

EPYLLION: A READING GROUP FOR TEENS ADVANCING TO AP LATIN DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS

The current Advanced Placement Examination in Latin comprises two texts, Caesar's *de bellō Gallicō* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. While many students rising to AP Latin may possess a good appreciation of social, political and military history through their prose readings through intermediate level, many still want a deeper appreciation of the epic tradition that inspires Vergil's poem.

This reading group is designed with that student in mind, namely, a student who is enthusiastic about succeeding on the full scope of the AP Latin examination and the literary skills that study of the *Aeneid* cultivates, such as thematic interpretation and poetic devices.

This is a month-long weekly workshop program patterned along the lines of a college course I have taught at Franklin & Marshall. The aim is for students to read three classical epics in translation, Homer's *Iliad*, Homer's *Odyssey*, and Vergil's *Aeneid*.

Weekly meetings will convene with the expectation that one epic poem is read in translation before our meeting. The reading group discussion will in the time allotted concentrate on key excerpts. In addition to gaining an appreciation of thematics, there will be a stress on important poetic devices common to both English poetry and Latin poetry, as these literary devices are among the knowledge tested on the AP Latin examination (as well as AP Literature).

ADVICE FOR PARTICIPANTS: Successful completion of 3rd year Latin with the grade of B or higher is advised but not required. Current enrollment in 4th year Latin or higher is advised. Other high school readers of Latin and world literature are also welcome.

WHO: Chris Ann Matteo, Ph.D. Princeton *'00 Comparative Literature (ancient Greek, Latin and English Literatures)

WHEN & WHERE

MONDAYS, 10 am.- 1 pm. @ Whole Foods Café, Vienna
Monday 3 August 2015; Monday 10 August 2015; Monday 17 August 2015; and Monday 24 August.

TUITION: \$75 for a single workshop or \$275 to preregister for all four (a \$25 discount).

Participants may register online at the scheduler at

Book Purchases are made separate from Tuition (see the listing on the reverse).

WHY call this reading group Epyllion? The word for "epic" in Greek is epos, and there was a genre of poetry called "little epic" or epyllion, that was a "small-scale" epic. So, because we will be reading the epics in a short period of time and selecting some of the more significant excerpts, it seems fitting to call this group Epyllion.

Week One, a three-hour meeting, will be Introductory and Homer's *Iliad*. Themes for focus include: The Rage of Achilles (1); The Catalogue of Ships (2); The Aristeia of Diomedes (5); Hector and Andromache in the Palace (6); A Night Raid (10); The Death of Patroklos (16); The Shield of Achilles (18); Priam Supplicates Achilles for Hector's Corpse (24). Topics include: epic cycle; oral verse composition; formula and originality in Homeric song; dactylic hexameter; invocation; *in mediās rēs*; apostrophe; metaphor; epithet; simile and Homeric simile; hyperbole; litotes; ekphrasis.

Week Two, a two- to three-hour meeting, will be Homer's *Odyssey*. Themes for focus include: Ithaca, Telemachus and Penelope (1); Calypso (4); The Raft of Odysseus (5); The Wanderings including the Cyclops' Cave (9); The Visit to the Underworld (11); The Dream of Penelope (16); The Stringing of the Bow (18); The Slaughter of the Suitors (24). Topics include: narrative digression; foreshadowing and backstory; characterization (the Trickster character and Cretan tales); metaphor & metonymy; onomatopoeia and alliteration; paranomasia, riddles, oracles; ekphrasis.

Week Three, a two- to three-hour meeting, will be the first six books of Vergil's *Aeneid*. Themes for focus include: The Sack of Troy (2); The Love of Dido and Aeneas (4); the Wanderings of the Trojans (1 passim); Aeneas' Descent to the Underworld (6). Topics include: literary and oral epic; the "Odyssean" *Aeneid*; the Roman pantheon and the Greek Olympians; literary devices revisited such as *in mediās rēs*, epithet, personification, anaphora, asyndeton and polysyndeton.

Week Four, another three hour meeting, will be the last six books of the *Aeneid*. Themes for focus include: Latium and the Palatine Hill (7 & 8); The Shield of Aeneas (8); the Battle books (9, 10, 11); The Death of Turnus (12). Topics include: figural reading (past precedents and later revivals); the "Iliadic" *Aeneid*; native Roman deities and legends; history in poetry; literary devices revisited such as *in mediās rēs*, ekphrasis, simile, epithet, *et aliīs*; narrative closure.

READING LIST

The texts I want students to use are those of translator Robert Fagles, available Amazon. Fagles, who was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2006 (among many other awards) before he passed away in 2008, was my professor at Princeton University. I endorse these translations and hope students will also rely on these texts so that citing page and line will be efficient.

- [Homer's Iliad on Amazon](#) (as of 27 June 2015 the market price in paperback is \$23.37)
- [Homer's Odyssey on Amazon](#) (as of 27 June 2015 the market price in paperback is \$9.35)
- [Vergil's Aeneid on Amazon](#) (as of 27 June 2015 the market price in paperback is \$14.73)
- [Box Set of Iliad, Odyssey and Aeneid on Amazon](#) (as of 27 June 2015 the market price in paperback is \$37.80)