

Homer

Intermediate Greek

Course narrative In this course, you will continue to build on the analytical skills, cultural knowledge, and grammatical expertise you've already begun to develop. You will read, discuss, and write about Homeric poetry, the most celebrated and foundational poet of ancient Greek culture. We will meet formally 3 times per week, during which we will review new material, sight-read, complete group activities, and participate in discussion.

Detailed daily assignments to be completed *before* each formal meeting and due dates can be found at the end of this document, divided by week.

Texts for purchase

- + Homer, *Iliad*, ed. Brenner.
- + Any English translation of the *Iliad*.

Online resources

- + *Logeion* Greek-English dictionary
- + *The Bridge* vocabulary building tool

Recommended texts

- + Cunliffe, *Homeric Lexicon*.



Fifty Days at Iliam: Shield of Achilles, 1978 © Cy Twombly Foundation

Course goals By the close of this course, you will have: gained speed and fluency in reading Greek; become familiar with the Homeric dialect, vocabulary, and style; and encountered both ancient takes and modern scholarship on Homer, his poetry, and his legacy.

Learning outcomes Throughout this course you will: contribute to class discussion and translation sessions with your peers; complete 4 quizzes and 1 exam; and produce 4 writing projects.

Grading

Every assignment in this course will be graded on a 4.0 scale.

20% Daily preparation This is a discussion-based course, and our group discussions can only be rich and productive if all participants have prepared the weekly assignments outlined in the schedule section in advance of the meeting for which they are listed. If no assignment is listed for a given meeting, use the time to review and/or work ahead.

In the event that you miss class (e.g., mental health day, family emergency, illness), you must make the class up in some way (e.g., send me a free-write about one or more of the readings; get coffee with a classmate and discuss that day's material; drop in to my office hours and bring questions) to earn daily preparation credit for that day. I expect that you spend ~50 minutes making up the missed class. Three absences are excused. All absences must be made up within a week of the missed class, barring extreme circumstances (e.g., you are hospitalized for a week).

20% Four pre-midterm quizzes, to be completed outside of class, at your own pace. These quizzes will be posted to Moodle and are due back the **Fridays of Weeks 2, 3, 4, and 5 by 11:59pm**. Barring exceptional circumstances, there will be no extensions. Quizzes consist of translating a passage that has been assigned and answering questions about its constructions.

20% Midterm commentary project, due the **Friday of Week 7**; see p. 11.

20% Three post-midterm mini-projects, due the **Fridays of Weeks 10, 13, and 15 by 11:59pm**; see p. 11–12.

How to prepare a reading for class

1. Read the passage out loud, either to yourself or a translation partner.
2. *Read it again!* This is a crucial step. This time around, pay attention to natural breaks in sense.
3. Translate clause-by-clause. In general, verbs and participles are *closural*, acting like brackets.
4. Translate sentence-by-sentence, honoring the word order of the Greek by reading left-to-right. Try not to skip around unless you are certain that doing so won't interfere with your understanding.
5. Bring a relatively unmarked copy of the Greek to class.
 - Start a flashcard set that includes all of the words you have to look up in Bennett's index or in *Logeion* (and not a dubious online source). Be diligent about practicing these flashcards!
 - Do **not**, under any circumstances, write out your translation.

20% *Final exam*, to be completed as a take-home at your own pace during Finals period. You will translate both seen and sight passages; answer questions on their grammar and syntax; and comment on these in short essay format.

