

SYLLABUS

HUM 4890/SPRING 2023 GENRES AND MEDIA: ANCIENT EPICS

Dr. James D'Emilio

This short syllabus has the items mandated for all USF syllabi ([USF Policy 11.008](#)). Use it for an overview. Use the Home Page, your dashboard throughout the course, to familiarize yourself with the key parts of our Canvas site. There you'll find links to Course Documents which describe our subject matter, schedule, and assignments, and my expectations more fully. Pay particular attention to these four documents (available by Jan. 9):

1. Introduction: What is this course about? I comment on why we read the ancient Greek and Roman epics today. I discuss our goals and our methods of analysis and interpretation, the bigger questions and issues we address, and how we connect the different works we read.

2. Course Schedule includes weekly topics and core readings for the semester and explains the regular ten-day schedule for readings, quizzes, and forums with tips for organizing your week.

3. Assignments/Assessment: past grading patterns; my weighting of assignments and of higher/lower grades; a description of the three graded assignments (weekly quizzes and forums, and "In Focus"); and my policies on missed assignments/extra credit.

4. Discussion Forum Guidelines: the weekly forums are our most important assignment. The guidelines outline basic requirements and offer tips for preparing and writing strong postings. Be sure you understand what I expect and how to approach the forums effectively.

During the semester, any minor adjustments to those documents or this syllabus will be indicated on the Home Page and/or Course Documents Page.

Contact me any time at jmsdemilio@gmail.com or demilio@usf.edu (direct email is fastest!), or through Canvas messages (slower). To reply or send my own comments and messages, I will always use *your USF email (@usf.edu)*, not Canvas, so please be sure to check that regularly.

1. Course prefix and number, section number, and title

HUM4890.007S23.25387: Genres and Media (topic: Ancient Epics)

2. Semester term and credit hours: Spring 2023, 3 credit hours

3. Class meeting days/times/location (if applicable)

This course is entirely online, but NOT self-paced. There are no "live" meetings at fixed times, but required quizzes and forums are open each week for set periods with regular deadlines.

4. Instructor name, contact information, and office hours

Dr. James D'Emilio, demilio@usf.edu or jmsdemilio@gmail.com

Since I regularly and promptly respond to emails, I don't hold online "office hours" or meetings.

5. University course description (required to be verbatim from catalog) (This is for all HUM 4890 courses)

This course focuses on a particular aesthetic genre or media. Emphasis is on close readings of the media or genre in question, and on how media or generic paradigms shape ideas and identities.

6. Course prerequisites: None

7. Student learning outcomes (these are specific to my Ancient Epics course)

Throughout the course, your readings and assignments will develop your ability to think critically and communicate clearly, so that you can understand and interpret complex texts and sustained arguments, marshal evidence to support your ideas, and express yourself effectively.

By the end of the course, you will also have acquired, expanded, or improved specific knowledge and skills, enabling you to demonstrate the ability:

- a. to describe main elements of the Trojan legends and to explain how they were adapted in different cultural contexts in ancient Greece and Rome.
- b. to recognize and analyze literary devices epic poets used to create vivid descriptions and compelling dramatic narratives, to structure their vast works, and to communicate ideas.
- c. to analyze, interpret, and compare the ways the epics address cultural, social, ethical, political, religious, and philosophical issues, and questions about knowledge, identity, and human nature.
- d. to recognize and analyze intertextual relationships, that is, the ways poets and artists read these epics critically and referred to them to enrich and deepen the meaning of their own works.

8. Required texts and/or course materials

The **four required texts** are available through the USF bookstore (\$50 for new copies, a bit less for used copies or rentals). **“Free” translations or adaptations available on the internet, ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.** They differ in major and significant ways from these modern translations. You will lose credit if you rely on them. These are the texts in the order in which we use them:

- a. **Homer. *The Iliad of Homer.*** Translated by Richmond Lattimore. U. of Chicago P.
- b. **Homer. *The Odyssey of Homer.*** Translated by Allen Mandelbaum. Bantam Books.
- c. **Vergil. *The Aeneid of Virgil.*** Translated by Allen Mandelbaum. Bantam Books.
- d. **Ovid. *The Metamorphoses of Ovid.*** Translated by Allen Mandelbaum. Harcourt, Brace & Co. (a Harvest Book).

