

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 Monday 11.00-12.00, Tuesday 11.00-12.00 and Wednesday 10.00-11.0. 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: Joanne.Price@uwtsd.ac.uk.

Lectures and workshops take place on:

Monday 9.00-10.50 (Red Room); Thursday 11.00-11.50 (LR 7)

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 the following response of the external examiner)

To be submitted by the 20th of October 2015 no later than 3 pm, 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.

“he fell with a crash, and his armour clattered around him. Blood soaked his hair, lovely as the Graces' hair, and his plaits tight-bound with gold and silver. As when a man nurtures a flourishing olive-shoot in a solitary place, where plenty of water wells up – a fine, healthy shoot it is, shaken by the breath of every wind that blows, and it blossoms thick with white flowers: but suddenly there comes a wind in a great storm, and uproots it from its trench and lays out its length on the earth. Such was the son of Panthoös, Euphorbos of the ash spear, as Menelaos son of Atreus killed him, and set to stripping his armour.”

(Homer, *Iliad* 17.50-60)

2.

“business over, and his morning labours done, he once more snatched up a couple of my men and prepared his meal. When he had eaten, he turned his fatted sheep out of the cave, removing the great doorstone without an effort. But he replaced it immediately, as easily as though he were putting the lid on a quiver. Then, with many a whistle, he drove his rich flocks off towards the high pasture, while I was left, with murder in my heart, beating about for some scheme by which I might pay him back if only Athene would grant me my prayer. The best plan I could think of was this. Lying by the pen, the Cyclops had a huge staff of green olive-wood, which he had cut to carry in his hand when it was seasoned. To us it looked more like the mast of some black ship of twenty oars, a broad-bottomed freighter such as they use for long sea voyages. That was the impression which its length and thickness made on us. On this piece of timber I set to work and cut off a fathom's length, which I handed over to my men and told them to smooth down. When they had dressed it, I took a hand and sharpened it to a point. Then I poked it into the blazing fire to make it hard” (Homer, *Odyssey* 9.310-28)

3.

“Thus he found his father alone on the vineyard terrace digging around a plant. He was wearing a filthy, patched, and disreputable tunic, a pair of stitched leather gaiters strapped around his shins to protect them from scratches, and gloves to save his hands from the brambles; while to crown all, and by way of emphasizing his misery, he had a hat of goatskin on his head. When the gallant Odysseus saw how old and worn his father looked and realized how miserable he was, he halted under a tall pear-tree and the tears came into his eyes. Nor could he make up his mind at once whether to hug and kiss his father, and tell him the whole story of his own return to Ithaca, or first to question him and find out what he thought. In the end he decided to start by assuming a brusque manner in order to draw the old man out” (Homer, *Odyssey* 24.226-40)

4.

“‘Alas!’ he sighed. ‘What country have I come to now? What people are there here? Some brutal tribe of lawless savages, or kindly and god-fearing folk? And what is this shrill echo in my ears, as though some girls were shrieking? Nymphs, I suppose – who haunt the steep hill-tops, the springs of rivers, and the grassy meadows. Or am I within hail, by any chance, of human beings who can talk as I do? Well, I must go and use my own eyes to find out.’

So the gallant Odysseus crept out from under the bushes, after breaking off with his great hand a leafy bough from the thicket to conceal his naked manhood. Then he advanced on them like a mountain lion who sallies out, defying wind and rain in the pride of his power, with fire in his eyes, to hunt the oxen or the sheep, to stalk the roaming deer, or to be forced by hunger to besiege the very walls of the homestead and attack the pens.”

(Homer, *Odyssey* 6.119-34)

Coursework 2: 1,500 word essay

(titles the following response of the external examiner)

To be submitted by 24th November 2015 no later than 3 pm, returned in January.

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

1. In what ways, and to what effect, is recent Roman history introduced into the *Aeneid*?
2. “The intention of Vergil is to imitate Homer” (Servius). With reference to specific examples, analyse how and why Vergil imitates Homer in the *Aeneid*.
3. Ovid's narrative in the *Metamorphoses* is typified by complexity. Give examples of how inset episodes and juxtaposed stories engage with and reflect upon each other
4. “There is no place for the sense of a divine plan in the *Metamorphoses*, as there is in the *Aeneid*.” Discuss.

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 3 pm 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, as Welfare Officer, 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* (A free version of the loeb translation by J. D. Duff is available at: archive.org/stream/lucancivilwarboo00lucauoft/lucancivilwarboo00lucauoft_djvu.txt)

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

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