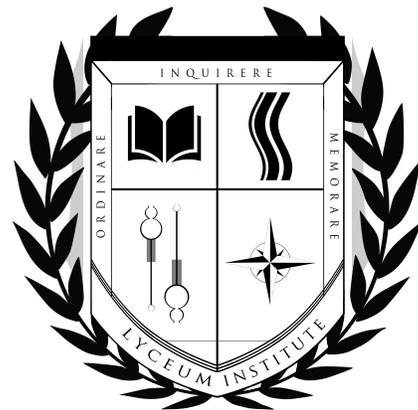


AN INTRODUCTION TO LATIN PROSE AND POETRY

RICHARD SHARPE, MA
COURSE SYLLABUS

FALL 2023

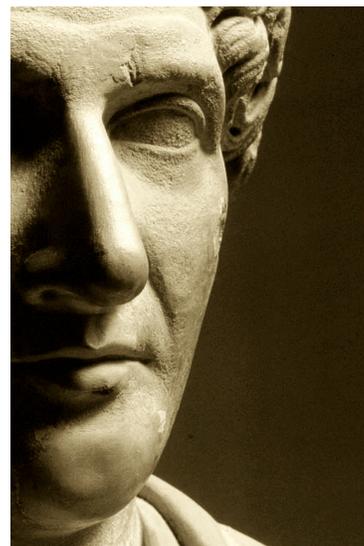


DESCRIPTION

The Lyceum Institute's Prose and Poetry course guides participants who possess intermediate or advanced Latin experience in a study of unadapted selections from the following Latin works: Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, and the Gospel of Mark, as presented in the *Vulgate*.

This course is designed to help participants (especially those who have recently completed our *Fundamentals* course sequence) improve their ability to read and translate sophisticated Latin writings with accuracy and confidence. Though participants are introduced to both a sizable amount of new vocabulary and a number of advanced grammatical constructions, particular emphasis is placed on the *development of basic skills in literary interpretation*.

At this level of study, it is required that participants have complete familiarity with both essential vocabulary and the fundamentals of grammar. (See the "Prerequisites and Placement Test" section below.)



METHOD

This course consists of **nine** class sessions, and includes a week-long break after the sixth week. The **weekly class session**, held **Thursdays at 6:00-7:00 ET**, consists in a translation of and discussion about an assigned passage from one of our authors. **Class sessions are conducted in English.** The general class structure is as follows: one participant reads and translates a passage, usually around fifteen to twenty lines; the instructor offers brief remarks, answers questions, and clarifies difficulties; another participant takes up the next passage, and so on. Class ends either when the passage is fully translated or when the hour has passed.

Unlike courses in our *Fundamentals* sequence, the primary focus is no longer a study of basic grammar and vocabulary, but rather an accurate translation of Latin passages with due consideration of their structure, style, and genre. To aid understanding and appreciation of these works, class time is also devoted to a discussion of the following aspects of literary interpretation:

- Grammatical and rhetorical figures of speech;*
- The basics of scansion and poetic meter;*
- The historical, social, cultural, political, and mythological/religious context of our authors and their works; and*
- The main divergences and developments in Latin grammar and vocabulary among different historical periods and regions (chiefly, those between Classical and Medieval Latin).*

Participants are expected to have read the assigned passage and notes prior to each class session. This enables efficient use of class time, including time for both translation and discussion of new concepts. Participants are expected to be fully engaged in class sessions, partaking in the translation process and asking questions.

So too, participants ought work to maintain a strong proficiency in grammar and vocabulary (ideally: 30-60 minutes of daily study *in addition to* preparation for the week's reading). To facilitate and maintain discipline in study, participants are encouraged to avail themselves of our digital resources and growing Latin community. Above all, I am available often throughout the week to meet and discuss difficulties, either through chat or audio/video calls.

