

Summer Reading for Upcoming Classics Students

We look forward very much to seeing you all at Corpus in October. Vacation reading is a crucial part of the course at Oxford, since our university terms constitute less than half a calendar year and are very busy with attending lectures and tutorials, writing essays and completing pieces of language work.

Everyone (including Classics & English students) will be studying Homer and Vergil, as well as doing language work in terms 1 and 2 (see further below). Those in Courses IB, IIA and IIB, and Classics & English Course II will be sent further details on preparation in the summer for their intensive language courses. Classics & English students will also receive reading instructions from the English tutors.

Homer (term 1, Michaelmas term)

There will be weekly, hour-long tutorials on Homer in your first term, in groups of ca 4 students, based on essay writing and discussion. For Course IA students, there will also be a weekly reading class on the *Iliad* (Course IB and IIB will have an introductory reading class in the second and/or third term). The set text of Homer is the *Iliad*. For Course IA students, the set books in Greek are *Iliad* 1-9 and 16-24; for course IB, *Iliad* 1, 9, 22 and 24; for Course IIB, *Iliad* 1, 6, 9, 22, 24. For Classics & English, the set books are 1, 6, 9, 16, 18, 22-24.

Everyone should read the whole poem in English **before coming up**, and those in Course IA should do this and also read as much as they can of the set books in Greek. There are plenty of good translations, some classics in their own right, such as those by Richard Lattimore or Robert Fagles; other very recent ones, with good introductions and commentary include those by Anthony Verity (Oxford, 2014) or Peter Green (Chicago, 2015). For the *Iliad* in the original, it is essential that you have your own Greek text edition. A useful portable edition of the *Iliad*, with some vocabulary and comment, is that of M.M. Willcock (2 vols, Macmillan, paperback). The standard text edition is the Oxford Classical Text by Allen (2 vols, Oxford University Press, hardback).

As for some useful introductory reading, we can recommend the *Cambridge Companion to Homer*, ed R. Fowler (Cambridge UP, 2006); as well as Barbara Graziosi's short book *Homer* (Oxford UP, 2016). The most important thing, though, is to familiarize yourself as well as possible with the text of the *Iliad*.

Vergil (term 2, Hilary term)

The set text in Latin for the Vergil (or Virgil) paper in Classics Mods IA and IB consists of seven books of the *Aeneid*: 1-6 and 12. Knowledge of the whole *Aeneid* in English is required, so the remaining books should be read in translation, as well as the books required in the original for translation and comment. Those of you on Course IIB or Classics & English Course II should read the whole poem in translation; though Vergil is not technically on your syllabus, we normally get you to do this subject for its general importance and for learning university-level essay technique.

As with Homer, there will be weekly classes (in two groups of four/five). Classes will last an hour, and will consist of the delivery and discussion of a paper, and discussion of a particular passage or passages in the poem related to that paper's topic. Everyone will be expected to write several papers over the course of the term (c.2000 words each). For the summer the main task for those on Courses IA and IB is to read as much as they can of books 1,2, 4 and 6 in Latin, and to read the whole poem in translation (the newer Penguin by David West is most readable, the recent revised Loeb by George Goold is very helpful, and there are many other interesting translations).

A range of commentaries is available on the *Aeneid*. Most useful of all on *Aeneid* 1-6 are the older separate volumes of commentary on individual books, published by O.U.P. - Books 1, 2, 4 and 6 by R.G.Austin; Book 12 has an excellent new commentary from C.U.P. by R.J.Tarrant. There is also a two-volume paperback Bristol Classical Press edition of the whole poem by R.D.Williams (also available second-hand in its old hardback Macmillan form); also useful is the recent US Focus commentary on 1-6 edited by Randall Ganiban.

If you want an introduction to the *Aeneid* and the major questions, W.A. Camps, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid* (1970) is still very helpful, while more up-to-date is Philip Hardie's study on *Virgil* in the 'Greece and Rome New Surveys in The Classics' series (1998). For a convenient survey of what has been written on the *Aeneid* in the period 1900-1988 see the first chapter of S.J.Harrison (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid* (1990). It is also very helpful to have read the *Odyssey* in translation (and the *Iliad* if you haven't already, especially as the *Iliad* will be the main object of study in the Homer paper).

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