COURSE SYLLABUS

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Office hours: TTh 11-12, T 2-3, 6-7pm, and by appointment.

Prof. Stefan Chrissanthos (writing instructor): Office: University Hall 3229; Office Hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION. Many consider Homer’s Iliad the foundational text of western literature, history, and thought. It is also, arguably, the greatest war story ever written, revealing (among other things) the challenges of being a leader – Agamemnon, the hero certain of death but who fights for home and country despite the pleas of his wife – Hector, of Andromache, and the other hero, who knows he will die but cares only to avenge the friend he failed to protect – Achilles, of Patroclus.

While long regarded as the “Bible” of the Greeks as it reveals the structures of their society, the cultural and ethical values prized by that society, the Iliad in recent years has assumed a new function, that of a forerunner of psychological introspection as it deals with human emotions that are timeless. Historian Victor Ehrenberg once observed that the poet is an artist, a spokesperson for his own moment in time, and a spokesperson for the ages. As the above few examples demonstrate there is much truth in his analysis and this will provide the structure for a close reading of Homer’s great poem.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: From this seminar, its discussions and assignments, students will come away not only with an understanding of this great poem and its interpretations, but also a clearer grasp of the critical skills intrinsic to a liberal education – how to read, write, and think critically, how to understand and interpret sources of information and analyze them – skills critical to any future endeavor whether it be a career in business, science, or, gasp!, liberal arts!

I. TEXTS FOR THE COURSE: the following books have been ordered and are available at the University bookstore. Additionally, other readings relating to the Homer and the Iliad have been placed together as a document (entitled “The Real Homer”) on BlackBoard via MyLMUConnect. Additional materials will also be posted on Blackboard, including this syllabus; you should let me know if you have problems locating these.


II. HOMER’S ILIAD. The Iliad is a remarkable poem, especially as it comes so early in the course of what we today call Greek history. Like its author, its date and its origins have long been objects of scholarly concern: one of the earliest attempts to unravel its secrets begins in the late eighteenth century with the work of F.A. Wolf, Prolegomena to Homer (1795), some of whose questions and conclusions remain viable today. Something will need to be said about the identity of “Homer” – i.e., how one person could possibly write such long poems at so early a date (c. 700 BC, but also later than this, perhaps as much as two generations), as also the how part, namely construct such complex poems. Something too will need to be said about Heinrich Schliemann, the German millionaire who excavated “Troy” between
1870 and 1890 (it had been identified as such 1863-65) and how Homer’s poem agrees, or doesn’t, with what archaeology tells us, or attempts to tell us. Finally, the *Iliad* is simply amazing in its depth, how repeated readings always turn up fresh views and ideas about the Greeks, what they believed in, how they lived, as well as how they died. Finally, the *Iliad* is a poem about war and this will figure in discussions too.

**ON READING HOMER (and some additional material too).** Why should you, should we, care about reading a poem that was written two millennia (and more) ago, talking about people remote from us, believing in gods who could influence their lives and the course of events? A pretty good question, isn’t it, though the same might be said of any number of fiction pieces today, let alone films!? Part of the answer, and some of which we’ll discuss in class is the degree to which things are worth reading as we find them true, or meaningful perhaps, as they relate to our own experiences, though this comes as a matter of degree. But you might consider the extent to which man’s relation with nature, man’s relation with his fellow man … with god, changes, and how this sheds light on our own definitions of, for example, psychology, ethics, or theology.

You might want to ask such questions as: What is the author telling me about this person, this event, this act? What kind of style and tone does the author take? What is the basis for the selection of material presented? Is there an overall message? What does the author say of “humanity?” How are “humanity” and “civilization” reconciled with the acts of individuals and societies? What is revealed generally of prevailing attitudes about war? What are the tensions that exist between civilian and peacetime morality and conduct in the spheres of warfare?

As you read, try in keep these questions in your mind, reviewing them often.

**III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **SHORT ESSAYS.** Besides close reading and regular discussion of the texts, each student in the course will be required to write 5 short papers of approximately two pages in length; one of these will include a critical book review (see below §c). For the due dates of these essays see the course outline below, Pt. V.

   b) The short papers are intended both to facilitate discussion of Homer’s text as well as to develop your writing skills. These short papers should be submitted in timely fashion. I will accept late papers (defined as those arriving after class), but a late paper penalty of a full letter grade (after the paper has been graded) will be assessed.

   c) The critical book review will comprise the last of the short papers and will be due 11/19. The subject of this review, of not more than three pages, will be a review of the essays by Simone Weil and Rachel Bespaloff, found in the NYRB edition, *War and the Iliad*. This should not be a summary (or book report), but rather an attempt to identify the interpretations and arguments presented by the authors.