We also read two plays by Euripides, Hecuba and Rhesos (as USF library E books). **Readings will include sections from my textbook (typically 10 to 25 pages each week)** posted on Canvas. Some weeks may have short recorded introductions or presentations of selected material. *****Some readings graphically portray brutal violence on the battlefield and refer to or describe rape and sexual assault in ways that may be disturbing and/or offensive. Needless to say (but I’ll say it anyway), reading a work does not imply endorsement or agreement with its contents.*****

9. Course requirements such as exams, assignments, and projected due dates, if any

- a. **Weekly Schedule:** After our first week, each week’s topic spans **ten days, from Thursday to the Saturday night of the following week**, as explained in the Course Schedule and Assignments/Assessment.
- b. **Readings:** The weekly page, available by Thursday, introduces the required readings and includes the assigned sections of the textbook.
- c. **Weekly Quizzes:** Required open-book quizzes (**30 minutes**, about **16 to 20 multiple choice questions**) open **7PM, Thursday, close 11PM, Tuesday**. Guidelines explain what’s covered.
- d. **Weekly Discussion Forums:** Each week I post several forum topics by Thursday. You **choose two** of the topics. Following my guidelines and prompts, you write **two postings, each of at least two full paragraphs** (one posting for each of your two topics), based on the indicated course readings. **Forums open Sunday morning. Your first of two postings is due 11PM, Wednesday. Forums close 11PM, Saturday.**

In selected weeks, the weekly requirement changes from two postings to **ONE longer posting of at least THREE paragraphs**, due 11PM, Saturday. (*See Discussion Forum Guidelines and Assignments/Assessments*)

e. In Focus: You are required to participate in **two special “pinned” discussion forums**. Several options will open for at least three weeks at different times in the semester. These may require additional research. Some topics/schedules are listed in Assignments and Assessment

10. Final exam date and time (if applicable): There is **NO final exam**.

11. Grading scale

The final grade is based on **1000 points**. This is how I assign letter grades:

A+	990+	B+	870-899	C+	770-799	D	650-699
A	930-989	B	830-869	C	730-769	F	<650
A-	900-929	B-	800-829	C-	700-729		

12. Grade categories and weights

a. 13 Best Quizzes (Weighted): Quizzes (200 points/16 points each/20% of final grade): best 13 of 15 weekly quizzes: 50% more weight to your best 3 (=24 points each), 50% less to your lowest 4 (=8 points each)

b. 12 Discussion Forums (Weighted): (520 points/40 points each/52% of final grade): 12 required weeks of forums, 40 points each; 50% more weight to your best 4 (=60 points each), and 50% less weight to your lowest 2 (=20 points each).

c. In Focus (180 points/80 points for each of 2 special forums + 20 points based proportionally on the higher of your 2 scores/18% of final grade)

d. Best Assignment Category (100 points/10% of final grade): based proportionally on the best of your three assignment categories (13 Best Quizzes [Weighted]; 12 Discussion Forums [Weighted]; In Focus)

e. On top of those 1000 points (100%), everyone gets up to 2% (20 points) added to your final grade based on your best assignment category. This is on top of any earned extra credit.

13. Course schedule

There are **two schedules** to remember: the **semester-long schedule of topics and readings** (visible in Canvas under Modules) and the **ten-day “weekly” schedule of assignments from Thursday through the following Saturday** for each topic. The “Course Schedule” lists week-by-week topics and readings in more detail. Here is a short outline.

a. Weekly Schedule (*there will be minor modifications in the first and final weeks and at spring break*)

-Thursday: The week’s page (with an introduction, textbook, quiz guidelines, and forum topics) is available; the **quiz opens at 7 PM**

-Sunday morning: Discussion forums open

-Tuesday (11 PM): The **quiz closes**

-Wednesday (11 PM): Your **first of two forum postings is due**.

[-Thursday: The next weekly page becomes available and the next quiz opens]

-Saturday (11 PM): The forums close.

b. Semester Schedule (after Week 1.1, weekly materials are available on the Thursday listed here)

Jan. 9-12: Getting Started! First Week Attendance Assignments (Practice Quiz + Personal Introduction due by Thursday noon, Jan. 12)

The four epics, the Iliad, Odyssey, Aeneid, and Metamorphoses, are each divided into what are called “books” (like chapters). You will usually be asked to read only some of the “books” listed here for each week, especially in Module 1 (the Iliad). The required weekly section of the textbook (typically 10 to 25 pages, posted as a PDF) will introduce, discuss, or provide a context for the overall set of “books”. Quiz guidelines and forum topics will direct you to much more specific parts of the week’s material.

