

Homer: Politics, War and Life

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Unseen by these great men Priam entered, then standing close,
with his arms he clasped Achilles' knees and kissed the
terrible man-slaughtering hands, which had killed his many sons.
As when madness closes tight upon a man who, after killing someone
in his own land, arrives in the country of others,
at a rich man's house, and wonder grips those looking on,
so Achilles looked in wonder at godlike Priam, and the others in wonder too, looked at
each other.

Homer, *The Iliad*, Book XXIV.477-484, Translated by Caroline Alexander

Course description

Imagine getting inside the mind of Homer, one of the greatest poets that ever lived, and see the world through his imagination. Imagine reading *The Iliad* and discover what seems to be permanent in the human condition about Politics, War and Life. This poem was composed almost 3000 years ago but continue to speak to us today. It have also formed the basis of Western culture. Our objective in this course are to understand Homer's *Iliad* as work of literature and how thi epic poem influenced Western society. We are also particularly interested in the political and military dimensions of Homer's poetry.

Course requirements

Attendance

Unexcused absences will lower your Participation grade.

Participation:

This is a seminar in Literature, Politics and War. Your participation is welcome and necessary.

Assignments

You will complete two forms of written assignments (15% + 15% of your final grade) and two videos (10% + 10%) during the term. There will be a *viva voce* exam (30%) at the end of the course. Class participation will be worth 20% of your final grade.

Reading List:

Seminar 1:

- (i) Introduction
- (ii) *The Iliad* - Book I – The Rage of Achilles

Seminar 2: *The Iliad* - Book II – The Gathering of Armies

Seminar 3: *The Iliad* - Book III – Menelaus and Paris fight for Helen

Seminar 4: *The Iliad* - Book IV - The truce erupts in war

Seminar 5: *The Iliad* - Book V – Diomedes's *Aristeia*

Seminar 6: *The Iliad* - Book VI - Hector returns to Troy

Seminar 7: *The Iliad* - Book VII - Ajax duels with Hector

The Iliad - Book VIII - The tide of battle turns

Seminar 8: *The Iliad* - Book IX - Embassy to Achilles

Seminar 9: *The Iliad* - Book X - Raiding through the night

Seminar 10: *The Iliad* - Book XI - Agamemnon's finest hour

Seminar 11: *The Iliad* - Book XII - The Trojans storm the rampart

Seminar 12: *The Iliad* - Book XIII

Seminar 13: *The Iliad* - Book XIV

Seminar 14: *The Iliad* - Book XV - The Achaean armies at bay

Seminar 15: *The Iliad* - Book XVI - Patroclus fights and dies

Seminar 16: *The Iliad* - Book XVII – Fighting for Patroclus' body

Seminar 17: *The Iliad* - Book XVIII – The shield of Achilles

Seminar 18: *The Iliad* - Book XIX- The champion arms for battle

Seminar 19: *The Iliad* - Book XX - Achilles fights the river Scamander

Seminar 20: *The Iliad* - Book XXI -

Seminar 21: *The Iliad* - Book XXII - The death of Hector

Seminar 22: *The Iliad* - Book XXIII – Patroclus' Funeral Games

Seminar 23: *The Iliad* – Book XXIV – The greatest scene in literature: King Priam kisses the hands of Achilles

Seminar 24: Conclusion – A conversation about Homer.

Bibliography:

You can use any scholarly translations of Homer's poems in English and/or in your national language. The course will be taught in English.

Translations of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey:

Frederico Lourenço, Homero, *A Ilíada* (tradução), (Lisboa: Quetzal)

Richmond Lattimore, *The Iliad*

<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/I/bo5811519.html>

Robert Fagles, Homero, *The Iliad* (translation) - <https://www.amazon.com/Iliad->

[Homer/dp/0670835102](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0670835102)

Caroline Alexander, *The Iliad* (translation) - <https://www.amazon.com/Iliad-Caroline-Alexander-translator-Homer/dp/1784870579>

Secondary literature:

Caroline Alexander, *The War that Killed Achilles* (Penguin Books, 2010), https://www.amazon.co.uk/War-That-Killed-Achilles/dp/0571234305/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2T7YE76MHFPK5&keywords=the+war+that+killed+achilles&qid=1576518432&s=books&prefix=the+war+that+killed+%2Cstripbooks%2C201&sr=1-1

Pat Barker, *The Silence of the Girls* (Hamish Hamilton, 2018), https://www.amazon.co.uk/Silence-Girls-Pat-Barker/dp/0241983207/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3RGDVP8CE8ATK&keywords=pat+barker+the+silence+of+the+girls&qid=1576518382&s=books&prefix=Pat+Bar%2Caps%2C198&sr=1-1

Rachel Bespaloff, *Sobre a Ilíada*, tradução de Filipe Jarro (Lisboa: Livros Cotovia, 2005), <https://www.wook.pt/livro/sobre-a-iliada-rachel-bespaloff/166107>

Barbara Graziosi, *Homer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), https://www.amazon.co.uk/Homer-Barbara-Graziosi/dp/0198788304/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1W6Y0NFSHHEZW&keywords=barbara+graziosi&qid=1576518471&s=books&prefix=Barbara+Gra%2Cstripbooks%2C198&sr=1-1

Jasper Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), https://www.amazon.co.uk/Homer-Life-Death-Clarendon-Paperbacks/dp/0198140266/ref=sr_1_1?crid=KESXYQJZI19G&keywords=jasper+griffin+homer+on+life+and+death&qid=1576518999&s=books&prefix=Jasper+Griffin%2Cstripbooks%2C198&sr=1-1

Barry Strauss, *The Trojan War: A New History* (London: Hutchinson, 2007), https://www.amazon.com/-/dp/0743264428/ref=sr_1_1?mk_pt_BR=ÁMÁŽŔŔ&crid=2ETQ5SOOHHK65&keywords=barry+strauss+the+trojan+war+a+new+history&qid=1576518131&prefix=Barry+Strauss%2Caps%2C255&sr=8-1

MM, December 2021