(N.B.: as we are working with rather challenging passages, it is quite likely that we shall not always complete the assigned reading within the hour. We shall pick up from where we left off the following week; in turn, it is quite possible that reading selections may begin to diverge from the progression listed below. As such: **this syllabus is subject to change**. Any change[s] will be made in writing and in a timely fashion.)

TEXTS (REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED)

Our **primary texts** are Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, and the *Vulgate* New Testament. **All readings are available online (legally) for free and uploaded to Teams. The specific passages selected from these texts, but not the texts themselves, are subject to change.**

It is **also required** that participants possess print copies of a **dictionary** (either [*Cassell's New Latin Dictionary*](#) or the [*Collins Gem Latin Dictionary*](#)) as well as a **grammar index** (either Mahoney's [*Essential Latin Grammar*](#) or Allen and Greenough's [*New Latin Grammar*](#)).

It is **recommended** to acquire physical copies of these texts to facilitate study. I encourage participants to buy Steadman's [*College Caesar*](#) and [*College Vergil*](#), as these "readers" feature many linguistic, historical, and cultural aids for beginners. Regarding the New Testament: the most affordable options are Wordsworth and White's [*Nouum Testamentum Latine*](#) or, if you desire a copy of the complete *Vulgate*, Weber and Gryson's [*Biblia Sacra Vulgata*](#). (That said, note that these editions, unlike the readers for Caesar and Vergil, offer little commentary or aid.)

Feel free to buy any suitable edition of these works, but *caveat emptor*: many print editions of Latin works are abridged. Look carefully before making a purchase.

PREREQUISITES AND PLACEMENT TEST

As this course centers on a close reading of unadapted Latin texts, it is required that participants possess an adequate mastery of essential Latin vocabulary and grammar. In terms of grammar, participants must be truly familiar with the fundamentals of both *morphology* (all forms of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs) and *syntax* (the main uses of all parts of speech, as well as the structure and use of phrases, clauses, and sentences).

Thus, as a prerequisite, participation in this course requires either the completion of our *Fundamentals* course sequence (Elementary Latin I-III) or the sufficient comprehension of a placement test. If Lyceum members wish to take a placement test, they ought contact me either by direct message on Teams or by email (r.sharpe@lyceum.institute).

SESSION SCHEDULE

September 14	<p>Selections from Caesar's <i>Commentarii de bello gallico</i> (CBG)</p> <p>Required Reading: CBG I.1.1–7.5; List of Grammatical and Rhetorical Terms (Notes)</p> <p>Recommended Reading: Introduction to Caesar (Notes)</p>
Sept. 21	<p>Caesar's <i>CBG</i> (Cont.)</p> <p>Required Reading: CBG IV.24.1–32.5</p>
Sept. 28	<p>Caesar's <i>CBG</i> (Cont.)</p> <p>Required Reading: CBG IV.33.1–36.1; VI.13.1–17.5</p>
October 5	<p>Selections from Vergil's <i>Aeneis</i> (<i>Aeneid</i>)</p> <p>Required Reading: <i>Aeneis</i> I.1–59; Poetry and Scansion (Notes)</p> <p>Recommended Reading: Introduction to Vergil (Notes)</p>
Oct. 12	<p>Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i> (Cont.)</p> <p>Required Reading: <i>Aeneis</i> I.60–127</p>
Oct. 19	<p>Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i> (Cont.)</p> <p>Required Reading: <i>Aeneis</i> I.128–197</p>
Oct. 26	Scheduled Break
November 2	<p>Selections from the <i>Biblia vulgata</i></p> <p>Required Reading: Selections from <i>Evangelium secundum Marcum</i> (Chs. 8–10); Introduction to Medieval Latin (Notes)</p>
Nov. 9	<p><i>Biblia vulgata</i> (Cont.)</p> <p>Required Reading: Selections from <i>Evangelium secundum Marcum</i> (Chs. 11–13)</p>
Nov. 16	<p><i>Biblia vulgata</i> (Cont.)</p> <p>Required Reading: Selections from <i>Evangelium secundum Marcum</i> (Chs. 14–16)</p>