

***Advanced Latin***

**Witches,  
from the Republic to the *Hammer***

Course narrative If our literary sources are to be believed, the Latin-speaking world teemed with witches—women capable of unbelievable supernatural feats, usually old, sometimes ugly, and always perverse. This course surveys the witches of the Latin tradition, from Ovid to Kramer and Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum*, stopping at Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, Seneca's *Medea*, Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, Horace's *Epodes* and *Satires*, Tacitus' *Annales*, and Augustine's *City of God* along the way. Although Latin literature is our primary focus, these readings are supplemented by epigraphic texts and relevant scholarship.

We will meet 3 times per week, during which we will translate together and discuss our readings. Daily assignments to be completed *before* each formal meeting can be found in the Detailed schedule at the end of this syllabus.

Texts for purchase

Course goals

By the close of this course, you will have: gained speed and fluency in reading Latin prose and poetry; experience in a range of genres, time-periods, and media; and encountered both ancient takes and modern scholarship on witchcraft, magic, and (male authors' representations of) female nature & culture.

Learning outcomes

Throughout this course you will: contribute to class discussion and translation sessions with your peers; complete 4 quizzes and 2 exams, all take-home; and produce 1 final paper or creative project.

## Grading

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 readings outlined in the schedule section in advance of the meeting for which they are listed. 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 translate that day's material; drop in to my office hours and bring questions) to earn daily preparation credit for that day. I expect you to spend ~50 minutes (the length of a class) on a make-up assignment. **3 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).

30% *Four quizzes*, to be completed outside of class, at your own pace. These quizzes are due **the Fridays of Weeks 2, 4, 9, and 11 by the start of class** to the appropriate Assignment dropbox on Moodle. Barring exceptional circumstances, there will be no extensions. Quizzes consist of translating one passage (from a choice of 2) from the prior ~two weeks' worth of readings, and answering any questions asked about its construction or context.

30% *Two take-home exams*, to be completed at your own pace at any point during the day they are assigned. On exams, you will translate both seen and sight passages; answer questions on their grammar and syntax; and comment in short essay format on the same. These exams are due **by 11:59PM the Fridays of Weeks 6 and 13** to the appropriate Assignment dropbox on Moodle.

15% *One final paper* of about 10 pages, or *one creative project*, designed by you and approved by me no later than the Friday of Week 14. If you choose to write a final paper, you must meet with me to discuss your direction and to establish your thesis by the Friday of Week 14.

5% *One informal presentation* of your progress on that paper or project, in Week 15.

## Miscellaneous notes

- 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 *The novel*

**1/21 W** *Salvete omnes!*

**1/23 F**

+ ***In translation*** Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* Book I chapters 1–7.

+ ***In Latin*** I.8–9. Text available at the [Latin Library](#); [commentary](#) available on [Moodle](#).

### ◆ Week 2

**1/26 M**

+ ***In Latin*** I.10–11.

**1/28 W**

+ ***In Latin*** I.12–13.

+ ***Scholarship*** Stavros Frangoulidis. 2008. “Lucius versus Socrates and Aristomenes,” in *Witches, Isis and Narrative: Approaches to Magic in Apuleius’ Metamorphoses*. De Gruyter.

**1/30 F** *Quiz I due by 12:10PM*

+ ***In Latin*** I.14–15.

+ ***In translation*** The remainder of Book I; [commentary](#) available on [Moodle](#).

### ◆ Week 3

**2/2 M**

+ ***In translation*** Books II–III.18.

+ ***In Latin*** III.19–20.

**2/4 W**

+ **In Latin** III.21–22.

+ **Scholarship** Daniel Ogden. 2021. “The *Longue Durée*: Greece and the Near East,” in *The Strix-Witch*. Cambridge University Press.

**2/6 F**

+ **In Latin** III.23–24.

+ **In translation** The remainder of Book III (through chapter 29).

♦ Week 4 *Elegy*

**2/9 M**

+ **Scholarship** William Turpin. “The Amores.” Dickinson College Commentaries.

+ **In Latin** Ovid, *Amores* Book I poem 8 lines 1–54. Text and facing commentary of Turpin, *The Amores*.

**2/11 W**

+ **In Latin** Ovid, *Amores* I.8, 55–114.

+ **Scholarship** Pauline Ripat. 2016. “Roman Women, Wise Women, and Witches.” *Phoenix* 70.1/2: 104–128.

**2/13 F** *Quiz II due by 12:10PM*

+ **Catch up day—Re-read!**

♦ Week 5 *The curse*

**2/16 M**

+ **Material culture** Take a look at some of the Bath tablets.

+ **In Latin** The Bath “prayers for justice.” Text and essay commentary of J. N. Adams. 1992. “British Latin: The Text, Interpretation and Language of the Bath Curse Tablets.” *Britannia* 23: 1–26.

**2/18 W**

+ **In Latin** Curses nos. 20 (Italia, p. 223–231), 85 (Mainz, p. 290–291), 76 (Kreuznach, p. 299–300), 132 (Carthage, p. 334–337). Text and essay commentary of Daniela Urbanová. 2018. Latin Curse Tablets of the Roman Empire. Universität Innsbruck.

**2/20 F**

+ **In Latin** Tacitus, *Annales* Book II chapter 69, II.74, III.7. Text and commentary available on [Moodle](#).

◆ Week 6 Epode and Satire

**2/23 M**

+ **Scholarship** Maxwell Tietle Paule. 2017. “Canidia, or What Is a Witch?,” in Canidia, Rome’s First Witch.

