

HUMS 1300: Classical Literature and Its Reception

College of the Humanities

Winter 2026

Class meets 2:35 pm - 3:55 am, Tuesday and Thursday. Check BS for location.

Instructor: Shane Hawkins

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Office hours: 10-11 T/Th and by appointment, 300 Paterson

In spite of what you will often hear and read, the syllabus is not an actual contract between the instructor and the students. Our relationship is not transactional; it is not based on an exchange of goods and services. The syllabus is certainly not a legally binding contract. It is more like a travel itinerary, and it is aspirational and subject to minor changes that do not disadvantage students.

Course Description This course is intended to cover 1) a wide selection of classical Greek and Latin literature in a variety of genres, and 2) the subsequent reception of classical literature, especially in sources that are typically neglected. This course is also intended to 3) further the writing skills taught in HUMS 1200 and instruct students in writing a research essay.

Readings are listed in the calendar below. All readings are posted on Brightspace. There is no cost associated with the required readings in this course.

Learning Outcomes In my opinion, 'Learning Outcomes' are not necessarily good pedagogical practice but are implemented at the behest of education managers who have betrayed the university ideal of learning for its own sake in exchange for empty pretense about employment skills. LOs are designed, in part, to make students feel as though they have received something quantifiable for the tuition they pay. But in fact, much of the best part of what one gains from a course like this is not strictly quantifiable. My hope is that while acquiring some skills in this course you also experience something ineffable—through a text, a thought, a conversation with another student, an insight from a reading—that remains with you for the rest of your life. As Robert Henri wrote, "all education is self-education", so what you learn in this course is ultimately only as much as what you are willing to teach yourself. I will be leading you through material I think is important in a coherent manner. There are not 'Five Learning Outcomes' you are supposed to derive from this experience and to assert otherwise would be clownish, but I do hope you learn many things about ancient literature, its reception, and how to construct a research paper.

Evaluation and Grading

- 20% Attendance and participation.
- 5% **Jan. 20:** the Dante Exercise, generating essay topic ideas. An in-class exercise.
- 15% Recitation of poems: 2 poems must be memorized and recited from memory. Instructions on Brightspace. First poem due before February reading week (5%), 2nd poem by April 7 (10%).
- 15% **Feb 5:** Midterm: essay format, in class.
- 10% **Feb. 26:** Topic and Research Question: completion of a 1-page form answering questions about your research paper topic + any draft materials. The form is included on Brightspace.
- 20% **April 7, midnight:** Research paper, focused on one work of ancient literature and one work of reception. We will be talking in detail about what a research paper is during the first half of this course. All paper topics must be approved by me before writing. Instructions and requirements, suggestions for authors and topics are posted on Brightspace.
- 15% **TBD:** Final, date determined by university; gobbet format, in person.

Please note, all written assignments must be submitted as Word documents on Brightspace. I will not accept PDFs or links to your OneDrive.

Plagiarism and AI policy for this course. The Academic Integrity Policy at Carleton defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one’s own. Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source.” Plagiarism is conduct that violates standards of academic integrity, which may lead to the imposition of sanctions.

No form of AI should be used in this course.

Course Calendar

Week 1: What are we doing in this course?

Tu Jan 6	An introduction to each other and to the course.
Readings:	1. M. A. Schwartz, <i>The importance of stupidity in scientific research</i> (1 p.). 2. J. Z. Smith, <i>The necessary lie. Duplicity in the disciplines</i> (6 pp.). 3. M. Beard and J. Henderson, <i>The Visit</i> (8 pp.).
Th Jan 8	Beyond ‘exegesis’ and expository writing. Types of scholarly writing and the research essay.
Readings:	4. T. Eagleton, ‘What is Literature?’, from <i>Literary Theory. An Introduction</i> (14 pp.). 5. S. Fish, ‘What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?’, from <i>Is there a Text in this Class?</i> (18 pp.). 6. Types of Research Papers (1 p.).

Week 2: Lyric: the personal voice

Tu Jan 13	Reading, re-reading, close reading, over reading. Generating research questions: a demonstration with Dante.
Readings:	7. Lionardo D’Arezzo, <i>Concerning the Study of Literature,—A Letter Addressed to the Illustrious Lady, Baptista Malatesta</i> (11 pp.). 8. Virginia Woolf, <i>On not knowing Greek</i> (about 20 pp.). 9. Italo Calvino, <i>Why Read the Classics?</i> (5 pp.).
Th Jan 15	Lyric poetry, ancient and modern.
Reading:	10. Sappho 1, 16, 31, 47, 102, 130, 168B, from A. Carson, <i>If not, Winter</i> (5 pp.). 11. ‘The Trees’, ‘This Be The Verse’, ‘Cut Grass’, from P. Larkin, <i>High Windows</i> (3 pp.). 12. ‘Talking in Bed’, ‘An Arundel Tomb’, P. Larkin, <i>The Whitsun Weddings</i> (2 pp.). 13. Giacomo Leopardi, ‘Alla luna’ and ‘L’infinito’ (2 pp.). 14. Clive James, ‘Gianfranco Contini’ in <i>Cultural Amnesia</i> (12 pp.). 15. Richard Rorty, ‘The Fire of Life’ (3pp.)

