



**TTh 2-3:15, Ragsdale 133**  
<http://myweb.ecu.edu/stevensj/>

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Fall 2019  
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Objectives. By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- read golden Latin poetry of the Age of Augustus, explain the grammar and syntax of a passage, answer questions about content, and translate it into cogent English.
- analyze the literary qualities of a passage of classical Latin, commenting on its vocabulary and mode of composition, and using: appropriate citation of the original literary source as evidence; a correct understanding of the passages cited; multiple modes of analysis (word choice, imagery, and where appropriate, metrical scansion); and a persuasive interpretation
- locate, organize, and evaluate information to investigate complex, relevant topics and address significant questions through engagement with and effective use of credible sources
- situate the dominant imagery of Augustan poetry in its history and material contexts.

We will be devoting this course to Vergil's *Georgics*, published in 29 BC, after the battle of Actium. Servius says that Vergil wrote it as a treatise on agriculture in imitation of Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Commentators point out that there were Hellenistic sources on which he drew such as Aratus' *Phaenomena* for the connection between seasons and constellations, and Nicander's *Georgics* which survives only in fragments. They also point out that his language is saturated with an imitation of Lucretius, which they use as evidence that Vergil was of Epicurean influence, as appears in various pseudo-Vergilian works around which Tenney Frank invented an Epicurean biography of Vergil. The allusions to Lucretius' language are undeniable, but questions remain as to what the imitation means, since the Epicurean avoidance of politics was incompatible with the imperial needs of Augustan Rome. The thesis that Vergil is advocating an Epicurean renunciation of war and politics faces many headwinds.

Roman poetry had adopted the Hellenistic ideal of the small, perfect, poem set down by the 3rd cent. BC Greek poet, Callimachus, in his *Hymn to Apollo* and *Aetia*. That ideal begins with the claim that poets practice an "art" *τέχνη*, and that the poet is an expert of this craft. This they understood to include a mastery of obscure myths, the interpretation of all prior literary and philosophical models, the etymology of names, sometimes including Latin words that allude to the meanings of Greek words. The result is an intricate infrastructure of veiled references to previous Greek authors. Their poetry was intended to reflect nature: on the surface one perceives beauty; upon deeper reflection there appear so many component structures of allusion and symbolism that art seems to surpass nature by imposing a moral order upon nature's apparent simplicity. The task of the reader is to rise to the creator's view of his creation. In nature, this would be God as the divine *artifex*, whom the poet tries to rival. This tradition was inspired in large measure by the arguments on aesthetics outlined in Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which Plato suggests that poetry could retain its claim to reveal the divine (and thus its moral authority) only if it adopts a philosophical purpose. Unfortunately for us, the *Georgics* allude constantly to the obscure myths of pastoral poetry employed by Theocritus in his poems about Sicily, by which he made his name at the court of

Ptolemy II Philadelphus in Hellenistic Alexandria. We will not have time to study the *Idylls* of Theocritus separately; so we will need to cover the meaning of the allusions briefly as we go.

