

LATIN EPIC, SILVER AND GOLD

INTERMEDIATE LATIN: POETRY
SPRING SEMESTER 2008
CLAS 332-01
MWF 13:10-14:10, OLD MAIN 003

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I. Course description and goals

This is an introductory course in Latin epic poetry. It will focus primarily on two authors: Lucan (39-65 CE) and Virgil (70 BCE-19 BCE). While Virgil has been called, by no less a literary critic than T. S. Eliot, the “classic of all Europe,” Lucan’s poetry has often been scorned, looked down upon as a lamentable fall from the grace of Virgil’s epic masterpiece, the *Aeneid*. Today, Lucan is very much *en vogue* in scholarly circles, and he is generally considered a ‘major’ Latin author. Still, even those critics who on the whole approve of Lucan manage to say some very nasty things about him, things that no self-respecting contemporary Latinist would ever dare to say about Virgil. W. E. Heitland wrote that Lucan’s epic poem *Bellum Civile* becomes at times a “vehicle for carrying great quantities of utterly irrelevant material.” Even Frederick Ahl, whose 1976 book *Lucan: An Introduction*, almost single-handedly inspired our new scholarly interest in Lucan, could not help but to say that some of Lucan’s poetry showed a lack of “poetic common sense.”

As these comments might suggest, there is, despite the upswing in recent critical interest in Lucan, a more long-standing critical perspective that is still with us, rightly or wrongly. It is a perspective which sees Virgil as the apogee of Latin poetry’s ‘Golden Age’ and Lucan as a degraded, decadent, flawed, awkward and at times embarrassing representative of the class of ‘Silver Age’ post-Virgilian epic. It is interesting to note, however, that things were not always thus in the critical estimation of Lucan’s work. Until the 18th century many critics regarded the *Bellum Civile* as a great piece of literature. In the introduction to an English translation of Lucan’s poem published in 1719, the Whig writer James Welwood esteemed the poem highly enough to set it alongside the *Aeneid* in a serious comparison of the various qualities of the two poems.

In this course we will carry out our own Intermediate Latin version of Welwood’s poetic *synkresis*—we will read Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* in counterpoint with Virgil’s *Aeneid*, adjudging their respective poetic strengths (and weaknesses) while trying to resist seeing their poetry in the longstanding (though for us unavoidable) critical matrix of ‘gold’ and ‘silver’. We will attend as closely as possible to the aesthetic properties (for lack of a better phrase) of the poetry—ideas, word order, diction, rhythm, sound, simile, metaphor, alliteration, etc., and try to come to our own conclusions about its quality. Our primary focus is, of course, improving our ability to read Latin poetry. Accordingly, we will emphasize a small class of fundamentals: increasing our Latin vocabulary, exercising our understanding of Latin grammar, and experimenting with scanning poetic lines and reading in meter.

II. Available at the Macalester bookstore

1. *Allen and Greenough’s New Latin Grammar*. Dover Publications (2006). ISBN: 978-0486448060 (abbreviation: **A&G**).
2. Lucan, *Civil War*. trans. Susan H. Braund. Oxford University Press (1999). ISBN: 978-0192839497.

Note: At the beginning of the course the instructor will provide you with one copy of S. H. Braund’s as-of-yet unpublished edition of selections from Lucan (abbreviation: **Lucan**). The edition includes preface, introduction, text, and commentary. You will also, over the course of the term, be provided with various photocopies featuring selections from other Latin hexameter poems.

III. Grading Scheme

Your final grade for the course will be calculated according to the following scheme:

Performance in class.....	30%
Quizzes.....	30% (10 graded quizzes worth 3% each)
Passage memorization.....	15%
HMML assignment.....	5%
Final exam.....	20%

	100%

A = 95-100%; A- = 90-94%; B+ = 88-89%; B = 83-87%; B- = 81-82%; C+ = 78-79%; C = 73-77%; C- = 70-72%; D = 60-69%; NC = less than 60%.

For more information on grading please consult the material in the following section.

IV. Course requirements

1. Performance in class. The success of this course depends in large part on your completing the assignments on time and being prepared to discuss them. Therefore a large portion of your grade reflects your in-class performance. To get a good grade in this area you should: 1) attend

all class meetings; 2) bring your primary text for that day (usually *Lucan*), your *A&G*, as well as any other necessary supporting materials; 3) be prepared to translate, scan, etc., and to contribute to a discussion of all of the readings assigned for that day; 4) ask questions when, after having given it some thought, you don't understand something; 5) listening thoughtfully and with respect to the ideas and opinions of other people in the class. In this class we aim to foster the art of respectful dialogue.

