East Carolina University
Tomorrow starts here.

GRK 3001 Homer and Hesiod
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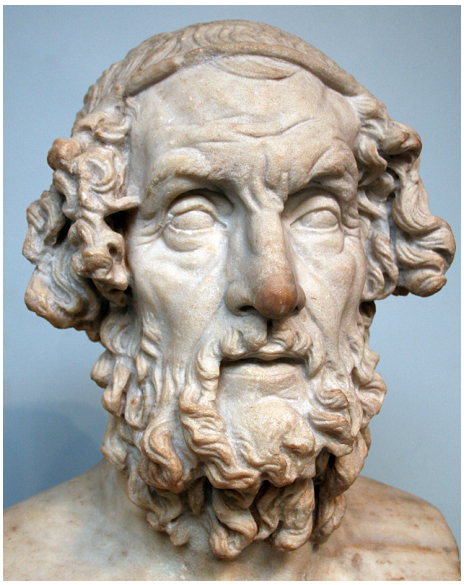
Objectives. In this course, the student will:

- Acquire advanced reading knowledge of ancient Greek poetry, understanding of the dialect of Homer's Ionic Greek, and of the meter and other conventions of epic.
- Identify and interpret passages in the readings that merit close study
- Evaluate critically the definition of civilization posed by the texts, and demonstrate this critical understanding in written work.
- Apply the skills of the Classicist to the interpretation of literary texts (close reading, intertextual analysis, the allusive modes of classical literature, and the compositional and narrative modes of ancient poetry).
- Analyze techniques employed by the author (e.g., setting and imagery, intertextual allusion, and modes of allegory) to reveal the higher purposes of the text. Demonstrate a synthetic understanding of Classical techniques of composition in assigned papers.

Each region of Ancient Greece had its own dialect of Greek. The form you learned in GRK 1001-2004 was the standardized Greek of Athens after 404 BC, called "Attic". There were also "Aeolic", "Doric" and "Ionic" dialects. Aeolic was spoken on Lesbos, N. Lydia, Thessaly, and Boeotia. Doric was spoken in the Peloponnese, Sicily and south Italy. Ionic was spoken on most of the Aegean islands and coastal regions. Homer is said to be from Chios, and the form of the poetry we have under his name reflects a combination of Aeolic and Ionic forms sometimes called old Ionic.



Homer's *Iliad* is the earliest complete work of Greek literature we possess. When Classicists speak of 'The Homeric Question,' they mean a number of things within the umbrella of how and by whom the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written. We know that the poem began in an oral tradition, recited, molded, and handed down from one great artist to another; and we know that the written form was edited at many points in history. The language we possess now suggests an early stage in the language going back to 750-700 BC. Our best evidence from ancient *testimonia* is that the followers of Homer on the island of Chios (Plato tells us he created not just poetry, but a community and a way of life), may have produced an authoritative edition of his works sometime before 530 BC, but whether they had a library of versions written down from the days of Homer or just an oral tradition they then put down on paper, we don't know. And then the works of Homer were edited again at the Library of Alexandria in Egypt in the 3rd c. BC.[1]

The Trojan War about which Homer writes is equally shrouded in mystery. Since the historical sources from other cultures are slim on the subject of Troy,[2] we are forced to rely on archeological evidence which was corrupted by Heinrich Schliemann, a slick character who made a fortune in the Crimean war, retired at 36 and decided to find Troy. As an amateur archeologist, he dug too deep and destroyed the upper layers. He excavated down to what is now called Troy level II, dating to 2600-2250 BC. Homer's bronze age Troy was several layers above that in VIIa (1300-1190 BC). Mythological sources would put the Trojan war in 1183 AD. Archeological evidence does show VIIa ending with a war and fire. Troy did not end there, however, and in layers VIIb1 (1120 BC) and VIIb2 (1020 BC), there are additional indications of destruction by fire, followed by abandonment in the Greek dark age. One might conclude from this that there was a Trojan war, but that the city muddled on for another 240 years, during which it continued to be harassed by enemies until its abandonment around 950 BC.

The *Odyssey* deals with the other great Homeric theme, 'home' or rather *nostos*, the 'return.' Another part of the Homeric question is whether *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are the product of the same person we call Homer. The language of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* show significant differences of vocabulary and dialect from within a generation of each other, which suggests different authors; yet the works complement one another in defining the destruction of civilization in *Iliad*, and the 'return' to civilization (restoring it in the home) in *Odyssey*.[3] The theme of home is fitting as a complement to the theme of war because war is a function of the city and failed politics, arising from questions of ruling and justice and one's standing among peers, while home is like the 'one' to the city's 'many,' where one

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[1] Art and literature show that there were Trojan stories and scenes as far back to the 8th or 9th c. BC, but there does not seem to have been a standard epic that early. Cicero says that the Athenian tyrant Peisistratus had them edited in the 6th c. BC (*De oratore* 3.137). But this seems to be an oversimplification of what Plato tells us in his dialogue, *Hipparchus* (228B), that P's son Hipparchus was the first to bring the epics to Athens, and forced the rhapsodes to sing them in order in a relay at the Pan-Athenaic festival, to educate the citizens. This suggests that there was a new widely approved text that the world's greatest rhapsodes would agree to use, unlike in the past when each might have had his own version of a story. See J.A. Davison, 'Peisistratus and Homer.' *TAPA* 86 (1955) 1-21. http://www.jstor.org/stable/283605.

