

MODULE SYLLABUS

EPIC

2/3CLA3720

Module Code:	2CLA3720 & 3CLA3720
Credit points:	20
Pre-requisites/restrictions:	None
OPTION	CS
Taught:	Michaelmas term 2009
Lecturer:	Dr Mirjam Plantinga

GENERAL INFORMATION

Content

This module focuses on three epics (Homer's *Iliad*, Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, Vergil's *Aeneid*) and provides students with a detailed study of the genre of epic. Starting with one of the most famous of all epics, Homer's *Iliad*, we shall study in detail Homer's narrative techniques, his description of warfare and battle scenes, and his portrayal of the gods. The second epic of the module is the *Argonautica*, an epic from the Hellenistic period that forms a bridge between Homer and Vergil. Here we shall study Apollonius' use of the myths associated with the Argonaut saga, his innovations of the epic genre, his portrayal of prophecy and the divine, and the characters of Medea, Jason, and Heracles. With Vergil's *Aeneid* we move into Roman epic and discuss the complex reworking of both Homer and Apollonius Rhodius. But the *Aeneid* is also very much a national epic and the way in which the epic reflects the values of its civilisation is another focus of attention. Several themes encountered in the study of Homer and Apollonius Rhodius shall also come back when we analyse Vergil's attitude to war and the defeated, his portrayal of women, and the role of the gods.

AIM(S)

To enable students to:

- study in detail the works of three authors of Epic: Homer, Apollonius Rhodius and Vergil
- gain a thorough knowledge of the key themes in the study of Epic and its development as a genre.
- place the texts studied in their literary and historical contexts
- develop and enhance their skills of literary appreciation and analysis

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

A. Subject specific skills and knowledge:

- demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the three epics: the *Iliad*, the *Argonautica*, the *Aeneid*.
- demonstrate a knowledge and awareness of the traditions of epic and the development of epic as a genre
- show an understanding of the literary and historical context of the epics studied

In addition level 5 students should be able to:

- identify and describe the key themes and subjects in the study of Greek and Roman epic
- demonstrate skills of literary appreciation
- demonstrate an up-to-date knowledge of the secondary literature on the topic

In addition level 6 students should be able to:

- analyse and assess critically the key themes and subjects in the study of Greek and Roman epic
- present a detailed literary analysis of the studied texts
- evaluate critically the modern scholarship on the topic

B. Transferable skills and knowledge:

- demonstrate appropriate written skills
- present written work in a manner appropriate for a relevant/professional audience
- access and employ the relevant e-resources for the course
- demonstrate their critical, analytical, and problem-solving skills
- demonstrate independent learning skills through the use of the library and electronic resources

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 Monday 11.00-12.00, Tuesday 10.00-11.00, Wednesday 9.00-10.00, and Thursday 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 (m.plantinga@lamp.ac.uk) or phone me (01570 424 911). 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 20 lectures, 1 revision class, and 4 seminars. Lectures take place on Monday at 10.00-11.00 in LR12 (Canterbury building) and on Thursday at 10.00-11.00 in LR12 (Canterbury building).

Course Outline:

Lecture	Title	Content
1.	Homer	Introduction
2.	Homer	The poet's craft I
3.	Homer	The poet's craft II
4.	Homer	Battle scenes and warfare
5.	Homer	Manhood and heroism
6.	Homer	Portraying the gods
7.	Homer	<i>Iliad</i> 24

Lecture	Title	Content
8.	Apollonius Rhodius	Introduction
9.	Apollonius Rhodius	The poet's craft
10.	Apollonius Rhodius	Heroism: Jason and Heracles
11.	Apollonius Rhodius	Medea in book 3
12.	Apollonius Rhodius	Portraying the gods
13.	Apollonius Rhodius	Book 4 I
14.	Apollonius Rhodius	Book 4 II
15.	Vergil	Introduction
16.	Vergil	The poet's craft
17.	Vergil	Heroism: Aeneas; war and the defeated
18.	Vergil	Women
19.	Vergil	The portrayal of the gods
20.	Vergil	Book 6

SEMINARS

All seminars are compulsory. If you cannot make a seminar group because of illness or other good reason, you need to inform me (m.plantinga@lamp.ac.uk) about this.

You will need to sign-up for a seminar group in the sign-up sheets during the first lecture for this course. If you have not done this, please contact me (m.plantinga@lamp.ac.uk) as soon as possible, so that you can be allocated to a seminar group.