**MODULE 1: THE ILIAD
THE MAKING OF THE EPIC**

Week 1.1 (Jan. 9-15): Homeric Epic: Oral Poetry, Myth, History

Week 1.2 (Jan. 12-21): The Trojan War, Achilles’ Anger, and a Cast of Thousands (Iliad, books 1-6)

Week 1.3 (Jan. 19-28): Fateful Choices, Mortals and Immortals (Iliad, bks 7-19)

Week 1.4 (Jan. 26 - Feb. 4): Achilles’ Anger, Part 2: Endings and Reflections (Iliad, bks 20-24)

**MODULE 2: THE ODYSSEY
SEQUEL OR CRITIQUE?**

Week 2.1 (Feb. 2-11): Coming of Age (Odyssey, books 1-6)

Week 2.2 (Feb. 9-18): Civilization and Barbarism (Odyssey, bks 7-12)

Week 2.3 (Feb. 16-25): Recognition and Identity (Odyssey, bks 13-19)

Week 2.4 (Feb. 23 - March 4): Retribution and Restoration (Odyssey, bks 20-24)

**MODULE 3: VERGIL’S AENEID:
CULTURAL APPROPRIATION AND THE ART OF EMPIRE**

Week 3.1 (March 2-11): Vergil’s Odyssey: Duty and Destiny (Aeneid, books 1-3)

Week 3.2 (March 9-25/Spring Break): Visions of Rome: Sacrifice and Empire (Aeneid, bks 4-8)

Week 3.3 (March 23 - April 1): Vergil’s Iliad: War, Heroism, and Loss (Aeneid, bks 9-12)

**MODULE 4: WHERE HAVE ALL THE HEROES GONE?
EURIPIDES’ TRAGEDIES AND OVID’S METAMORPHOSES**

Week 4.1 (March 30 - April 8): Euripides’ Troy: Antiheroes and the Muse’s Thracian Bastard (Euripides’ tragedies, Hecuba and Rhesos)

Week 4.2 (April 6-15): Ovid’s Metamorphoses: Mock Epic and Battles of Words

-core readings: Ovid’s Metamorphoses, book 4 (from line 606) through book 6 (to line 411); book 8 (from line 262 through line 546)

Week 4.3 (April 13-22): Ovid’s Trojan War: Rumor, Themes of War, the Victory of Eloquence

-core readings: Ovid’s Metamorphoses, book 11 (from line 749) through book 13 (to line 623)

Week 4.4 (April 20-29, *schedule adjusted for final week*): Ovid’s Aeneid: The Last Word?

-core readings: Ovid’s Metamorphoses, book 13 (from line 623) through book 14 (to line 608); book 15 (from line 60 through line 481, from line 745 to 879)

14. General Education statement: This is not a Gen Ed course.

15. Global Citizen Project statement (undergraduate only; only required if a GCP course): This is not a GCP course.

16. Course-specific grading policies (e.g., late work, extra credit, etc.), if any

Together, the weekly quizzes and forums count for 72% of your final grade (if you do well, they can be as much as 82% of your grade). Individually, each quiz or forum is a small portion of your grade. I give your high scores more weight, your lower scores less weight, and drop the two lowest quizzes. Everyone gets up to 20 points (2%) added to your final grade based on your best assignment category. In addition to that, there are modest extra credit opportunities (limited to another 2%).

With small-scale, weekly assignments, all these adjustments will offset a few low scores or even missed assignments in a way that is **consistent for everyone**. The best response to a low score or missed assignment is to move forward and earn higher scores which get more weight.

Because of this, I do NOT reopen quizzes or weekly forums after the deadlines or accept late submissions. There are no exceptions, retakes, or makeups (unless mandated by specific USF policies).

I do deduct penalty points for missing any required assignment. For one or two assignments, those are little more than a “heads up” that will be offset by the extra points and weighting of high grades. Missing multiple assignments, however, will have a serious impact on your grade (with or without penalty points!), as it reasonably should. It is, in fact, the most common cause of failure. (See “Assignments/Assessment”)

17. Course-specific attendance and punctuality policies, if any

This course is conducted entirely online. It is “asynchronous”, with no fixed “meeting” times. You are, however, required to complete a “First Week Attendance” assignment (Practice Quiz + Personal Introduction) by Thursday noon, Jan. 12, or you will be dropped from the course.

18. Course-specific technology and media policies (e.g., recording class, expected email response time, etc.), if any

All course materials, including the textbook, assigned readings, assignments, images, recordings, and videos, which I provide are intended solely for your use within this course. They are protected by copyright and must not be circulated outside this course (*except, as specified under HB 233, within a formal complaint to the university or in relevant civil or criminal proceedings*). Distributing these materials on the internet, posting them on social media, or contributing them to digital repositories is specifically prohibited by USF Regulation 3.027 (Academic Integrity of Students), 4.I.8, p. 7, and USF Policy 10.048 (Course Notes and Recordings), 2.C, p. 2. Violations may be sanctioned.

19. [USF Core Syllabus Policy Statements](#)

The core policy statements listed on the linked website apply to all USF courses. This course is a USF course. Therefore, these policies apply to this course. That’s an example of a syllogism.

I look forward to the course!