## LAT 15: Latin Literature: Catullus and the Lyric Spirit

MWF 11-11:50 Instructor: Professor Christopher van den Berg

Fall 2010 Office: Grosvenor 11

Classroom: CHAP 204 cvandenberg@amherst.edu

Standing Office Hours: Tue. 11:30-12:30; Wed. 12:30-1:30

Additional “Unofficial” Hours:

I encourage you to speak to me either in-class or office hours regarding both the content and the mechanics of the course. I will not, however, fill you in on what you missed because you failed to attend class. Attendance is required and you need not draw attention to any unexcused absences.

Also, I particularly recommend coming to see me Tuesday afternoons if you’d like to discuss matters not strictly related to the course (Classics in general, poetry and literature, etc.).

**Course Description:**

The course will introduce students to the poetry of Catullus, one of the most important (and exciting) figures in Roman Republican letters. We will also read snippets from Cicero’s *Pro Caelio*, which details Cicero’s scathing attack on Clodia, often equated with the Lesbia of our poems.

The class aims to enhance and develop your facility in Latin. We will concentrate on aspects of grammar, accidence, and meter. (Effective and efficient) vocabulary acquisition will also play a key part in the learning process.

The course also introduces key literary dimensions of the authors read. We will look at the social and aesthetic frameworks from which Catullus’ and Cicero’s works emerged.

The course will include a regular review of grammar, which will reinforce (and be reinforced by) the works read in class. The schedule for grammar review will be handed out separately.

**Requirements:**

Four translation quizzes (3 count: lowest score dropped) 30%

Midterm and Final exams (20% each) 40%

Paper/Project 10%

Attendance, Participation, Small Projects, Recitations, etc 20%

Regular attendance is required. Tardiness and unexcused absences may (noticeably) affect your grade.

**Required texts:**

Quinn’s text/commentary, available from Sara Upton (for $20) in the Classics Office.

I will provide Catullus’ vocabulary on the CMS site. We’ll work through this during the semester.

We will also read a number of introductory essays from recent “Companions” to Catullus (by M. Skinner and J. Gaisser). I will make these available via electronic reference through the library.

**Reference books:**

**Meter and Vocabulary** (from: Daniel H. Garrison, The Student's Catullus. Third Edition. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8061-3635-9).

Lewis’ elementary lexicon is excellent. There is also a good on-line and installable dictionary that I have found extremely useful:

<http://www.erols.com/whitaker/words.htm>

**About reading Latin at the intermediate level:**

The length of readings is restrained (on average around 50 lines per week).

I expect that you will concentrate on the syntactical meaning of each sentence or phrase, and that you will also make an effort to understand the text within the context of the work. The constant transition between ‘reading for the literal meaning’ and ‘reading for the literary meaning’ demands patience and diligence. This may require that you reread lines or passages several times. Don’t despair! Especially when syntax is difficult or vocabulary abstruse, you may have to be persistent: ‘not understanding’ is an important part of language acquisition. If you encounter a passage whose meaning you can’t grasp, return to it at a later point. I would advise you not to grab blindly for a translation; you’ll only slow your long-term learning. First use a commentary and then make an effort to discuss difficult passage(s) with a classmate, with me, or in class. You also should not write out your own translation (with some exceptions: complicated phrases, or if you come up with a particularly keen rendering of a joke, word play, or purposely ambiguous use of language). In class it is imperative to work directly from the Latin. NEVER READ FROM A TRANSLATION WHEN CALLED UPON TO TRANSLATE (please!).

Keep a list of the vocabulary that you look up and grammatical constructions that you need to review. I will provide lists and other materials to help you concentrate on the most important aspects of the Latin that you will read. I will also point out exceptionally uncommon lexical or grammatical phenomena, which you should make an effort to understand, even if you typically will not be tested on such exceptions.

For vocabulary, I recommend keeping a list corresponding to the line numbers of the text you are using. You should especially mark out words that you look up more than once.

Group study can save you time and effort. Small groups meeting regularly often work best. Please note, this should \*not\* be a substitute for your own reading. I recommend always reading through texts alone, before or after meeting with others to discuss passages. Your Latin will improve most by constant repetition, including reading and **rereading** passages in different contexts and under different constraints (sight reading, reading alone/with others/in-class, etc.).

Toward the end of the term the pace will quicken, and we may not translate every line in class that might appear on a quiz. You should make a list of passages or phrases you had difficulty understanding, and feel free to ask questions in class or at office hours. You should, of course, always see if a commentary offers you some direction, and use other resources (grammar aids). Part of learning Latin is employing these resources effectively.

**Abide by the Honor Code of the college**. For this class the following aspects are important: 1) you should not discuss the contents of the quizzes or exams with anyone who has not taken them; 2) in writing your papers you must provide documentation for ideas that are not your own (citation of material). Responsible collaboration on daily assignments, vocabulary, or grammar study is not contrary to the Honor Code; effective team-work is recommended.

Consult the following document and, if you still have questions, please talk to me:

<https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/deanstudents/code/code>

**Students in need of accommodations:**

If you have a disability which may necessitate special accommodations of any kind, please let me know outside of class during the first week of term. All accommodations are cleared through Academic Resources.

If you anticipate religious observances that will interfere with your class participation, I would appreciate your letting me know well in advance so that we can discuss appropriate accommodations.

**THE FUN STUFF: COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1**

Lesbia Poems: Polymetrics, especially Hendecasyllabics (learn the meter!)

13, 1

**Week 2**

Begin studying/memorizing Catullus’ vocabulary (vocabulary on-line)

2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11

**Week 3**

36, 37, 51, 58

**Mon. Vocab Quiz**

**Wed. Quiz 1**

**Week 4**

10, 42

[Stroh mp3’s available on blackboard]

**Week 5**

Recitationes carminum Catullanorum

5 Parts: Poem 10: lines 1-11, lines 12-23, 24-34; Poem 42: 1-12, 13-24

[Fall 2010 Recitatores]

1. Sarah, 2) Jasia, 3) Neal, 4) Peter, 5) Andrew

**Wed. Review for Midterm**

**Fri. Oct. 8th MIDTERM 1**

**Week 6**

Non-Lesbia Poems: Literary Criticism and Invective: 14, 15, 16

**Week 7**

49 (tandem ad Ciceronem venimus!), 50

The Culture of the Late Republic: Catullus and Cicero

Begin Cicero *Pro Caelio* 33-36

**Week 8**

Cicero *Pro Caelio* 33-36

**Week 9**

**Mon. Nov. 1st: Quiz 2**

End of Polymetrics; Begin Elegiac Poems

[NB: All short except poem 76]

70, 72, 75, 76 (26 lines), 79

**Week 10**

83, 85, 86, 87

91 (10 lines), 92

104, 107, 109

Non-Lesbia Poems: Farewell to his Brother: 101

**Fri. Nov. 12th: Quiz 3**

Begin Reading 63

**Week 11**

63 and oral practice of 63 [Stroh mp3’s available on blackboard]

**[Thanksgiving Break between 11 and 12]**

**Week 12**

**Wed. Quiz 4 (through poem 63)**

Catullus Juventius Cycle:

21, 23, 24, 26, 48, 81, 99, and possibly and 40 (15 & 16 already read this term)

**Week 13**

Continue Juventius poems

**Week 14**

**Mon.: Finish Poems; Review for Midterm**

**Wed.: Midterm 2**

**Book Review Paper/Project Due**