There are 2 seminar groups:

Group	Day	Time	Place
Group 1	Monday	9.00-10.00	LR19 (27 College Street, next door to TRS)
Group 2	Monday	2.00-3.00	Cyril Williams Room, TRS

Preparation material for the seminars will be available in the Moodle space for this course in the week preceding each seminar.

Seminar	Title	Week
Homer	Portrayal of women: <i>Iliad</i> 3 & 6	3
Apollonius Rhodius	Doliones episode (book 1) & Amycus episode (book 2)	5
Apollonius Rhodius	Circe episode (book 4)	7
Vergil	Book 9	9

ASSESSMENT

Level 5:

Examination

one two-hour exam (50%)

Coursework

1. one 1,000 word exercise (20%)
2. one 2,000 word essay (30%)

Level 6:**Examination**

one two-hour exam (50%)

Coursework

one 3,000 word essay (50%)

Exam

The exam which constitutes 50% of your final mark will last 2 hours. The exam consists of two parts (A and B). You need to answer one gobbet and one essay question. In part A you are asked to comment on the context and content of 3 of 6 gobbets. You should not spend more than 60 minutes on this question. Part A will give you 1/2 of your total mark for the exam. In part B you will be given a choice of 5 essay questions. You will need to write one essay. You should reserve app. 60 minutes for this part of the exam. Part B will give you 1/2 of your total mark for the exam. The exam will test breadth of knowledge and you will be required to show knowledge of different areas in the exam from that chosen in the course work. You should also ensure that you avoid repetition in your answer to different questions within the exam itself.

Course work

FOR LEVEL 5: Two pieces of work are required for this module. Details are given below.

FOR LEVEL 6: One piece of work is required for this module. Details are given below.

Please consult the School Office website at www.lamp.ac.uk/schooloffice for guidelines on the submission of your work and extension guidelines.

NOTE: Submission, assessment, and extension regulations have CHANGED from 2008/9. Please consult the guidelines at the School Office website carefully.

Word count

FOR LEVEL 5: Your first piece of work should be 1,000 words long. Your second piece of work should be 2,000 words long.

FOR LEVEL 6: Your essay should be 3,000 words long.

For information and guidelines regarding word-count limits and penalties, please consult the School Office website at www.lamp.ac.uk/schooloffice.

REMEMBER that the word count includes everything apart from the bibliography, titles or captions. You must provide the word count clearly on your piece of coursework.

Welsh First language

If your first language is Welsh and you would like to submit any assessed coursework in Welsh, please see the School 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 our Welfare Officer, Dr Magdalena Öhrman, is made aware of this so that we can make sure that we fully support you in your studies.

Returning of work

Details of the course work deadline and return date are given below. Detailed feedback is given on the essay cover sheet 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).

For more information on the return of your work, please consult the School Office website at www.lamp.ac.uk/schooloffice

Some extra assignment/essay guidelines

Help for the writing of coursework is available in the Classics Programmes of Study Handbook and you are advised to read the relevant sections carefully. Marks will be deducted if your piece of coursework is not presented properly (e.g. double-spacing, font 12 is needed). Note that all coursework needs to be word-processed; hand-written work will not be accepted.

Here are some further guidelines.

- **Planning your assignment/essay**

It is important to spend enough time thinking about the question. What is the question asking for? What are the difficulties associated with that particular question? Do you need to discuss a definition before you can proceed with the piece of coursework itself? Do you understand the question fully?

Make a detailed plan. This will help you to stick to the question and decide how much space you have got to devote to each section of your piece of coursework. You need to take care that the discussion is balanced and that you cover everything (extra examples can always be given in brackets or a footnote with only a reference to the passage; this will take up hardly any space).

Show in your piece of coursework that you have thoroughly read the play / work you are discussing. In a gobbet question you need to make sure that you focus on the passage given.

- **Planning enough time for your assignment**

This may seem self-evident, but it is good to remember that you will always need a lot of time (and more than you think) to structure and phrase your ideas properly. It is often not that difficult to get the ideas, it takes much more time to get it all down on paper.

- **The structure of your assignment**

Start with a short introduction in which you immediately focus on the question and show how you are going to discuss this in your assignment. If you have chosen to focus on a certain element, but leave the rest, then this is the time to do say so and defend that choice.