2. Quizzes. Over the course of the semester there will be ten quizzes (**FEB 1, 8, 15, 22; MAR 7, 14; APR 4, 11, 18, 25**) which will be administered at the beginning of the class period. Each quiz will take 10-12 minutes. The quizzes will test your ability to translate and to scan Latin poetry that we cover in class; they will also test your knowledge of Latin vocabulary and grammar. A more specific list of potential quiz material will be distributed during the class prior to each quiz so that you will be able to focus your studying.

3. Memorization, performance, and discussion of a passage from Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. Each of you will memorize, perform, and discuss your translation of a short (5 line) passage from the *BC* in class. First of all, pick a passage that you have some genuine interest in, for whatever reason (maybe you like the sound of it; maybe you like the images; maybe you like the ideas; maybe...). Scan it (if you haven't already). Memorize it (and the scansion will of course aide the memorization). Translate it—this is your chance to work on a polished 'literary' translation. There are many questions to consider when working on a polished translation, including: what is the significance of word order? How should the meter of the lines be reflected in English (if it should at all)? What is the appropriate lexical register (e.g.: Braund chooses to translate *viscera* in l. 1.3 as 'guts'; but why not the less harsh 'entrails,' 'innards' or 'organs'? In a polished translation, every word counts). These are just a few of the thousands of potential issues you might face in the process of translating a long poem. What issues do you face in translating your five lines? What are your priorities as a translator?

On the appointed day you will rise before the class and perform your five memorized Latin lines. You will then circulate a handout with 1) the original Latin and 2) your translation (with any notes that you want to share). You will read your translation and describe the thought process that stands behind it. You will then take questions/comments from the class. The total time allowed for this is 15 minutes. The order of presentations over the course of the term will be determined by sortition.

4. HMML Visit and Associated Assignment. On **Saturday, March 1st**, our class will visit the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (www.hmml.org), located on the campus of St. John's University in Collegeville, MN. While there we will have an opportunity to learn about manuscript transmission from an expert on manuscripts and rare books. In association with this visit will be an assignment on the transmission of texts which will be due on Monday, March 10th. In compensation for this added time commitment I have cancelled class on Monday, March 24th.

5. Final Exam. The final exam will comprise translation of material already seen, scansion, vocabulary, very-short-answer questions on technical terms and cultural matters, as well as a brief sight translation passage. **The exam has been scheduled by the Registrar for Friday, May 9th, from 13:30 to 15:30.** There should not be a conflict with any other exam, but if for some reason this time and date presents a real problem please let me know as soon as possible.

V. Misc. Information & Policies

Cell Phones and Laptops

In order to create a space conducive to respectful dialogue and learning I ask that you turn off your cell phone before class. Also, the use of personal computers is not allowed in class.

Moodle

Information for this class (including this syllabus) is available on Moodle.

Writing Help

We will not do a lot of formal composition in this class. However, if you feel like you could benefit from some help with your writing, do not hesitate to consult with the people the Macalester Academic Excellence (MAX) Center. Their peer-tutors assist students in all stages of their writing. The MAX Center is in Kagin Commons. Hours are S-Th 7-10 p.m.; M-F 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. or by appointment. Call x6121 for more information or to make an appointment. Becky Graham and Michael Dickel also provide writing assistance to students during the day M-F. You may walk in for help or call ahead (x6121) to make an appointment.

Academic Honesty

On the first day of this class you will receive a handout discussing issues of academic honesty. Please read this handout carefully and consult me if you have any questions.

Considering a major or minor in Classics?

This course counts toward the Major or Minor Concentrations in the Classics Department (Classical Civilization; Classical Archaeology; Classical Languages). Please don't hesitate to talk with me about majoring or minoring in the department.

VI. Course Calendar

• **Week 1: An Epic Opening**

JAN 28/Monday

Course preliminaries. An introduction to meter.

JAN 30/Wednesday

Read sections I and II from Califf's *A Guide to Latin Meter and Verse Composition* (handout).

1. Translate the first 7 lines of *Lucan*. Keep good notes about your translations, in which you write down all of the questions/problems that you have (and this goes for all future translation assignments as well). **2.** Mark out the long and short syllables in lines 1-7 according to Califf's *Guide*. **3.** Learn all of the vocabulary that you don't know, as you go (you will be quizzed on vocabulary from Lucan only).

Be sure to collect text, vocabulary, and notes for Aeneid 1.1-7.

