

MODULE SYLLABUS

The Muses' Playground: Epic in Antiquity
CLCS5001

Module Code: CLCS5001
Credit points: 20
Pre-requisites/restrictions: None
Taught: Semester 1
Lecturer: Dr Ruth Parkes

GENERAL INFORMATION

This module focuses on three epics – this year the focus is on Greek and Roman epic. We will be studying Homer's *Odyssey*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* against the background of the epic genre as a whole. The module provides students with a detailed study of the genre of epic, and a sense of evolution. As such, the module highlights the historical development of the genre and the importance of intertextuality for the appreciation particularly of later epic, but also considers overarching themes such as descriptions of warfare, portrayals of gods and use of mythology. The module also allows students to develop their methodological skills by applying, for instance, narratological, historicist, and gender-focussed readings, to the studied texts.

AIM(S)

- To develop students' knowledge and understanding of the epic genre;
- To provide students with the tools to critically evaluate epic texts in the contexts of genre and socio-historical situations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module all students should be able to:

- demonstrate a sound knowledge of the genre of epic and of the three individual epics read as part of the module;
- display an understanding and critical appreciation of key themes and diverse scholarly approaches to epic;
- demonstrate an understanding of literary, socio-cultural and historical contexts, and how these affect our interpretation of the chosen set texts.

OFFICE HOURS/HOW TO CONTACT ME

Please feel free to come and see me if you would like to discuss any problems you may have concerning this module. Try, if at all possible, to come during my office hours. My office hours are Tuesday 10.00-11.00, Thursday 14.00-15.00 and Friday 11.00-12.00. If you come to see me at another time and I am not in because of teaching or other commitments, please email me (R.Parkes@uwtsd.ac.uk). You can also ask questions (not confidential) in the discussion board available in the Moodle space for this course.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

This 20-credit module has 30 contact hours, inclusive of 2 revision classes. Attendance is compulsory for ALL lectures and workshops. If you cannot make a class because of illness or other good reason, you need to inform the Faculty Office.

Lectures and workshops take place on:

Tuesday 15.00-16.50 (Arts 1); Thursday 16.00-16.50 (Tucker 03)

Course Outline:

Type	Content
lecture	module introduction
lecture	Homer's <i>Iliad</i>
lecture	Homeric poetry and its context
lecture	Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>
lecture	Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>
lecture	Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>
lecture	Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>
workshop	Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>
lecture	Apollonius' <i>Argonautica</i>
lecture	Early Roman Epic
lecture	Catullus 64
workshop	Catullus 64
lecture	Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i>
lecture	Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i>
lecture	Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i>
lecture	Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i>
lecture	Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i>
lecture	Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i>
workshop	Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i>
lecture	Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i>
lecture	Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i>
lecture	Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i>
lecture	Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i>
lecture	Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i>
lecture	Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i>
lecture	Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i>
lecture	Lucan's <i>Civil War</i>
workshop	Lucan's <i>Civil War</i>
lecture	Revision
lecture	Revision

ASSESSMENT

Coursework (50%)

1. one 500-word exercise (20%)
2. one 1,500-word essay (30%)

Coursework

Coursework 1: 500 word gobbet

(passages tbc following response of the external examiner)

To be submitted by 4th November 2016 no later than midnight, returned by twenty working days later.

You should choose ONE of the following gobbets and comment on its context and content in an essay of 500 **words** (worth 20% of your final mark) :

1.

“So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and did as he was ordered. Then the son of Peleus sprang like a lion to the door - not alone, but two lieutenants went with him, the hero Automedon and Alkimos, the two that Achilles honored most of his companions, after Patroklos was dead. They then released the horses and mules from the yoke, and brought in the herald, the old man’s crier, and sat him down on a stool: and from the well-polished cart they lifted out the unlimited gifts to ransom the head of Hektor But they left behind two cloaks and a closely-woven tunic, for Achilles to wrap the body before he gave it to Priam to carry home. Achilles called out his serving-women and told them to wash the body and anoint it all over, carrying it first to another room so that Priam should not see his son- in case in his anguish of heart he might not control his anger on seeing his son, and then Achilles might have his own heart stirred to violence, and kill him, and so offend against Zeus’ command.” (Homer *Iliad* 24.571-586)

2.

“He found them listening in silence to a song which their admirable bard was singing to them about the Achaeans’ return from Troy and the disasters that Pallas Athene made them suffer. In her room upstairs Penelope, wise daughter of Icarius, caught the words of his stirring ballad and came down from her quarters by the steep staircase, not alone, but with two waiting-women in attendance. Face to face with her suitors the great lady drew a fold of her bright head-dress over her cheeks and took her stand by a pillar of the massive roof, with one of her faithful maids on either side. Then, bursting into tears, she broke in on the worthy minstrel.

‘Phemius’ she said, ‘with your knowledge of the ballads that poets have made about the deeds of men or gods you could enchant us with many other tales than this. Choose one of those now for your audience here, and let them drink their wine in peace. But give us no more of your present song. It is too sad: it never fails to wring my heart.’”

(Homer *Odyssey* 1.325-342)

3.