The theme that dominates all Roman poetry after 60 BC is loss and fall caused by civil war. Rome has been tearing itself apart for 100 years: from the Gracchi who first provoked riots with their reforms (133, 121BC); to the social wars that pitted Italy against Rome (91-89 BC); to the proscriptions of Sulla that killed off his entire political opposition (the liberal half of the Roman aristocracy, 82 BC), which had itself massacred many of the conservative wing under Marius and Octavius (87); to the unconstitutional first triumvirate (Caesar, Pompey, Crassus) and its bloody end which pitted the Roman army of Caesar against Pompey, the Senate, and its forces at Pharsalus (49-48 BC), spreading revolt from Asia Minor to Egypt to Spain; to the assassination of Caesar himself (44 BC); to the second triumvirate (Octavian, Antony, Lepidus) which renewed proscriptions (43), this time against Caesar's murderers (Brutus, Cassius, and many senatorial families including Cicero); and to another civil war battle between the triumvirate and the patricides at Philippi in 42; and finally, at the breakup of the second triumvirate, to universal war between Octavian and Antony, splitting the Mediterranean world into armed camps, west against east, at the battle of Actium in 31. After this, Octavian was the sole power. By the time Vergil (70-19 BC) was writing the *Eclogues* (42-40), nearly the entire aristocracy of Rome (senatorial families) had been decimated, and even Vergil himself had lost his home in the proscriptions. The didactic theme of all Augustan poetry is that the old republic and the old ways are not only immoral but destructive. A new order is needed, particularly after the battle of Actium. In *Aeneid* VII, Vergil declares, *maior nascitur ordo*, "a greater order of things is being born". The word *maior* is key: Octavian, now Augustus, is conceived as creating a new world, as if he were God (Jupiter), and this world is "senior", superseding or having greater moral authority than the previous world, alluding to the *maius imperium* of the Roman consul. The dominant imagery of Augustan poetry is a new Rome rising from the ashes of the fall of the old world.

From Stoic doctrine and Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*, the Romans understood two kinds of fire that came into operation at such a moment in history. Destructive fire brings about the end of an age of history, devolving all things back into a state of divine fire, after which Jupiter (divine reason) adopts the role of artist (*artifex*, the Platonic demiurge from *Timaeus*) and creates a new order of things by adding art to fire, the so-called 'designing fire' (*pur technikon*). The birth of a new age is also interpreted as a sort of divine procreation, because Jupiter is reason, and begets an order of fated history through the power of the *spermatikos logos* –reason as it 'sows' the universe to inaugurate a new age, to which Vergil alludes in *Aen.* 6 with talk of 'fiery seeds'.

The end of a cycle of history and the start of a new one also owes something to the Roman reception of Hesiod's myth of five races of man in *Works and Days*: gold, silver, bronze, heroic, and iron, which late authors such as Plato often simplify into a system of four metals by lumping in the heroic race with the bronze. The ancients appreciated that Hesiod was describing the maturity of civilization on the principle of the life of a man, and thus not so much 'races' as 'ages': we are babies in the golden age, unruly children in silver, killing machines in the late adolescence of the bronze age, romantic seekers of justice in the heroic age, and grimly self-aware adults in the iron age. Plato mapped this progression onto his decay of five constitutions from aristocracy through timocracy, oligarchy, and democracy into tyranny, as human government declines from a pursuit of what is good and beautiful to the pursuit of honor, wealth, and a naive liberality of power, into the license and corruption of tyranny. Intellectual Romans of this period felt that their republic had decayed into tyranny along this arc, and that the battle of Actium marked the end of the cycle of ages, as though tyranny and the iron age went together.

They envisioned a return to the golden age, which Augustus commemorated literally in 17 BC at the secular games, celebrated in Horace's *Carmen saeculare* or 'Century Hymn / Hymn for the Age'. The new golden age was conceived not as an infancy, but as under mature leadership with mature citizens freed from the grim realities of war. Poets spoke often about a prohibition against returning to the past, meaning the greed and passions of the senatorial oligarchy, and Rome's founding through Romulus' murder of Remus. As we read the four books of *Georgics*, we will evaluate whether we see Hesiod's ages and metals employed in the poetic fabric, along with any allusions to cycles of history, theories of political rule, and the creation of a new order by art and designing fire, where the poet's art, Caesar's rule, and god's divine reason intersect.

### Textbook:

- The *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Moretum* of Virgil. Notes & lexicon, by George Stuart. Chase and Stuart's Classical Series. (Philadelphia 1876, repr. Bibliobazaar 2016) 9781361966457. <http://bit.ly/2yUONJ8>

### Grading:

In-class translation and participation	30%	Scale: A 93-100, A- 90-92
Midterm	30%	B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82
Article report due 12/3	10%	C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70-72
5 page final paper due 12/10	30%	D+ 67-69, D 63-66, D- 60-62

For the class participation and translation grade, you are expected to have read each assigned passage 2 or 3 times, to have identified every word carefully and to be prepared to translate and discuss the passage.

