Classics 140: Heritage of Greece and Rome
(An Introduction to the Classical World)

Required Texts


NB: You will find these texts in the Aztec Shops sorted by the author as alphabetized.

Course Description and Objectives

The title of this course, “Classics 140: Heritage of Greece and Rome,” really doesn’t tell you much. The official catalogue description: “Greek and Roman art, literature, arts, and institutions in the Western tradition” assumes you can supply a verb to something with that list of topics. It also assumes you know what the terms “Greek” and “Roman” imply. I’m not going to make any such assumptions. Instead, I’m going to make it a course objective that we thoroughly familiarize ourselves with all that is implied by the terms, Greek and Roman. This course is, in fact, going to be a general introduction to classical studies designed to make you acutely aware of how and to what extent classical civilizations (a.k.a., the Greeks and the Romans) exerted influence in the past and, to an amazing degree (as I hope to convince you), continue to exert influence. By investigating, interrogating, and appreciating (perhaps even deprecating), comparing, and contrasting several key pieces of classical art, literature, and social institutions (including political and religious practices, military and civilian organizations, and ordinary rituals, customs and ethics), students will be able to demonstrate—through brief responses on three exams designed to elicit familiarity with concepts covered in our lectures and readings—a general familiarity with key topics in the field of classical studies.

There’s a second course objective, and it has to do with that word in the course title, “Heritage.” I’d like to have it as a course objective, demonstrated again through brief responses to questions on our exams, that students be able recognize, identify, critique and evaluate certain instances of the continuation (or appropriation, or translation, or mutation) and discontinuation of classical culture in our own times. *Heritage* [hereditary “descending by inheritance,” < L. hereditarius < L. heres, heredis, “heir”] indicates that this class will have to do with the transmission of material from a deceased benefactor to some lucky heirs: this course will examine an inheritance. If I’m successful in this second course objective, you will leave the class with a fledgling sense of what has been left for you to claim as yours. I want to teach you how rich are without your even knowing it.
Grading

Reading quizzes and home assignments  25%
First Midterm (Monday, Week 6)  20%
Second Midterm (Monday, Week 11)  25%
Final (Wednesday, 12 Dec—note fix--8:00-10:00)  30%

Reading quizzes will be given through Blackboard (Bb). Home assignments will include the construction of a “homepage” for me on Bb and there will be a brief additional homework assignment (which you’ll love doing, but you’ll have post to me through Bb). That is, success in this course depends on your having fast and regular access to the internet (either on campus or off). There will be no make-ups for midterms without prearrangement (and only to an earlier date). In the extremely unlikely event of an unforeseeable, verifiable, and excusable absence from a midterm, I’ll re-weight your score by my own grading software. I’ll make your “raw scores” available to you for all graded work at Bb as soon as I am able: you should use Bb to verify that I’ve recorded the correct score for you, but you should in no way assume that Bb is showing you a correctly weighted, curved or interpreted grade (unless I specify a data column that tells you it is your “weighted/equivalent” grade). N.B. the early hour of our final. The final will only take one hour and we’ll start that at 9:00 a.m.

Intellectual Properties

I reserve all rights over the intellectual property of the course. You must ask me for permission to record the class (which I’ll always grant you), and to make the course available to others (which I conditionally grant you only for purposes of studying for this class). You must ask my permission to bring any guests to class.

I reserve the right to assess and reassess your progress in the course and to readjust assignments in the middle of the semester. Grades posted at Blackboard are not to be understood as reflecting on the reality of your grade; they do serve to indicate to you that I have corrected an assignment and recorded it. My own grading software is the final arbiter of your weighted grade, based on the scores that I enter into it from Bb.