FEB 1/Friday

1. Translate the first 7 lines of the *Aeneid* (handout). **2.** Mark out the long and short syllables in lines 1-7 according to Califf's *Guide*.

1st Quiz.

• **Week 2: Madness**

FEB 4/Monday

Lucan 1.8-23.

1. Translate the lines. 2. Scan lines 1-23 and be prepared to read out lines in class (and this goes for all future assignments). 3. Write at least 150 words total on the scansion of the two poems. In what interesting ways are they similar? Different? How do the foot divisions relate to the sense divisions? How does the rhythm of a line possibly reinforce/undermine the sense of that line?

FEB 6/Wednesday

Lucan 1.24-32.

FEB 8/Friday

Lucan 1.32-45.

2nd Quiz.

Be sure to collect text, vocabulary and notes for *Georgics* 3.1-48 (handout).

• **Week 3: Praise**

FEB 11/Monday

Georgics 3.1-20 (handouts).

FEB 13/Wednesday

Georgics 3.21-33 (handouts).

FEB 15/Friday

Georgics 3.34-48 (handouts).

3rd Quiz.

• **Week 4: An Epic Task**

FEB 18/Monday

Lucan 1.67-89.

FEB 20/Wednesday

Lucan 1.89-102.

FEB 22/Friday

Lucan 1.103-118.

4th Quiz.

• **Week 5: Lightning Strikes**

FEB 25/Monday

Lucan 1.118-135.

FEB 27/Wednesday

Lucan 1.135-145.

FEB 29/Friday

Lucan 1.146-157.

*****SATURDAY, MARCH 1st: HMML VISIT*****

Depart campus 8:00 am.

Please read the following web pages on the history of the HMML before departing:

1) <http://www.hmml.org/about06/about.htm>

2) <http://www.hmml.org/about06/history.htm>

3) and the four parts of the story listed here:

http://www.hmml.org/Early_HMML/kapsner1.htm

• Week 6: Caesar, the Rubicon, and the Lion

MAR 3/Monday

Lucan 1.183-203 (Caesar has the vision of Rome and contemplates crossing the Rubicon).

MAR 5/Wednesday

Lucan 1.203-212.

Aeneid 12.4-8 (handout).

MAR 7/Friday

Lucan 1.213-227.

5th Quiz.

Be sure to collect text, vocabulary and notes for the excerpt from *Aeneid* 2 (handout).

• Week 7: Ghosts

MAR 10/Monday

Excerpt from *Aeneid* 2 (handout).

HMML Assignment due.

MAR 12/Wednesday

Lucan 3.8-23.

MAR 14/Friday

Lucan 3.24-35

6th Quiz

• Week 8:

SPRING BREAK

• Week 9: The Speaking Dead

MAR 24/Monday

*****CLASS CANCELLED*****

MAR 26/Wednesday

Lucan 6.624-653.

Be sure to collect text, vocabulary and notes for the excerpt from *Aeneid* 6 (handout).

MAR 28/Friday

Excerpt from *Aeneid* 6 (handout).

• Week 10: The Beginning of the End

MAR 31/Monday

Lucan 7.617-637; 7.647-652.

APR 2/Wednesday

Lucan 7.652-666.

APR 4/Friday

Lucan 7.666-682.

7th Quiz

• WEEK 11: An Epic Nightmare

APR 7/Monday

Lucan 7.728-746; 7.760-770

APR 9/Wednesday

Lucan 7.770-789.

APR 11/Friday

Lucan 7.789-811.

8th Quiz

• Week 12: The Death of Pompey

APR 14/Monday

Lucan 8.542-576.

APR 16/Wednesday

Lucan 8.577-595.

APR 18/Friday

Lucan 8.595-610.

9th Quiz

• Week 13: Cato

APR 21/Monday

Lucan 8.610-635; 8.663-673.

APR 23/Wednesday

Lucan 8.673-688; 9.190-201.

APR 25/Friday

Lucan 9.201-217.

10th Quiz

• Week 14: Looking Back at Rome's Future

ARP 28/Monday

Lucan 9.961-986.

APR 30/Wednesday

Lucan 9.986-999.

Be sure to collect text, vocabulary and notes for the excerpt from *Aeneid* 8 (handout).

MAY 2/Friday

Excerpt from *Aeneid* 8 (handout).

• Week 15: No End In Sight...

MAY 5/Monday

Conclusions

FINAL EXAM

Friday, MAY 9, 13:30-15:30

Old Main 003