2. **TERM PAPER.** In addition, there is a research paper due at the end of the term. A short form (about 5 minutes in length) of this paper or project will be presented at the end of the semester in a symposium at which we will all be present. Please note that your presentation here will comprise a portion (25%) of your final paper’s grade. This topic is your selection (though I will be happy to assist you in finding and focusing on that topic) and your paper should have all the necessary supporting materials: notes and bibliography in particular. I expect that this paper will be approximately ten pages in length. Creative works including historicized fiction (i.e., short stories, screenplays) and related performing arts projects will also be considered as viable (and acceptable) projects. The same late paper formula as outlined above for the short papers applies here as well.
On November 5th proposals for the term paper will be due in class (a penalty free extension will be granted to November 8th). Proposals should include (minimally) a one page proposal with bibliography. Failure to submit on time will result in an automatic forfeiture of one-half a letter grade on the final grade for the assignment, i.e., A>A-, B+>B, etc.

Please note that in this day and age of computer-assisted writing, I expect essays to be flawless. Papers will be typed, double-space (size 12 font) and will follow the usual guidelines (please note those at the end of this syllabus). Grading will be based not only on content but also language mechanics - in short, how you write is as important as what you write. Note too the following:

1) A term paper submitted without approval of the topic or bibliography will not be accepted and will receive a grade of 0 (= F).
2) A paper that omits treatment, analysis, or criticism of the primary sources will receive a grade no higher than a B.
3) A paper submitted without title page, page numbers, or complete bibliography will receive a grade no higher than a B.
4) Wikipedia and other anonymous internet sources are not acceptable for the written work outlined above. Submissions citing these will be regarded as lacking supporting documentation.

3. EXAMINATIONS. While this course is a seminar and will be conducted as such, i.e., with discussions of text and so on being the principal class format, it is also important that you learn how to write essay type examinations – something you will be asked to do in future both here at LMU and elsewhere (graduate school, law school, for example). For this reason there will be both mid-term and final examinations (see semester outline below) with the subject matter coming from Homer’s *Iliad*, the characters and issues that will be discussed in class. Study guides will be distributed in advance so that you may prepare and additional time will be spent in class discussing examination writing.

4. GRADING. The course grade will be determined as follows:
   - Term Paper:  25%
   - Short Papers (including the book review): 25%
   - Class Participation: 15% (noted, evaluated, and recorded)
   - Examinations: 25%
   - The Information Literacy Module: 10% (on which see below)

1) A word about incompletes. University policy is that 80% of the course work must be completed before an instructor can agree to assign a grade of incomplete. The grade breakdown for this course provides no rationale or support for assigning an incomplete. Please note this.

2) A note on plagiarism: this appears to be a spreading cancer afflicting the academic community including LMU and it seems to be occurring more than I can recall being the case in the past. The LMU Bulletin gives wide discretionary power to the faculty in dealing with cases of plagiarism. If I even think that I have detected an instance of plagiarism, the minimal penalty will be a grade of F on the assignment and possibly the course.

3) Finally, a note on attendance: I do not grade on attendance as I expect that you will be in class and ready to participate. While I do keep track of absences, this is for advising purposes.

5. THE INFORMATION LITERACY MODULE. This component of the grade is worth 10% overall and is designed to introduce you to how to use the library and conduct research. These must be completed by the end of the semester; the quizzes you are required to take will be graded/recorded as Pass/Fail.
There are three steps you will need to access the tutorial:

1. Log in to MyLMU Connect and click on FFYS 1000 FYS 22 or 70 FYS Homer’s *Iliad* to enter the course site.
2. Click on the “Information Literacy” link in the menu on the left-hand side of the page.
3. Click the link for the tutorial you are assigned. The tutorial will open in a new window.
4. Other things you will have to keep in mind using the tutorial and taking the quizzes:
   a. You should not take the quizzes on wireless as there may be problems in saving the data.
   b. The computers in the Information Commons in the Library have been established for the tutorials and should work without any problems.
   c. Firefox is the preferred browser to use.
   d. A number of “open house” events are planned at the library in September and October to assist students in using the ILM.

6. **THE INSTRUCTOR AND THE WRITING INSTRUCTOR.** As you will know, this is a team-taught course in the sense, with an instructor responsible for course content, perhaps most importantly, the course grade, as well as the overall structure and organization of what you will be doing. The role of the writing instructor is supplementary to this. Overall, you can expect the following in terms of the interaction of the instructor and the writing instructor:

1. The writing instructor will have the responsibility and duty as “first reader” of the essays that you submit (outlined above). When these essays are returned to you, you can expect them to be marked as follows: a + grade meaning good to excellent work; a √ grade meaning average but acceptable; and – grade meaning unsatisfactory and requiring a rewrite to be resubmitted to the writing instructor. After this round of readings, the essays (including the original draft submitted to the writing instructor) will then be given to the instructor who will read them again, this time assigning a letter grade, A-F.