The midterm will be open book with dictionary sight reading of a passage from the *Georgics* with commentary. Since it is given during classtime, it will measure how much you can translate well in 75 minutes.

The article report should be submitted as a 3-4 page paper with the following structure: ¶ Summary of content and analysis. 2 pages on the content of the article. 1 page of analysis of the article's strengths and weaknesses. ¶ conclusion on how you might use the article in further research of your own. Total, around 4 pages; length of sections may be longer or shorter as needed.

The final paper must be a close reading of a passage or passages of the Latin text. It may study a single word or concept across the entire work, explicate a single passage, be connected to another work of literature (an intertextual analysis), to questions of history, art, philosophy, architecture, archeology, religion or other fields. It must interrogate a significant question for the text or Roman Civilization which can be answered by a close study of the Latin text of *Georgics*. The paper will be evaluated on how well each ¶ and sentence analyzes the imagery, vocabulary, and allusive nature of the Latin poem. If you have gone an entire ¶ without mentioning a Latin word, you are not fulfilling the purpose of the assignment. Papers may go longer, but the Latin intensive nature of the assignment will make that difficult if done properly.

### Online School Commentaries:

Charles Anthon, Notes on *Eclogues* & *Georg.* 1846. <https://bit.ly/2BXRRFh>

Edward Holdsworth's Notes on *Georgics*, repr. 1825 <http://bit.ly/2yEM4TR>

### Internet Resources:

Vergil's Garden (Plants in the *Georgics*, Holt Parker) <http://bit.ly/2YnIYD7>

Servius Comm *Georg.* <http://bit.ly/2T53dzm>

*Life of Virgil* <http://virgil.org/vitae/>

Classics Journals @Joyner: <http://bit.ly/2T5HB6a>

Vergil Homepage: <http://vergil.classics.upenn.edu/>

Life of Augustus: <http://www.luc.edu/roman-emperors/auggie.htm>

Smith's Dict. Biography: <http://bit.ly/2Kfx0Tc>

Ara Pacis: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ara\\_Pacis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ara_Pacis)

Appian, *Bellum Civile* 4.105-138 on Actium <https://bit.ly/2GPGIBF>

### Bibliography:

*Georgics* to 2015 (by Niklas Holzberg, @VergilianSociety.org) <http://bit.ly/2KrC9GF>

