



Greek Literature



CLAS 101, Spring 2008

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MWF 11:10-12:00

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This is a course about reading. Typically, the assignment for a specific session consists of a few pages from de Romilly's *Short History of Greek Literature* and a substantial chunk of a work that was originally composed in Greek. The former provides an excellent overview of the cultural background, isolates certain characteristics of the various authors, and sketches many of the great works that we sadly do not have time to read (or to read in full). You will find that de Romilly, unlike some handbook authors, does not talk down to her reader; therefore take it as a compliment that you will need to look up some of her terms on almost every page. In the process of discussing literature over the past few centuries, human beings have developed a set of labels and, since they are useful, I expect you to add them to your vocabulary. Concerning the primary texts, on the other hand, I expect you to be able to recount in detail its story/stories, including the names of persons and places, so that we will be free in class to turn from WHAT is being said to HOW and WHY it is being said. I reserve the right to impose a regimen of quizzes at the beginning of each class, if there appear to be lapses in preparation of the reading assignments or a problem with lateness or absences. Every student is entitled to miss one session without excuse; further absences must be announced and explained before the beginning of the session to be missed, otherwise they will affect the grade for participation. For the benefit of the whole seminar, I expect you to contribute to our discussions readily, regularly, and (most importantly) thoughtfully. Ideally, aim for a balance between voicing your own creative ideas and responding perceptively to those of others. (33.3%)

Throughout the semester, approximately every other week, you will be asked to complete a variety of short writing assignments. Typically they are based on the material covered in a certain week and due at the beginning of class on Monday of the following week. (For example, the assignment for Week 1 is due at 11:10 on Jan 21.) Please be advised that any essay that contains ungrammatical or unidiomatic English cannot receive a grade higher than 'C'. There will be no extensions. (33.3%)

The final will consist of a variety of different tasks which may include identifications, short answer questions, essay questions, etc. In addition to the material covered in class, I will expect you to have read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in their entirety. (33.3%)

NOTE: This course is conducted according to the Socratic Code of Honor. If you ever feel the slightest doubt about proper conduct in class, the consultation of sources for take-home assignments or anything else, do ask. Inversely, do not hesitate to let me know about any special accommodations you may need or any aspect of the course that irks you or makes you uncomfortable. Remember, this is a seminar and it is YOUR seminar.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Jan 14: Introduction
Jan 16: de Romilly ix-xii, McCulloh's review, map, *Iliad* I-II
Jan 18: de Romilly 1-11, *Iliad* III-IV
- Jan 21: *Iliad* V-VI
Jan 23: de Romilly 11-21, *Odyssey** XVI 1-339, XVII 211-534, XVIII 1-115
Jan 25: *Odyssey* XIX and XXI-XXII
- Jan 28: *Odyssey* XXIII-XXIV
Jan 30: de Romilly 21-22, Homeric Hymn to Demeter (II), The Battle of Frogs and Mice, both available at http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_text_homer_homerica.htm
Feb 1: de Romilly 23-27, Hesiod *Works and Days* (with notes)
- Feb 4: Guest Presentation on the New Archilochus by Alden Tigh
de Romilly 27-34, *Greek Lyrics* (Archilochus, Callinus, Semonides, Hipponax, Tyrtaeus, Mimnermus, Solon, Phocylides, Xenophanes, Theognis, Terpander, Alcaeus, Hybrias)
- Feb 6: Guest Presentation on the New Sappho by Rob Gyenes
Greek Lyrics (Early Metrical Inscriptions, Alcman, Stesichorus, Ibycus, Sappho, Anacreon, Anonymous Drinking Songs, Praxilla, Anonymous Lyrics, Corinna, Simonides)
de Romilly 34-38, *Greek Lyrics* (Pindar, Bacchylides), handout of "Olympian 1"
- Feb 8: de Romilly 39-45, *A Presocratic Reader* 1-51
- Feb 11: de Romilly 45-46, *A Presocratic Reader* 53-107
Feb 13: de Romilly 47-57, Aeschylus *Persians*
Feb 15: de Romilly 57-65, Herodotus Book 1
- Feb 18: Herodotus Books 8-9
Feb 20: Aeschylus *Oresteia* (*Agamemnon*)
Feb 22: Aeschylus *Oresteia* (*Libation Bearers*, *Eumenides*)
- Feb 25: de Romilly 66-75, Sophocles *Antigone*
Feb 27: Sophocles *King Oidipous*, De Quincey (handout)
Feb 29: Sophocles *Oidipous at Colonus*

SPRING BREAK

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. At the beginning of most classes we will pick a name by lottery to identify the student who will compose a record of our discussion that day.
2. Week 1: Having attuned your ears to the sound of Greek (at least a tiny bit) and having taken your first surfing lesson on the waves of the dactylic hexameter, write a review of one translation of the proemium to the *Iliad*. You are not limited to the handout! By a near criminal act, I have omitted the versions by Pope and by Chapman -- this latter providing the inspiration for a famous poem by Keats. Alternatively, you are welcome to pass by all predecessors and create your own rendering. In this case, instead of a review, add an explanation of the effects you hoped to achieve and why you regard them as important. (2 pages max)
3. Week 3: Interpret a Homeric simile. No scholarship. Every student must work on a different simile. Email me your choice for approval by Friday 10:00am. (2 pages max)
4. Week 5: Compose English verses in Greek meters. (handout)

* All line numbers for the *Odyssey* refer to Lombardo's translation and will not work for other translations.