!)

The *Iliad* of Homer, in any translation. I recommended the translation of Stanley Lombardo (1997, ISBN: 0872203522), available at the UH bookstore. A free electronic translation is available here.

The *Odyssey* of Homer, in any translation. I recommended the translation of Stanley Lombardo (2000, ISBN: 0872204847), available at the UH bookstore. A free electronic translation is available here.

The *Histories* of Herodotus, in any translation. I recommended the translation of Aubrey de Selincourt (ISBN: 0140449086), available at the UH bookstore.

The *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, in any translation. A free electronic translation is available here. The translation of Christopher Collard (ISBN: 0192832816) is available at the UH bookstore.

The *Persians* of Aeschylus, in any translation.

The *Iphigeneia at Aulis* of Euripides, in any translation. Note, however, that the ancient manuscripts present us with two different endings, and translators sometimes choose one or the other, and sometimes include both. We will discuss both endings. A free electronic translation (containing only the first ending) is available here. The translation of W.S. Merwin and G. Dimock (ISBN: 0195077091) is available at the UH bookstore.

The *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes, in any translation. I recommend that of Jeffrey Henderson (ISBN: 0941051587), available at the UH bookstore. (Warning: Humor is extremely hard to translate. The translation you choose will make

a big difference in whether or not you enjoy this play. Avoid old/archaic or overly British translations – or anyone that translates the dirty parts into Latin!)

Recommended Reading (for those very new to Greek literature, looking for a good introduction):

Charles Rowan Beye, *Ancient Epic Poetry: Homer, Apollonius, Virgil, With a Chapter on the Gilgamesh Poems*. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2006. (ISBN 0-86516-607-2).

Components of Course Grade: Weekly Participation in Web Discussion (10 postings total) 25%; Essay 25%; Midterm Exam 25%; Final Exam 25%

\*Attendance Policy: Because of the nature of this course, which meets only once a week and depends heavily on class discussion, attendance is absolutely required. One unexcused absence will result in the loss of a letter grade. I reserve the right to drop you from the course after 2 absences.\*

## Schedule of Readings, Lectures, and Discussions

\* NOTE: All reading assignments must be completed in advance of the day to which they are assigned.

Week 1 (8/27): Introduction to the course and the Homeric *Iliad*

Week 2 (9/3): *Iliad* (cont.); Epic Poetry in Performance  
ASSIGNMENT: Read *Iliad* books 1, 6, 9; Watch *Double Life of Veronique*  
Recommended Reading: *Ancient Epic Poetry* chapter 4

Week 3 (9/10): *Iliad* (cont.)  
ASSIGNMENT: Read *Iliad* books 16, 18, 22, 24; Watch *Blade Runner*  
Recommended Reading: *Ancient Epic Poetry* chapter 4

Week 4 (9/17): Introduction to the *Odyssey*  
ASSIGNMENT: Read *Odyssey* 1-8  
Recommended Reading: *Ancient Epic Poetry* chapter 5

Week 5 (9/24): *Odyssey* (cont.)  
ASSIGNMENT: Read *Odyssey* 9-16; Watch *O Brother Where Art Thou?*  
Recommended Reading: *Ancient Epic Poetry* chapter 5

Week 6 (10/1): *Odyssey* concluded  
ASSIGNMENT: Read *Odyssey* 17-24; Watch *Chunhyang*  
Recommended Reading: *Ancient Epic Poetry* chapter 5

Week 7 (10/8): Introduction to Greek Drama  
ASSIGNMENT: Read *Agamemnon* and *Iphigeneia at Aulis*

Week 8 (10/15): *Agamemnon* and *Iphigeneia at Aulis*  
ASSIGNMENT: Review *Agamemnon* and *Iphigeneia at Aulis*; Watch *Iphigeneia*

Week 9 (10/22): Midterm Exam

Week 10 (10/29): Persians  
ASSIGNMENT: Read *Persians*; Watch *300*

Week 11 (11/5): *The Histories* of Herodotus and *The English Patient* (part 1)  
ASSIGNMENT: Read the *Histories* of Herodotus, books 1 and 2; watch *The English Patient*

Week 12 (11/12): The *Histories* of Herodotus and The English Patient (part 2)

ASSIGNMENT: Read the *Histories* of Herodotus, books 1 and 2; watch *The English Patient*

Week 13 (11/19): Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*

ASSIGNMENT: Read Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*; Watch 9 to 5

Week 14 (no class meeting): Essay due; THANKSGIVING BREAK

ASSIGNMENT: Essay due \*Monday, November 23 by noon\*

Week 15 (12/3): The *Iliad* revisited

ASSIGNMENT: Watch *Troy*; READ: "Learning Lessons From The Trojan War: Briseis and the Theme of Force."



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