### Books in Joyner Library

Cambridge Comm. on *Georgics* by Richard F. Thomas, 1988

*The Cambridge Ancient History*

Favro, Diane *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome*

Galinsky, Karl. *Augustan Culture. An Interpretive Introduction*

*Oxford Classical Dictionary*

Zanker, Paul. *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*

PA6804 .A6 1988 v.1-2

Ref D 57 C252 (1982) v.9-10

DG69 .F38 1996

DG279 G17 1996

Ref DE 5 O9 1996

N5760 Z36 1988

**Syllabus:**

Tues. 8/20	Introduction; Servius' <i>Preface</i> to his commentary on the <i>Georgics</i>
Thurs. 8/22	<i>Georgics</i> 1.1-70
Tues. 8/27	<i>Georgics</i> 1.71-140
Thurs. 8/29	<i>Georgics</i> 1.141-203
Tues. 9/3	<i>Georgics</i> 1.204-275
Thurs. 9/5	<i>Georgics</i> 1.276-350
Tues. 9/10	<i>Georgics</i> 1.351-423
Thurs. 9/12	<i>Georgics</i> 1.424-514
Tues. 9/17	<i>Georgics</i> 2.1-82
Thurs. 9/19	<i>Georgics</i> 2.83-160
Tues. 9/24	<i>Georgics</i> 2.161-237. No class this week. Stay on syllabus and email translations to all of us.
Thurs. 9/26	<i>Georgics</i> 2.238-314. No class this week. Stay on syllabus and email translations to all of us.
Tues. 10/1	<i>Georgics</i> 2.315-396
Thurs. 10/3	Midterm
Tues. 10/8	Fall break
Thurs. 10/10	<i>Georgics</i> 2.397-474
Tues. 10/15	<i>Georgics</i> 2.475-end
Thurs. 10/17	<i>Georgics</i> 3.1-71
Tues. 10/22	Advising. <i>Georgics</i> 3.72-156
Thurs. 10/24	<i>Georgics</i> 3.157-241
Tues. 10/29	<i>Georgics</i> 3.242-321
Thurs. 10/31	<i>Georgics</i> 3.322-403. Pre-registration for Spring starts Monday.
Tues. 11/5	<i>Georgics</i> 3.404-488
Thurs. 11/7	<i>Georgics</i> 3.489-end
Tues. 11/12	<i>Georgics</i> 4.1-87
Thurs. 11/14	<i>Georgics</i> 4.88-179
Tues. 11/19	<i>Georgics</i> 4.180-280
Thurs. 11/21	<i>Georgics</i> 4.281-386
Tues. 11/26	<i>Georgics</i> 4.387-480
Thurs. 11/28	Thanksgiving break
Tues. 12/3	Last day of classes. <i>Georgics</i> 4.481-end. Article reports due.
Tues. 12/10	Final Papers due by 5pm

Marcus **Servius** Honoratus, *prooemion* to Vergil's *Georgics*:

Vergilius in operibus suis diversos secutus est poetas: Homerum in *Aeneide*, quem licet longo intervallo, secutus est tamen; Theocritum in *Bucolicis*, a quo non longe abest; Hesiodum in his libris, quem penitus reliquit. hic autem Hesiodus fuit de Ascra insula. qui scripsit ad fratrem suum Persen librum, quem appellavit ἔργα καὶ ἡμέρας, id est *Opera et Dies*. hic autem liber continet, quemadmodum agri et quibus temporibus sint colendi. cuius titulum transferre noluit, sicut *Bucolicorum* transtulit, sicuti *Aeneidem* appellavit ad imitationem *Odyssiae*: tamen eum per periphrasin primo exprimit versu, dicens: indicabo, quo opere et quibus temporibus ager colendus sit. ingenti autem egit arte, ut potentiam nobis sui indicaret ingenii coartando lata et angustiora dilatando. nam cum Homeri et Theocriti in brevitatem scripta collegerit, unum Hesiodi librum divisit in quattuor. quod ratione non caret. nam omnis terra, ut etiam Varro docet, quadrifariam dividitur: aut enim arvus est ager, id est sationalis; aut consitus, id est aptus arboribus; aut pascuus, qui herbis tantum et animalibus vacat; aut floreus, in quo sunt horti apibus congruentes et floribus. male autem quidam *Georgicorum* duos tantum esse adserunt libros, dicentes georgiam esse γῆς ἔργον, id est terrae operam, quam primi duo continent libri — nescientes tertium et quartum, licet georgiam non habeant, tamen ad utilitatem rusticam pertinere; nam et pecora et apes habere studii est rustici. licet possimus agriculturam etiam in his duobus sequentibus invenire: nam et farrago sine cultura non nascitur, et in hortis colendis non minorem circa terras constat inpendi laborem. et hi libri didascalici sunt, unde necesse est, ut ad aliquem scribantur; nam praeceptum et doctoris et discipuli personam requirit: unde ad Maecenatem scribit sicut Hesiodus ad Persen, Lucretius ad Memmium. sane agriculturae huius praecepta non ad omnes pertinent terras, sed ad solum situm Italiae, et praecipue Venetiae, teste ipso Vergilio, qui ait “tibi res antiquae laudis et artis ingredior”, cum de Italia diceret.