+ **In Latin** Horace, *Epode* 3. Text and essay commentary of Paule, “*Venefica Minor*: Canidia in *Epode* 3, *Satire* 2.1 and 2.8,” in Canidia; and commentary on [Moodle](#).

+ **In Latin** Horace, *Satires* Book II poem 1, II.8. Text and essay commentary of Paule, “*Venefica Minor*,” in Canidia.

**2/25 W**

+ **In Latin** *Epode* 17 lines 1–52. Text and essay commentary of Paule, “Routing the Empusa: The Iambic Canidia of *Epode* 17,” in Canidia.

+ **In translation** The remainder of *Epode* 17. Text of Paule, “Routing the Empusa,” in Canidia.

+ **Scholarship** Amy Richlin. 1984. “Invective against Women in Roman Satire.” *Arethusa* 17.1: 67–8.

**2/27 F** No class—Exam I due by 11:59PM

◆ Week 7 Drama

3/2 M

+ **In Latin** Seneca, *Medea* lines 1–55. Text and commentary available on [Moodle](#).

+ **In translation** lines 56–669 (from the first Chorus to start of Act IV). Text of Emily Wilson, trans. 2010. “Medea,” in *Seneca: Six Tragedies*. Oxford University Press.

3/4 W

+ **In Latin** 670–719.

3/6 F

+ **In Latin** 720–770.

◆ Week 8 Nefas!

◆ Week 9

3/16 M

+ **In Latin** 771–819.

+ **Scholarship** Ellen Oliensis. 2009. “Murdering Mothers,” in *Freud’s Rome: Psychoanalysis and Latin Poetry*. Cambridge University Press.

3/18 W

+ **In Latin** 820–878.

+ **In translation** The remainder of *Medea* (i.e., Act V).

3/20 F *Quiz III due by 12:10PM*

+ **Catch up day—Re-read!**

◆ Week 10 Epic

**3/23 M**

- + **Scholarship** C. A. Tesoriero. 2000. "Introduction," in A Commentary on Bellum Civile 6.333-830. PhD Diss. The University of Sydney.
- + **In Latin** Lucan, *Bellum Civile* Book VI lines 413-460. Text available at the Latin Library; commentary of Tesoriero, A Commentary on Bellum Civile, p. 14 ff.

**3/25 W**

- + **In Latin** 461-509.

**3/27 F**

- + **In Latin** 510-561.
- + **Scholarship** W. R. Johnston. 1987. "Erichtho and Her Universe," in Momentary Monsters: Lucan and His Heroes. Cornell University Press.

◆ Week 11

**3/30 M**

- + **In Latin** 562-601.

**4/1 W**

- + **In Latin** 602-653.

**4/3 F Quiz IV due by 12:10PM**

- + **In Latin** 654-711.

- + **Scholarship** Ogden, "Roman Witches: The Impact of the Strix-Paradigm," in The Strix-Witch.

◆ Week 12

4/6 M

+ ***In Latin*** 712–767.

4/8 W

+ ***In Latin*** 768–809.

4/10 F

+ ***In Latin*** 809–830.

+ ***Scholarship*** Andrew McClellan. 2019. “Re-Animator,” in *Abused Bodies in Roman Epic*. Cambridge University Press.

◆ Week 13 Early Christian thinking

4/13 M

+ ***Scholarship*** Georg Luck. 2006 (1985). “Epilogue: The Survival of Pagan Magic,” in *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

+ ***In Latin*** Augustine, *City of God* VXVIII.18 through *qui tamen nullo modo poterat excitari*. Text available at the Latin Library; essay commentary of Ogden, “Augustine’s Italian Landladies,” in *The Strix-Witch*.

4/15 W

+ ***In Latin*** Augustine, *City of God* VXVIII.18 from *Post aliquot*.

+ ***In translation*** Pseudo-Clement of Rome, *Recognitions*—selections. Text and essay commentary at #65 in Ogden. 2002. *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook*. Oxford University Press.

+ ***In translation*** Augustine, *City of God* XXI.6; *On Christian Doctrine* II.20.30–24.37. Text and essay commentary of Bernd-Christian Otto and Michael Stausberg, eds. 2014. “Augustine of Hippo: City of

God and On Christian Doctrine,” in Defining Magic: A Reader. Routledge.

**4/17 F** Exam II due by 11:59PM

♦ Week 14 Handbook

**4/20 M**

+ **Scholarship** Christopher Mackay. 2015 (2009). “Introduction” to p. 39, in The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus Maleficarum. Cambridge University Press.

+ **Latin** Malleus, Question VI section 39D–40B. Text available on [Moodle](#).

**4/22 W**

+ **Latin** 40C–41A.

**4/24 F**

+ **Latin** 41B–41C.

+ **In translation** The remainder of Question VI. Text of Mackay, The Hammer of Witches, p. 159 ff.

♦ Week 15 Presentations

**4/27 M 4/29 W 5/1 F**

### Further bibliography

Edmonds, Radcliffe G. III. *Drawing Down the Moon: Magic in the Greco-Roman World*. Princeton University Press.

Frankfurter, David, ed. 2019. *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic*. Brill.

Watson, Lindsay. 1991. *Arae: The Curse Poetry of Antiquity*. Cairns.

Wilbrun, Andrew T. 2012. *Materia Magica: The Archeology of Magic in Roman Egypt, Cyrus, and Spain*. University of Michigan Press.