“Seizing the olive pole, they drove its sharpened end into the Cyclop’s eye, while I used my weight from above to twist it home, like a man boring a ship’s timber with a drill which his mates below him twirl with a strap they hold at either end, so that it spins continuously. In much the same way we handled our pole with its red-hot point and twisted it in his eye till the blood boiled up round the burning wood. The fiery smoke from the blazing eyeball singed his lids and brow all round, and the very roots of his eye crackled in the heat. I was reminded of the loud hiss that comes from a great axe or adze when a smith plunges it into cold water- to temper it and give strength to the iron. That is how the Cyclops’ eye hissed round the olive stake. He gave a dreadful shriek, which echoed round the rocky walls, and we backed away from him in terror, while he pulled the stake from his eye, streaming with blood. Then he hurled it away from him with frenzied hands.”

(Homer *Odyssey* 9.382-398)

4.

“From the dead around him there rose a clamour like the call of wild fowl, as they scattered in their panic. His looks were sombre as the blackest night, and with his naked bow in hand and an arrow on the string he glanced ferociously this way and that as though at any moment he might shoot. Terrible too was the golden strap he wore as a baldric over his breast, depicting with grim artistry the forms of bears, wild boars, and glaring lions, with scenes of conflict and of battle, of bloodshed and the massacre of men. That baldric was a masterpiece that no one should have made, and I can only hope that the craftsman who conceived the work will rest content.

One look was enough to tell Heracles who I was, and he greeted me in mournful tones.

“Unhappy man!” he exclaimed, after reciting my titles. “So you too are working out some miserable doom as I was a slave to when the sun shone over my head. Son of Zeus though I was, unending troubles came my way, For I was bound in service to a master far beneath my rank, who used to set

me the most arduous tasks. Once, being unable to think of anything more difficult for me to do, he sent me down here to bring away the Hound of hell. And under the guiding hands of Hermes and bright-eyed Athene, I did succeed in capturing him and I dragged him out of Hades' realm.”
(Homer *Odyssey* 11.605-626)

Coursework 2: 1,500 word essay

(titles the following response of the external examiner)

To be submitted by 13th December 2016 no later than midnight, returned in January.

Write a 1,500 word essay on ONE of the following essay titles (worth 30% of your final mark). :

1. What effects does Virgil derive from the structural organization of the *Aeneid*?
2. Since the human plot of the *Aeneid* could be narrated entirely in human terms, what does the participation of the gods contribute?
3. Why did Ovid choose to write about change? Illustrate your answer with examples from the text
4. How and why does Ovid engage with tragedy in his *Metamorphoses*?

Exam

The exam for this module will take place in the January examination period. It will consist of gobbets and essays on the epics under consideration.

General assessment information: coursework

Coursework submission for this module will be through Moodle. Please follow the instructions on the module's Moodle page for how to submit your work. The deadline for submission will be at midnight on the day given above.

Word count

Please be aware that if you go significantly over or under the word limit (i.e. more than 10%), you may be penalised. REMEMBER that the word count includes everything apart from the bibliography, titles or captions. You must provide the word count clearly on the cover sheet.

Welsh First language

If your first language is Welsh and you would like to submit any assessed coursework in Welsh, please see the Faculty Office as soon as possible to make arrangements for this.

Special needs / requirements

If you have any special needs (e.g. dyslexia, visual impairment) that need to be taken into account for the teaching of this module, please make sure that I am made aware of this so that I can make sure that I fully support you in your studies.

Returning of work

Detailed feedback is given on the returned piece of work but if you would like to discuss your work in more detail, do come and see me during one of my office hours (see times given above).

Bibliography

A bibliography is provided in the Moodle space for this course.

READING:

Essential

Homer's *Iliad* (tr. M. Hammond, *Homer The Iliad*)

Homer's *Odyssey* (tr. E. V. Rieu, *Homer The Odyssey*)

Apollonius' *Argonautica* (tr. Hunter, R., *Apollonius Rhodius: Jason and the Golden Fleece (The Argonautica)*)

Catullus 64 (recommended Lee, G. (1998), *Catullus: The Complete Poems*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. A free version of poem 64 is available at

<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/cat64.shtml>)

Vergil's *Aeneid* (tr. D. West, *Virgil. The Aeneid*)

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (tr. A. D. Melville, *Ovid Metamorphoses*)

Lucan's *Civil War* (the loeb translation by J. D. Duff is available as an online resource in the library)

Foley, J. M. 2005. *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Malden (MA) and Oxford: Blackwell. (e-book in library)

Toohey, P. 1992. *Reading Epic: An Introduction to the Ancient Narratives*. New York and London: Routledge.

Recommended (general)

Boyle, A. J. 1996. *Roman Epic*. London: Routledge.

Feeney, D. C. 1991. *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition*. New York and Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hainsworth, J. B. 1991. *The Idea of Epic*. Berkeley (CA) and Oxford: University of California Press.

Hardie, Philip. 1993. *The epic successors of Virgil: A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jenkyns, R. 1992. *Classical Epic*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press.

Keith, A. M. 2000. *Engendering Rome: Women in Latin Epic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Malpas, S. and Wake, P. 2006. *Routledge Companion to Critical Theory*. London: Routledge.

Newman, J. K. 1986. *The Classical Epic Tradition*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Pavlock, B. 1990. *Eros, Imitation and the Epic Tradition*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Recommended (on specific set texts):

Ahl, F. M. 1976. *Lucan: An Introduction*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Boyd, B. W. 2002. *Companion to Ovid*. Leiden: Brill.

Fowler, R. 2004. *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martindale, C. 1997. *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Myers, Sara. 1999. 'The Metamorphosis of a Poet: Recent Work on Ovid' *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 89: 190-204

Papanghelis, T. D. and Rengakos, A. 2001. *Companion to Apollonius Rhodius*. Leiden: Brill.