Miscellaneous notes & policies

- The quality of this course will be heavily determined by the quality of our discussions, whether as a class or in small groups, and productive discussion flourishes in a respectful and professional environment. I expect and encourage disagreement about our primary and secondary sources to arise, so it's important that we build, as a class, a thoughtful, equitable, and inclusive foundation. Learning is a team effort, so listen to and address your peers' concerns and ideas and those of the scholars we read.
- Relatedly, our course meetings are a tech-free space, so be sure to have physical copies of our readings handy.
- I take Bryn Mawr's Honor Code very seriously. As per BMC's code, "Each student is responsible for the integrity of her own academic work. Thus, it is important that each student read and understand these academic resolutions, as each student will be held responsible for them." I encourage you to review its tenets.
- In this course, **the use of generative AI tools and Grammarly are prohibited in the completion of any assignment.**
- I am a mandatory Title IX reporter.
- I encourage you to use the resources available to you!
- Your best resource is your fellow learners. Engage both in and outside the classroom, review each other's essays, and collaborate to work through tough reading assignments.
- Students who think they may need accommodations in this course due to the impact of a learning, physical, or psychological disability are encouraged to meet with me privately early in the semester to discuss their concerns. Students should also contact Deb Adler, Coordinator of Access Services (610-526-7351 or dadler@brynmawr.edu), as soon as possible, to verify their eligibility for reasonable academic accommodations. Any student who has a disability-related need to record this class first must speak with the Director of Access Services and to me, the instructor. Class members need to be aware that this class may be recorded.
- To work more intensely on your writing, contact the writing center (writingcenter@brynmawr.edu) on the first floor of Canaday, where peer tutors read drafts, ask questions, and guide you through the process of planning, drafting, and revising your assignment at no cost to you.

- If, at any point in the semester, a disability or personal circumstances affect your learning in this course or if there are ways in which the overall structure of the course and general classroom interactions could be adapted to facilitate full participation, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.
- This syllabus is tentative and subject to change. Changes will be announced on Moodle and in class.

Detailed schedule

Week 1

W 1/21 Homeric dialect; sight-reading

F 1/23 I.1-52

Iliad (Il.) in translation, books 1-6

Week 2 Quiz I due, Friday @ 11:59pm

M 1/26 *Il.* 1 lines 53-100

W 1/28

F 1/30 I.101-147

Week 3 Quiz II due, Friday @ 11:59pm

M 2/2 I.148-187

W 2/4

F 2/6 I.188-244

Week 4 Quiz III due, Friday @ 11:59pm

M 2/9 2.1-55

W 2/11

F 2/13 3.1-57
Il. in translation, books 7-12

Week 5 Quiz IV due, Friday @ 11:59pm

M 2/16 3.340-398

W 2/18

F 2/20 3.399-461

Week 6

M 2/23 5.297-351

W 2/25

F 2/27 6.369-439

Week 7 Midterm commentary project **due, Friday @ 11:59pm**

M 3/2 6.440-481

W 3/4 6.482-529

F 3/6 *No class.*

Week 8 Nefas!

Week 9

M 3/16 9.182-224

W 3/18

F 3/20 9.225-276
Il. in translation, books 13-18

Week 10 Mini-project I **due, Friday @11:59 pm**

M 3/23 9.277-345

W 3/25

F 3/27 9.346-397

Pratt, Louise. 2007. "The Parental Ethos of the *Iliad*."

Week 11

M 3/30 9.398-448

W 4/1

F 4/3 9.479-523

Week 12

M 4/6 9.624-655, 16.684-725

W 4/8

F 4/10 16.777-829

Il. in translation, books 19-24

Week 13 Mini-project II due, Friday @11:59 pm

M 4/13 16.830-861, 18.15-34

W 4/15

F 4/17 22.214-277

Blondell, Ruby. 2010. "'Bitch that I Am': Self-Blame and Self-Assertion in the *Iliad*."

Week 14

M 4/20 22.278–336

W 4/22

F 4/24 22.337–404

Week 15 Mini-project III **due, Friday @11:59 pm**

M 4/27 24.470–27

W 4/29

F 5/1 24.528–596
Fowler, R. 2001. "The Homeric Question"

Finals period Take-home final exam **due @close of semester**

Midterm commentary project (to be completed alone or in pairs)

In the discipline of Classics you will often engage with texts through the form of the annotated commentary, a genre that has been remarkably consistent for centuries. In your commentary project, you will attempt to shake up the format in your own way by annotating a passage of Greek and engaging in your own research to illuminate an aspect of the text that intrigues you or to help explain a difficult passage to a new audience.