2. The writing instructor will also be holding office hours where he will be available for assistance in the writing of student papers.

3. There will also be occasions when the writing instructor will be present for class discussions (as a Greek and Roman historian he is quite familiar with the material too) and can be expected to participate.

4. Finally, the writing instructor may also at times become the actual instructor (this most likely on the absence of the instructor).

**IV. HOW TO CONTACT ME:** My own work keeps me busy and preparations for an early October symposium, “The Many Faces of War” will be keeping me very occupied the first half of the semester. Additionally, I will be making at least one trip out-of-town during the term, so please make use of e-mail. I check it frequently and will respond as quickly as possible to your questions and concerns.

Please talk with me before or after class and make use of office hours as well.

Students should keep in mind that Professor Chrissanthos will be holding office hours where he too will be available for advice and assistance in regard to the essays and other matters relating to the course.

If you are experiencing any personal or academic problems, pressures, doubts or malaise at any time during the semester, seek advice or help before things get out of hand. I am available and at least know people who can help in different areas of academic, career, and personal counseling. Most problems can be solved if confronted early enough.
All electronic equipment (cell phones, etc.) are to be turned off during class. If I even think you are text-messaging I will ask you to leave the class. Lap-tops may be used in class, but only for instructional purposes (!); tape recorders may be used to record lectures and discussions.

**SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:** Students with special needs who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Daum Hall # 224, x84535) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit [www.lmu.edu/dss](http://www.lmu.edu/dss) for additional information.

**V. SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS** (please note that the following list of topics and readings is subject to change as necessary).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC &amp; READING (all reading will be found in Homer; additional BlackBoard readings may also be assigned, posted on Blackboard)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 27</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Homeric Greek World: Introduction to Homer (lecture)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 3</td>
<td>Achilles &amp; Agamemnon (Bk. 1)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Agamemnon, Odysseus, &amp; Thersites (Bk. 2)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Hector, Paris, &amp; Helen (Bk. 3) &gt; <strong>ESSAY 1 DUE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nestor, on battle (Bks. 4 &amp; 5)</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Hector, Paris, &amp; Andromache, on War (Bk. 6)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>A Truce (Bk. 7)</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>The Trojans Rally (Bk. 8) &gt; <strong>ESSAY 2 DUE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The Embassy to Achilles (Bk. 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>The “Doloneia” (Bk. 10)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>TUTORIAL SESSIONS (OCT. 1-2-3)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Homer in Review (I)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</strong></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td><strong>AUTUMN DAY BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Agamemnon’s Glory (Bk. 11) &gt; <strong>ESSAY 3 DUE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Trojans Break Through &amp; the Greeks Hold, barely (Bk. 12-13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Greeks, Trojans, &amp; Gods at War (Bk. 14)</td>
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VI. LIST OF DISCUSSION TOPICS
The following list of questions is provided as suggestions to assist you in the preparation for class discussion and the writing of the short essays. You are free to improvise as you see fit, bringing in appropriate comparative material, and to develop and expand on ideas you find interesting or important. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Please note: it is my preference that there are volunteers to initiate and sustain discussion, but in the absence of contributions to discussions I will call on members of the seminar to offer their ideas and views on the reading and these topics.

Aug.  27  Introductory Class (orientation)
        29  Homeric Greek World: Introduction to Homer (lecture)
Sept.  3  What explains the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles?
        5  Why does Thersites complain to Agamemnon and what happens to him when he does?
        10  How do Hector and Helen regard the bravery of Paris?
        12  What does Nestor tell those about to enter battle? What does this say about the nature of courage?
17 Explain the differing attitudes of Hector & Andromache on war – how is war part of life?

19 How is the Greek-Trojan truce arrived at? What explains it?

24 Why do the Trojans almost win?

26 Why does Achilles reject Agamemnon’s overture? What explains his reaction & rejection?

Oct. 1 Is the “Doloneia” different from the rest of the Iliad – is it unheroic?

3 Tutorial Sessions

8 Homer in Review (I)

10 Midterm Examination

15 Is Agamemnon brave? Is the Achillean portrayal biased?

17 How do the Greeks manage to hang on – how do they survive the Trojan onslaught?

22 How are men and gods alike, and not, in battle?

24 What explains Hector’s glory? Is what drives Patroclus different?

29 Does Menelaus redeem himself?

31 Is the grief of Achilles real? What suggests that this is so?

Nov. 5 How does Achilles manage his grief?