Week 3: Greek drama

Tu Jan 20	Aeschylus, <i>Agamemnon</i> .
Reading:	16. Aeschylus, <i>Agamemnon</i> (55 pp.).
Th Jan 22	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Tyrannus</i> .
Reading:	17. Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Tyrannus</i> (65 pp). 18. E. R. Dodds, "On Misunderstanding the <i>Oedipus Rex</i> " (12 pp.).

Week 4: Greek drama (cont'd)

Tu Jan 27	Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i> .
Reading:	19. Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i> (46 pp.).
Th Jan 29	Euripides, <i>Medea</i> . Structuring an essay.
Reading:	20. Euripides, <i>Medea</i> (50 pp.).

Week 5: Rhetoric

Tu Feb 3	Rhetoric.
Reading:	21. Thucydides, Pericles' Funeral Oration (6 pp.). 22. Cicero, <i>First Catilinarian</i> ; Caesar, <i>Speech on Catiline</i> (10 pp.). 23. 'The Typographic Mind' from N. Postman, <i>Amusing ourselves to Death</i> (20 pp.).
Th Feb 5	Mid-term test, in class.

Week 6: Comedy

Tu Feb 10	Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i> .
Reading:	24. Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i> (52 pp.).
Th Feb 12	Plautus, <i>Pseudolus</i> . 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum' (in class).
Reading:	25. Plautus, <i>Pseudolus</i> (50 pp.).

Feb 16-20 Winter Break. No classes

Week 7: Historical writing

Tu Feb 24	Research paper. a. Some ways to think about Classical Reception: a demonstration with Garfield (without Garfield) and Icarus. b. Thesis statements and organizing a research paper.
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	c. Secondary literature and where to find it.
Reading:	26. Livy, intro to book 1 (2 pp.). 27. Machiavelli, <i>Discourses on Livy</i> , prefaces to books 1 and 2 (5 pp.)
Th Feb 26	Historical writing. Putting the research paper together and troubleshooting.
Reading:	28. Herodotus, intro. to book 1 (3 pp.). 29. Thucydides, intro. to book 1 (9 pp.). 30. Tacitus, intros to <i>Histories</i> and <i>Annals</i> (6 pp.).
Due:	Topic and research question form.

Week 8: Lyric, Bucolic & Georgic

Tu Mar 3	Roman lyric poetry. Some thoughts on style: concision, coherence, elegance.
Reading:	31. Catullus 1, 50, 51, 63, 85 (7 pp.). 32. Horace, Ode 1.11 (<i>carpe diem</i>), 1.22 (<i>Lalage</i>), 1.37 (<i>nunc est bibendum</i>), 2.16 (<i>otium divos rogat</i>), 4.7 (<i>Diffugere nives</i>). 33. Calvino, <i>Quickness</i> (29 pp.). 34. G. K. Pullum, <i>50 Years of Stupid Grammar Advice</i> . (3 pp.). 35. G. K. Pullum, <i>The Land of the Free</i> and <i>The Elements of Style</i> (8 pp.).
Th Mar 5	Bucolic & Georgic.
Reading:	36. Theocritus, <i>Idylls</i> 6 and 11 on Polyphemos and Galatea (5 pp.). 37. Vergil, <i>Eclogue</i> 2 and 4 (6 pp.). 38. Vergil, <i>Georgic</i> 1 (12 pp.).

Week 9: Epic: Lucretius

Tu Mar 10	Epicurus and Lucretius.
Reading:	39. Epicurus, <i>Leading Doctrines</i> and <i>Aphorisms</i> (10 pp.). 40. Lucretius, <i>De rerum natura</i> bk. 1 (on nothing, atoms, the universe) (32 pp.).
Th Mar 12	Lucretius.
Readings:	41. Lucretius, <i>De rerum natura</i> bk. 2 (atoms and swerve) (34 pp.), 3.830-1094 (8 pp.).

Week 10: Epic: Virgil

Tu Mar 17	Virgil.
Reading:	42. <i>Aeneid</i> books 1 & 2 (David West trans., 45 pp.).
Th Mar 19	Virgil.
Reading:	43. <i>Aeneid</i> books 4 (Sarah Rudens trans., 21 pp.) & 6 (Robert Fagles, trans., 30 pp.).

Week 11: Epic: Virgil & Ovid

Tu Mar 24	Virgil.
Reading:	44. <i>Aeneid</i> , book 12 (Robert Fitzgerald trans., 36 pp.). 45. D. Mendelsohn, <i>Is the Aeneid a Celebration of Empire—or a Critique?</i> from <i>The New Yorker</i> , October 18, 2018 (11 pp.).
Th Mar 26	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> .
Reading:	46. Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , Book 1; sections on Jupiter and Europa, Cadmus, Diana and Actaeon, Semele and Bacchus, Tiresias, Narcissus and Echo, Pentheus (46 pp.).