Do NOT give me a long biography of the poet or author in question unless it is directly relevant for the question you are answering. In the middle part of your text you discuss the main arguments. You always finish with a short conclusion in which you summarise your findings and come up with a conclusion. Do NOT bring in any new elements at this stage. It is important that the arguments 'flow'; i.e. that there is no awkward gap or link between sentences or between paragraphs. Help your reader along and do not be too allusive.

If you illustrate your ideas with an example, you need to give an exact reference to the text involved. Full details of the translation you use need to be given in your bibliography.

Whenever you quote from a primary or secondary source you need to add page references. It is NOT enough to mention merely the author and title of a work; you need to give a page reference as well. Use full quotations for your best examples; leave the rest for short references in brackets or in your footnotes. Be selective with your examples.

You need to watch plagiarism whenever you use secondary literature (**please read carefully the plagiarism section in the Classics Programmes of Study Handbook**). Please consult the Classics Programmes of Study Handbook for advice on how to reference secondary literature. Information on plagiarism can also be found on the School Office website: www.lamp.ac.uk/schooloffice

- **Bibliography**

You ALWAYS need to add a bibliography at the end of your assignment, with at the very least the translation(s) you have used. This is your primary source. You do need to read secondary books as well. Use the lecture handouts and books listed in the module syllabus as a guide, but do also some of your own browsing through the library catalogues (or do a subject search).

Several books are available as e-books. Many articles are also available via J-STOR. If you are not sure how to access these and other e-resources, do come and see me. If you are using websites, please read carefully the relevant section in the Classics Programmes of Study Handbook.

Similarly, if you have a question about a particular book or do not know how to use the computer system, please do feel free to discuss this with me. It is not enough just to read secondary literature. You also need to show in the assignment when you have used it (please read the Classics Programmes of Study Handbook section on plagiarism carefully).

- **Writing**

Remember that this is a formal written piece of work; do not write as you would speak. Write full sentences and do not string too many ideas together with the help of a whole series of commas or no punctuation at all. Think carefully about the phrasing of your ideas. Check the spelling of your ideas carefully (and especially the spelling of ancient names!!)

- **In case of problems....**

Do come and see me if you have any problems with the writing or planning of your piece of coursework.

Essay(s) / Assignment(s)

FOR LEVEL 5:

1,000-word exercise: To be submitted by **Tuesday 27 October**; returned on Tuesday **17 November**. You should choose ONE of the following subjects and write an essay of **1,000 words** (worth 20% of your final mark).

EITHER

'Sighing heavily, Achilles of the swift feet answered her:
You know; since you know why must I tell you all this?
We went against Thebe, the sacred city of Eetion,
and the city we sacked and carried everything back to this place,
and the sons of the Achaians made a fair distribution
and for Atreus' son they chose out Chryseis of the fair cheeks.
The Chryses, priest of him who strikes from afar, Apollo,
came beside the fast ships of the bronze-armoured Achaians to ransom
back his daughter, carrying gifts beyond count and holding
in his hands wound on a staff of gold the ribbons of Apollo
who strikes from afar, and supplicated all the Achaians,
but above all Atreus' two sons, the marshals of the people.
Then all the rest of the Achaians cried out in favour
that the priest be respected and the shining ransom be taken;
yet this pleased not the heart of Atreus' son, Agamemnon,
but harshly he sent him away with a strong order upon him.'

Iliad 1.364-379

OR

'Now to Helen of the white arms came a messenger, Iris,
in the likeness of her sister-in-law, the wife of Antenor's
son, whom strong Helikaon wed, the son of Antenor,
Laodike, loveliest looking of all the daughters of Priam.
She came on Helen in the chamber; she was weaving a great web,
a red folding robe, and working into it numerous struggles
of Trojans, breakers of horses, and bronze-armoured Achaians,

struggles that they endured for her sake at the hands of the war god.
Iris of the swift feet stood beside her and spoke to her:
'Come with me, dear girl, to behold the marvellous things done
By the Trojans, breakers of horses, and bronze-armoured Achaians,
who just now carried sorrowful war against each other,
in the plain, and all their desire was for deadly fighting;
now they are all seated in silence, the fighting has ended;
they lean on their shields, the tall spears stuck in the ground beside them.'
But Menelaos the warlike and Alexandros will fight
with longs spears against each other for your possession.'