7 Just how terrible is Achilles in battle? Is he different from previous days in battle?

12 Hector and Achilles meet – for whom do you cheer? Why?

14 What role(s) do the funeral games for Patroclus serve? Honorific, memorial, ??

19 Why does Achilles grant Priam his request? What moves him?

21 Homer in Review (II)

26 Homer in Review (III)

Dec. 3 In-class Presentations

5 In-class Presentations

VII. GRADING STANDARDS FOR ESSAYS AND TERM PAPERS

A. In grading your written work, I look at the following criteria:

1. The Topic. One of the first things I look for is your topic: how well focused it is, how well you have explained it. Of particular importance is the introductory paragraph: this should be tight and by its conclusion, any reader should know just what it is you intend to argue and investigate. You might also take into account when forming your argument counter
examples, possibly even ideas disagreeable to your own. These should be responded to somewhere in your discussion.

2. **Grammar and Writing.** This is nearly as important as the topic itself. After you leave LMU, most careers that you will take up will require a good deal of writing. How well, or how poorly, you write will identify you among your peers. Clear sentences and correct grammar are essential components of this and will be evaluated. How do you go about this?
   a) start your work early.
   b) write and rewrite.
   c) read, and read more.

3. **Sources, Bibliography and Citations.** These are also essential components to your writing. Whenever you refer to a source other than yourself, you should provide a reference, either in a footnote, endnote, or parenthetical citation, and then a bibliography at the end of your paper. This should also be done for information you have obtained from an internet source.
   a) a bibliography at the end of your paper is an essential part of your paper and your work is incomplete without one. See further below, end p. 2.

4. **Citation and Plagiarism.** When you provide information without a citation - and it belongs to someone else - that constitutes plagiarism. The consequences of this can be severe, ranging from an F grade for the assignment to expulsion from the University. The easy way to avoid this situation is to work carefully, making sure that proper credit is given to those from whom you take information and ideas.

5. **Deadlines.** The dates on which your written work is due are carefully noted in the syllabus. You should adhere to these. As with the development of effective writing skills, the habit of completing your work when it is due will serve you well later in life. As you will see in the syllabus, late papers will receive a late paper penalty of one letter grade per day after the due date. This rule is applied when there are no mitigating circumstances (e.g., illness, a death in the family), and sometimes the spirit of this rule is applied rather than the law. In any event, you should submit your work however late it has become (this is not a perfect world!), and keep me informed.

### B. Correcting the Essay: Some Thoughts:

Often students think that since their papers are for a history course, for example, that proper grammar and spelling somehow becomes optional. This is not the case. The University has a “writing across the curriculum” policy that aims to instill in its students an understanding and appreciation of the finer points of composition. For this reason, all classes, even history classes, require writing assignments which are evaluated carefully not only for content but for grammar, syntax (not quite the same thing as grammar), and spelling.

The following list of helpful hints might serve as a checklist of sorts as you prepare your paper for submission:

1. **Does the paper have page numbers?** This seems pretty basic, but you would be surprised how many times a paper is submitted with pages out of order. Page numbers prevents this.

2. **A title?** As with page numbers, a title is again a basic item; an omitted title suggests a lack of clarity to a reader. Developing a title for a paper also helps you to focus on a particular topic or theme.

3. **References and quoted (or cited) passages.** Please note the following:
a) **ANY TIME** you cite or refer to a passage from a source other than yourself, you must provide a citation, that is a page number to the source. This can be done in a foot/end note or parenthetically, but it must be done.

b) A quoted or cited passage **must be reproduced exactly like it is in the original.** If you want to delete some of the passage, the omitted words must be indicated by ellipsis (these are a series of … inserted where the words are in the original). Quotations, especially in short papers, should be used sparingly and they should be connected to your ideas both before and after the citation. Quoted material should not be simply inserted without discussion or comment.

4. **Titles of books, films, foreign words.** These should always be italicized. In the old days, this was done by underlining. Today computers have an italics function and this is what you should use.

5. **Grammar.** Please note the following:

   a) **Proper spacing after a period** is one space.

   b) **There is a big difference between it's and its:** it's is a verbal contraction of “it is,” while “its” (for simplicity’s sake) is a possessive adjective. The two are not used interchangeably.

   c) **The comma.** Commas are not inserted at will. They are used to separate clauses; they are used to provide certain “pauses” for emphasis in reading a text (e.g.). Rules of use are a bit complicated, but two sources that help unravel their mysteries are: W. Strunk & E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* (New York, 1935, since revised), and L. Truss, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves. The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* (London, 2006).

   d) **Numbers.** Usually round numbers are spelled out, others printed at numbers (e.g., “two hundred,” “289”). Dates such as “nineteenth” century are spelled out, not printed as “19th.”