Week 12: Epic: Ovid & endings

Tu Mar 31	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> .
Reading:	47. Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , Perseus and Andromeda; Rape of Proserpine; Arachne; Tereus, Procne, Philomela; Minotaur-Daedalus and Icarus; Orpheus and Eurydice; Pygmalion; Doctrines of Pythagoras; Epilogue (48 pp.).
Th Apr 2	Closure.
Reading:	48. Jorge Luis Borges, <i>Inferno</i> , 1, 32 (2 pp.). 49. Susan Sontag, <i>Against Interpretation</i> (12 pp.). 50. Don Fowler, <i>Postmodernism, Romantic Irony, and Classical Closure</i> (25 pp.).

Week 13: The end of laughter and soft lies

Tu Apr 7	Endinglessness.
Reading:	51. Jorge Luis Borges, <i>The Immortal</i> (12 pp.). 52. Jorge Luis Borges, <i>The Library of Babel</i> (7 pp.). 53. Jorge Luis Borges, <i>The Book of Sand</i> (4 pp.). 54. Italo Calvino, <i>Jorge Luis Borges</i> (7 pp.).

April 7 Research paper due on Brightspace, by midnight.

Final exam TBD, date set by university scheduling (exam period April 11-23).

University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses (December 2025)

Academic Dates and Deadlines

This schedule contains the dates prescribed by the University Senate for academic activities. Dates relating to fee payment, cancellation of course selections, late charges, and other fees or charges will be published in the Important Dates and Deadlines section of the Registration Website.

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion can be found [here](#). [Grade Appeal Process Information](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities at Carleton

Carleton University strives to provide a safe environment conducive to personal and intellectual growth, free of injustice and characterized by understanding respect, peace, trust, and fairness.

The [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) governs the non-academic behaviour of students. Carleton University is committed to building a campus that promotes personal growth through the establishment and promotion of transparent and fair academic and non-academic responsibilities.

Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodation refers to educational practices, systems and support mechanisms designed to accommodate diversity and difference. The purpose of accommodation is to enable students to perform the essential requirements of their academic programs. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University.

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the [Academic Accommodations website](#).

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes can be [found here](#).

Addressing Human Rights Concerns

The University and all members of the University community share responsibility for ensuring that the University's educational, work and living environments are free from discrimination and harassment. Should you have concerns about harassment or discrimination relating to your age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (religion), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, place of origin, race, sex (including pregnancy), or sexual orientation, please contact the [Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities](#) at equity@carleton.ca.

Academic Consideration Policy

As per the [Academic Consideration Policy](#), if students encounter extenuating circumstances that temporarily hinder their capacity to fulfil in-class academic requirements, they can request academic consideration. The

Academic Consideration for Coursework is only available for accommodations regarding course work. Requests for accommodations during the formal exam period must follow the [official deferral process](#).

NOTE: As per the Policy, students are to speak with/contact their instructor before submitting a request for Academic Consideration. Requests are not automatically approved. Approving and determining the accommodation remains at the discretion of the instructor. Students should consult the course syllabus about the instructor's policy or procedures for requesting academic consideration. [More information here](#).

Academic Integrity Policy

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as 'presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.' This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgment
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own
- failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor.

The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous process for academic integrity allegations, including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of extenuating circumstances, as defined in the [Academic Consideration Policy](#), may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made.

The application for a deferral must:

1. be made in writing to the Registrar's Office no later than **three (3) working days** after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation. In cases of short-term extenuating circumstances normally lasting no more than five (5) days, students must complete the University's self-declaration form which is included in the deferral application found on the [Registrar's Office website](#). Additional documentation is required in cases of extenuating circumstances lasting longer than five (5) days and must be supported by a medical note specifying the date of onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [here](#).

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of extenuating circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work. Requests for academic consideration are made in accordance with the [Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical or Other Extenuating Circumstances](#).

1. Students who claim short-term extenuating circumstances (normally lasting up to five days) as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor. If the instructor requires supporting documentation, the instructor may only request submission of the University's self-declaration form, which is available on the [Registrar's Office website](#). The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule.
 - a) Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. In all cases, formative evaluations providing feedback to the student should be replaced with formative evaluations. In the event the altered due date must extend beyond the last day of classes in the term, the instructor will assign a grade of zero for the work not submitted and submit the student's earned grade accordingly; the instructor may submit a change of grade at a later date. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.
2. In cases where a student is not able to complete term work due to extenuating circumstances lasting for a significant period of time/ long-term (normally more than five days), the instructor and/or student may elect to consult with the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses) or Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) to determine appropriate action.
3. If a student is concerned the instructor did not respond to the request for academic consideration or did not provide reasonable accommodation, the student should follow the appeals process described in the [Academic Consideration Policy](#).
4. If academic consideration is granted, but the student is unable to complete the accommodation according to the terms set out by the instructor as a result of further illness, injury, or extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, the student may submit a petition to the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses)/Graduate Registrar (graduate courses). Please note, however, that the course instructor will be required to submit an earned final grade and further consideration will only be reviewed according to established precedents and deadlines. (More information: [Undergraduate](#).)

Department Contact Information

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MEMS:
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