To complete your Commentary, first **select** a passage of the *Iliad* that is not assigned for this course. Copy your selected text into a Word doc (or, if working in a pair, a Google doc).

Then, **comment** on individual lines. [Comments should follow the format: “οὕτως: an adverb, ‘thus,’” i.e., quote a word/passage in bold before commenting on it.] Be sure to **cite** your sources!

Your comments should do one of the following (multiple are allowed per line):

- + Explain a difficult aspect of the grammar to a student that may be struggling with the passage. You may reference Brenner, Cunliffe, or any dictionary in *Logeion* here as an authority (e.g., Cunliffe, p. 175).
- + Discuss an aspect of Greek or Homeric culture. Here you'll need to perform some original research. To get started follow this helpful [guide](#).

Finally, **write** a short introduction (~500 words) that reflects on the process and what you hope to display in your notes. If you worked in a pair, explain how you distributed the workload. Include a Works cited page for all sources at the end of your document.

Post-midterm mini-projects

Complete these three mini-projects, in any order you choose. These are open-note, open-time, and you're free to collaborate with your classmates on them, and talk about your work with our me.

I. **Commentary** on any of passage of the *Odyssey* or *Homeric Hymn*. For guidelines, see above.

To earn a 4.0 / A+, the piece must be above & beyond in effort, execution, and original thinking. It must incorporate material beyond that strictly assigned---consult the bibliographies of what's on our Syllabus. If an Assignment earns a 4.0, it signifies that I cannot think of a way it could be improved.

II. **Short essay** response to either Blondell or Pratt. Essays must:

- be at least ~1,000 words.
- quote and cite at least two passages from the *Iliad* (e.g., 1.30–45; 4.57–80).
- quote and cite at least three passages from the essay (e.g., last name, p. X).
- follow the citation guidelines available [here](#).
- include a Works cited page.

III. **Short essay** response to any piece of scholarship relating to Homer *not* assigned for this course. See above guidelines.

Anatomy of an analytical essay
based on Diane Hacker, *The Pocket Style Manual*

To compose an analytical essay: (1) “formulate a **thesis** statement that is open to debate”; then, (2) “use one or more texts to build an argument around that **thesis**.” If a reader’s question upon beginning to read your paper is “Why should I read this paper? What’s the point?” its **thesis** is your reply. Your reader might next ask, “Why should I believe the claim that this **thesis** is making?” Throughout your essay, you provide **evidence** that supports your **thesis**. “Okay,” your reader concedes, “But why does your **evidence** support your **thesis**? What is the connection?” As you introduce your **evidence**, you **reason** *how* and *why* it supports your **thesis**—and thus why your reader should believe it!

(1) Formulating a **thesis** is an art and a science! It requires practice and patience. “Within the guidelines of your assignment, begin by asking **questions** that you are interested in exploring, that you believe will interest your audience, and that will contribute to an ongoing debate or to existing knowledge in the field. For any type of assignment, you should make sure that your questions are *narrow* (not too broad), *challenging* (not too bland), and *grounded* (not too speculative).”

Too broad: “What is rhetoric?”

More narrow: “How does Achilles’ rhetoric compare to that of Agamemnon?”

Too bland: “Which female figures appear in ancient literature?”

Challenging: “How does a figure’s gender inform their characterization?”

Too speculative: “Did the Trojan War really happen?”

Grounded: “Why does Homer choose to represent the Trojan War in the way that he does?”

You might have several questions you are considering! Your **thesis** answers your central question: “The **thesis** expresses your informed, reasoned judgment, not your opinion. Usually your **thesis** will appear at the end of the first paragraph.”

(2) **Evidence & reasoning** persuades your reader of the claim your thesis has made. After your introductory paragraph/s, your essay “will draw on the sources you use to support your thesis.” For the purposes of this course, our class readings constitute your body of “source material” from which you will draw evidence that demonstrates why your (necessarily) debate-able **thesis** is true.

(3) **Secondary sources** make for more robust scholarly conversation when you weave them into your own analysis of a question raised by a text/s. To best integrate secondary scholarship into your essay, consider how a source might inform your own reading, differ from it, or augment it.