

Epic Questions

(Classics 304: Jan. 23 to May 10, Spring Semester, 2012)

Instructor: Prof. Andrew Porter, Classics, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literature

Class location and hours: Curtin Hall 119, 2-3:15 p.m.

- Contact Me:
 - Email: portera@uwm.edu.
 - Office Visit: Curtin 812, Tuesdays 1-3 p.m. and by appointment
 - Office Phone: 414-229-6436.; Home/Cell/Skype phone number to be sent out as an email.

Epic Questions:

What other myths lie hidden in Greek epic? What of urban legends and folk tales? Are there other oral traditions with epic traditions? How have age old and current Near Eastern traditions influenced the epics of Homer and Hesiod? Are there any similarities between early Greek epics and the Bible? How did we get these epics in the first place? These are just some of the questions we will raise as we read and think through the earliest epics of the Western world.

Texts: The following books are available at Panther Bookstore, on Downer:

- Lattimore, Richmond, trans. 2011. *The Iliad of Homer*. Intro. by Richard Martin. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fagles, Robert, trans. 1999. *The Odyssey*. Penguin Classics. Intro. and Notes by Bernard Knox. New York: Penguin.
- Athanassakis, Apolstolos, trans. 2004. *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, Shield*. 2nd ed. Baltimore, Md: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Other readings as made available on D2L.

Course Structure:

The course structure is meant to encourage you to read thoughtfully, and to be consistent in your reading and thinking about these early epics. To do well in the class, you need both to think actively about central questions related to early epics, but also to ask your own questions related to what you read. Doing both of these things this will assist you in entering into meaningful dialogue in class. Dialogue means asking questions, responding to others' and the instructor's questions, bringing up points for class consideration.

The first 40% of the class will focus on rehearsing the narratives of all four epics. Following this, we will begin asking deeper questions of the sort listed on this syllabus and on D2L. The questions will not all be fully answered, since many of them are now being considered by leading scholars working on Homer and Hesiod. The questions, however, are important, and will hopefully encourage you to suggest some answers from your own understanding of ancient epics.

Weekly: To do well in this course, you will come to class each week:

- 1.) having read the required reading and having completed the short, pertinent quiz on D2L;
 - the schedule of reading and quizzes is available on the course schedule.
- 2.) having prepared a weekly question (WQ) of your own to hand in for class discussion, to be raised as we have time. Of course, spontaneous questions are more than welcome, as well. The idea here is to get

you thinking. The WQ is due on Mon. (except for the first week of the class and exam weeks, when it is due on Wed.)

- The WQ is to be based upon the pre-reading for class, listed on the course schedule. Directions for the class question can be found under Course Resources on D2L.

3.) having responded to one of the weekly questions (WRQ) I raise, to hand in;

- The weekly questions (from which you choose one for response) are available on D2L as indicated on the course schedule. Directions for your weekly response to a question can be found under Course Resources on D2L. It is due on each Mon. (except the first week of class and exam weeks, when it is due on Wed.)

(#2. and #3 are to be handed in on one sheet of paper, with #2 appearing first, as indicated in the instructions of D2L).

Grade:

Weekly Question (WQ) and class participation: 15%

- For specific instructions, see “Weekly Response Question and Response to Question” under Course Resources on D2L

Weekly Response to Question (WRQ): 15%

- For specific instructions, see “Weekly Response Question and Response to Question” under Course Resources on D2L

One Article Summary (due April 11 at the latest): 5%

- See Article Summary Requirements on D2L, under Contents. Since our course deals with oral traditions, you will be choosing an article from the online journal *Oral Tradition*, found as a link on the Links page of our website, and providing a short summary. It may be a good opportunity to consider your research and to read something that interests you and relates to what we are doing.

One Semester Paper (due May 9, at the latest): 20%

- See D2L: Research Paper Requirements

Weekly Pre-reading Quizzes: 15%

- Available on D2L, as per the Course schedule; Certain weeks have no assigned quiz work.

Average of Three Exams (See Class Schedule): 30%

- Exams will be a mixture of short answer (for example, describe the following character, story, or term) and essay (there will be some choice). The essay questions on the exam will generally be questions that you have formerly considered for class, or that you have raised in class, so it pays to spend time considering the questions as you go along. Exams will be returned one week after they have been given.