Iliad 3.121-37

OR

'He made the earth upon it, and the sky, and the sea's water,
and the tireless sun, and the moon waxing into her fullness,
and on it all the constellations that festoon the heavens,
the Pleiades and the Hyades and the strength of Orion
and the Bear, whom men give also the name of the Wagon,
who turns about in a fixed place and looks at Orion
and she alone is never plunged in the wash of Ocean.
On it he wrought in all their beauty two cities of mortal
men. And there were marriages in one, and festivals.
They were leading the brides along the city from their maiden chambers
under the flaring of torches, and the loud bride song was arising.
The young men followed the circles of the dance, and among them
the flutes and the lyres kept up their clamour as in the meantime
the women standing each at the door of her court admired them.
The people were assembled in the market place, where a quarrel
had arisen, and two men were disputing over the blood price
for a man who had been killed. One man promised full restitution
in a public statement, but the other refused and would not accept nothing.
Both then made for an arbitrator, to have a decision;
and people were speaking up on either side, to help both men.'

Iliad 18.483-502

OR

'First he placed along his legs the fair greaves linked with
silver fastenings to hold the greaves at the ankles.
Afterward he girt on about his chest the corselet,
and across his shoulder slung the sword with the nails of silver,
a bronze sword, and caught up the great shield, huge and heavy
next, and from it light glimmered far, as from the moon.
As when across water a light shines to mariners,

from a blazing fire, when the fire is burning high in the mountains
in a desolate steading, as the mariners are carried unwilling
by storm winds over the fish-swarming sea, far away from their loved ones;
so the light from the fair elaborate shield of Achilles
shot into high air. And lifting the helm he set it
massive upon his head, and the helmet crested with horse-hair
shone like a star, and the golden fringes were shaken about it
which Hephaistos has driven close along the horn of the helmet.
And brilliant Achilles tried himself in his armour, to see
If it fitted close, and how his glorious limbs ran within it,
and the armour became as wings and upheld the shepherd of the people.

Iliad 19.331-48

2,000-word essay: To be submitted by **Tuesday 8 December**; returned on **Tuesday 15 January**. You should choose ONE of the following subjects and write an essay of **2,000 words** (worth 30% of your final mark).

1. Discuss the role and portrayal of the goddess Hera in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*.
2. Examine the heroism of Jason and Heracles in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*.
3. Discuss the ending of the *Argonautica*. To what extent does it provide the reader with a sense of closure? Why does the epic end here and not at the end of the Phaeacian episode?
4. To what extent does Apollonius play with the reader's knowledge of Euripides' *Medea* in his *Argonautica*?

FOR LEVEL 6:

3,000-word essay: To be submitted by **Tuesday 8 December**; returned on **Tuesday 15 January**. You should choose ONE of the following subjects and write an essay of **3,000 words** (worth 50% of your final mark).

1. Is the *Iliad* a poem of 'death' or 'life'? Discuss this question in relation to Homer's concept of war.
2. What part is played by 'divine spectators' in the *Iliad*? How sharply, and with what motives, does the poet portray antagonisms among the gods themselves?
3. Analyse the different ways in which Apollonius uses landscape in the *Argonautica*.
4. In what ways does Apollonius experiment with and distance himself from the old epic concept of war and battle?
5. Analyse Apollonius' use of the *Odyssey* in book 4. To what extent does Apollonius renew the genre of epic?

Bibliography

A bibliography is provided in the Moodle space for this course. Please note that the books mentioned there are only recommendations. You should also make use of the relevant lecture notes and handouts and do some independent research.

Unless they are available in electronic format, all items for the reading list have been placed on library-only loan and are kept behind the library counter. Note that all these items can be reserved via the computerised catalogue – a very useful device that allows you to plan ahead with your reading for the essay.

PRESCRIBED TEXT BOOKS (essential purchases):

These are the recommended translations from which all quotations employed in the lectures will be taken. Other translations are available, but the recommended ones should be used if at all possible.

1. Lattimore, L. (1961), *The Iliad of Homer*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2. Hunter, R.L. (1998), *Jason and the Golden Fleece: The Argonautica*, Oxford: Oxford World's Classics.
3. West, D. (1991), *Virgil: The Aeneid*, London: Penguin Classics.

Course Materials and Moodle

All information regarding this course, including lecture and seminar handouts, powerpoints, this module syllabus, the bibliography, assessment assignment details and lecture podcasts will be available in the Moodle space for this course. Further, the Moodle space for this course will offer you a discussion board, where you can ask questions and discuss aspects of the course with your fellow students and me.

If you have trouble accessing any of this material or the Moodle space for this course in general, please contact as soon as possible the departmental Moodle co-ordinator, Dr. Errietta Bissa (e.bissa@lamp.ac.uk).