Late policy: Weekly questions (WQ) and responses (WRQ) cannot be handed in late, but I am dropping the two lowest grades (which includes any 0’s) for each to allow time out for sickness or family emergencies. Online quizzes have two attempts to allow for any computer problems, and I am dropping the two lowest scores (including any 0’s). Quizzes and exams cannot be made up except with a medical excuse for the day missed. Exceptions will not normally be made. If you have a chronic medical condition that may impede your attendance or participation, please visit arrange to meet with me during my office hours during the first two weeks of class, so that we can consider alternatives.

Use of class time: Since I have a class immediately following this one, could I ask that you visit me at office hours, email me, phone me, or post any question (of a non-personal nature) on the Mundane Matters Question open forum on D2L (I usually check this daily), rather than ask questions of a mundane nature (about testing, website, dates, etc.) before or even during class time. Such questions can rob us of our time to deal with the central questions we are addressing together.

Special Learning Needs: If you have special learning needs, including special accommodations, please communicate these with me in the first week or two of the course. It is my goal to help you succeed! The course is

specifically created to also be supportive of different learning styles, but also dhh students. If you are having difficulties in the course, whether or not you have a diagnosed physical or mental condition, I would be more than happy to meet with you and discuss your options. Please do this in the first two weeks of classes, to avoid difficulties.

Surveys: You will be asked to take a few minutes to fill out an anonymous survey in week ten and week fifteen of the course. If 90% of the class does so, I will add 1 point directly onto the end of term grade.

Syllabus Policy: This syllabus and course schedule is subject to change. Notice of change will normally be posted in the course “News” on the homepage on D2L or through an email.

Other Policies: For policies governing participation by students with disabilities, accommodation for religious observances, academic misconduct, complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures, sexual harassment, incompletes, and financial obligation, please see the Classics bulletin board outside the offices of the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, eighth floor, Curtin Hall, or the full explanation maintained by the Secretary of UWM at <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>

Course Schedule

Week 1: Jan. 23 and 25

- Welcome and Introduction to Ancient Epic;
- **The Great Rift and Loss:** Rehearsing the Contents of Homer’s *Iliad*, 1-9
- Discussing your Questions (WQ) and your responses (WRQ).
 - Pre-Read *Iliad* 1, 5, 9: Lattimore 1951:75-91, 146-70, 216-235: 62 pages in total. (Pre-reading Quizzes on D2L to be finished by Jan. 26, 11:59 p.m.)
 - Weekly Discussion Questions for class available on D2L, Jan. 23.
 - For assistance in understanding the context of a particular book of the *Iliad*, see “*Iliad and Odyssey Summary*”, available under Course Contents on D2L.

Week 2: Jan. 31 and Feb. 1

- **The Pressing Dilemma and the Intense Struggle:** Rehearsing the Contents of Homer’s *Iliad*, 10-17
- Discussing the Questions and your answers.
 - Pre-Read *Iliad* 10, 14, 16: Lattimore 1951: 236-52, 315-29, 351-74: 56 pages in total (Pre-reading Quizzes available on D2L, Jan. 25-30);
 - Weekly Discussion Questions for class available on D2L, Jan. 25.

Week 3: Feb. 6 and 8

- **Grief Unleashed and Pity Reborn:** Rehearsing the Contents of Homer’s *Iliad*, 18-24
- Discussing the Questions and your answers.
 - Pre-Read *Iliad* 18, 24: Lattimore 1951:396-413, 472-96, 497-518: 65 pages in total. (Pre-reading Quizzes available on D2L, Feb. 1 to Feb.5)
 - Weekly Discussion Questions for class available on D2L, Feb. 1.

Week 4: Feb. 13 (**Exam #1**) and 15

- **A Home on the Brink of Ruin:** Rehearsing the Contents of Homer’s *Odyssey* 1-4
- Discussing the Questions and your answers.
 - Pre-Read 1, 4: Fagles 1996:77-92, 124-51: 44 pages in total. (Pre-reading Quizzes available on D2L Feb. 8 to Feb. 14)
 - Weekly Discussion Questions for class available on D2L, Feb. 8.
 - For assistance in understanding the context of a particular book of the *Odyssey*, see “*Iliad and Odyssey Summary*”, available under Course Contents on D2L.

Week 5: Feb. 20 and 22

- **Adventures and Dangers:** Rehearsing the Contents of Homer's *Odyssey* 5-13
- Discussing the Questions and your answers.
 - Pre-Read *Odyssey* 9, 10, 11, Fagles 1996:211-70: 60 pages in total (Pre-reading Quizzes available on D2L Feb. 15 to Feb. 19)
 - Weekly Discussion Questions for class available on D2L, Feb. 15.

Week 6: Feb. 27 and 29

- **Return and Revenge:** Rehearsing the Contents of Homer's *Odyssey* 14-24
- Discussing the Questions and your answers.
 - Pre-Read *Odyssey* 16, 21, and 23, Fagles 1996:338-53, 424-38, 455-67: 44 pages in total. (Pre-reading Quizzes available on D2L Feb. 22 to 26)
 - Weekly Discussion Questions available for class on D2L, Feb. 22.

Week 7: Mar. 5 and 7

- **Is supremacy achieved? KHC and Hesiod's Theogony**
- **What is Hesiod's Complaint?** Rehearsing the Contents of Hesiod's *Works and Days*
- Discussing the Questions and your answers.
 - Read over the *Theogony*, but don't get lost in the details! (No quiz on this)
 - Pre-Read the *Works and Days*, Athanassakis 2004:65-85: 20 pages in total (Pre-reading Quizzes available on D2L, Feb. 27 to Mar. 4)
 - Weekly Discussion Questions available for class on D2L.

Week 8: Mar. 12 and Mar. 14

- **What are the origins of early Greek epic?**
- Discussing the Questions

Week 9: Mar. 26 and 28

- **What of world-wide oral epic traditions?**
- Discussing the Questions and your answers. Pre-Reading of select portions of Armenian and South Slavic epic on D2L.
- Weekly Discussion Questions available for class on D2L.

Week 10: Apr. 2 and 4

- **Are there similarities between Greek epic and Near Eastern literature?**
- Pre-Reading of select Near Eastern sources on D2L.
 - No Pre-Reading on D2L.

Week 11: Apr. 9 (Exam #2) and 11 (Article Summary due on April 11); Paper Idea due April 15th, at latest.

- Continuation of topic from week 10.
 - No Pre-Reading on D2L.

Week 12: Apr. 16 and 18

- **Are there similarities between Greek epic and the Bible?**
- Discussing the Questions and your answers. Pre-Reading on D2L, and quiz.
- Weekly Discussion Questions available for class on D2L.

Week 13: Apr. 23 and 25

- **What other myths are hidden in Homer?**
- Discussing the Questions and your answers. No Pre-Reading on D2L.
- Weekly Discussion Questions available for class on D2L.

Week 14: Apr. 30 and May 2

- **Continuation of topic from Week 13**

- Discussing the Questions and your answers. No Pre-Reading on D2L.

Week 15: May 7 and 9 (Paper due, at latest)

- **Urban legend and Folktale in early Greek epic?**
- **Epic and modern media? (Two pages of pre-reading for Movie)**

Final Exam (Exam #3): 12:30-2:30, Tuesday, May 15; Class Survey online.

Why not consider Classics as a major, minor, or career? Speak with Prof. David Mulroy (dmulroy@uwm.edu), Curtin Hall 803, to find out about all the possible ways you can study ancient Greek and Roman society in more detail. The study of classics can include a major in Classics or Classical Civilization, and a major, minor, or language requirement in Greek or Latin. **The department also participates in the Certificate Program in Ancient Mediterranean Studies (CAMS)**, designed to encourage students to pursue a serious interest in the ancient Mediterranean world in a structured way. A variety of disciplines are concerned with reconstructing various aspects of ancient civilizations, including linguistics, history, archaeology, art history, anthropology, philosophy, and literary studies. Classics 170. counts. For more information on the CAMS program, be sure to check our website: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CAMS/index.html> If you have any questions, or would like to sign up as a CAMS student right away, please contact the CAMS Program Coordinator: Prof. Elisabetta Cova, Asst. Professor of Classics Curtin 814 covae@uwm.edu.

Religious Studies Academic Advising in Religious Studies. If you are thinking about a major or a double major in Religious Studies, please contact Dr. Judith Beall , Interim Director of Religious Studies, at jbeall@uwm.edu

KEEP THIS SYLLABUS HANDY, AND REFER TO IT OFTEN!!