[2] The Greek name for Troy was *Ilion*, which linguists think was originally *Wilion*. There are some Hittite texts (central Turkey) which mention *Wilusa* and *Taruisa* (Troy?) and a treaty with *Alaksandu* (Paris was called Alexandros in Greek); a Hittite king who ruled 1265-1240 BC corresponded with the king of the *Ahhiyawa* (the Greeks were call the *Achaioi* in Homer, originally *Achaiwoi*) about a conflict with Wilusa. The Egyptians record a conflict with 'Sea-People' among whom are the *Tursha* and the *Teresh*. There is also mention of the *Danaya* (Homer calls the Trojans *Danaoi*, originally *Danawoi*). See Korfmann, Manfred, Joachim Latacz, and J.D. Hawkins. "Was There a Trojan War?" *Archaeology* 57.3 (2004) 36-41. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41779750.

[3] See T. E. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* (1955) 149-57.

finds examples of stable political institutions (marriage and family, by which authority is negotiated between spouses, who jointly govern children) which are meant to provide a model of justice and affection among its members that shows humanity how to be civilized.

Odyssey interrogates questions of civilization by looking at related themes of sex, eating, hospitality, and most importantly false appearances, lies, and fiction. The theme of home does not seem to lend itself to lies and fiction until we reflect how great a part of the construction of civilization lies in the word 'story.' It is dangerous to lie to oneself, but it is perhaps necessary to a good life to construct one's life as the right kind of story. We do not reveal all our inner fears and experiences to everyone we meet. We save the truth for the right audience and the right moment. Successful social interactions depend upon a certain kind of public performance that hides true experiences and intentions in order to cultivate socially important false appearances such as politeness, compassion, and a spirit of cooperation. All of these are either absent from *Odyssey* or lie silently awaiting their discovery after we have eliminated all the dark sides of lying. Odysseus lies to nearly everyone he meets in one way or another, and thus all of his encounters in the first half of the epic (V-XII) are with monsters or people who are uncivilized in one way or another. He comes seeking, or rather demanding hospitality, but he defines it in the selfish manner of a plundering thief who has come to see what he can take from his host by right of being a guest. There is a violence in his manner, which finally erupts into open lies in his encounter with the cyclops Polyphemus, leading to the loss of most of his crew. In the end he loses them all, and winds up the sex slave (if we believe it) of the goddess Calypso for seven years. Each story is more ludicrous than the one before, culminating in a consultation of the dead (*nekyia*), mere shades of appearance, in his account of which he is caught in a lie. All of these stories of his encounters with monsters are told by Odysseus to his last hosts, the Phaeacians (a name which denotes 'false appearance'). They find his stories captivating but lacking in believability, as do we. The question then becomes what response we are to have to a clearly fictional account of Odysseus' voyage to the nadir of leadership and then his return to set his home in order, liberating it from the suitors who have besieged his wife in a kind of sexual tyranny. We wonder how to respond to a tale with such important moral implications that seems to proceed, in the first half of the epic, from a man who lacks self-awareness and tells lies for uncivilized purposes, to a man disguised as a vagrant who tells lies in the 2nd half that we are not expected to accept, and which seem to reinforce his humility and cooperation in the justice of Athena. His wife Penelope recognizes him from his lies in XIX, and we wonder what lies she has had to tell to keep so many lusty young men at bay for 20 years. What *Odyssey* does not say is as compelling as what it does, and we wonder what line it intends us to discern between the lies that destroy civilization and those that build it up.

Hesiod's *Works and Days* (*Opera et dies*, *ἔργα καὶ ἡμέραι*) is also a work of fiction with an emphasis upon justice and the civilization found at home (in the country on the farm) as it struggles against the injustice, tyranny, and uncivilized political world of the city (represented by Hesiod's brother, Perses, whom, Hesiod says, has bribed judges to steal his share of their inheritance). The poem, in dactylic hexameter – an epic meter, is not of epic length. The important allegorical stories of the first half (the *Works*) are accomplished in a mere 300 lines. Even with the more puzzling agricultural almanac like didactic advice of the *Days*, it is complete in a mere 828 lines. Because of its allegorical manner, morality, and brevity, it became the forefather of all important later works on literary criticism, beginning with Plato's *Republic*, which is modeled on its structure, as well as the Hellenistic ideal of the perfect short poem praised by Callimachus, and manifested in the Alexandrian form of the *epyllion* or 'mini-epic.' One cannot read Roman didactic poetry without reference to Hesiod. It lies behind Vergil's *Georgics*, Horace's *Roman Odes*, and every treatment of the theme of a return to the golden age in Augustan literature. It is from Hesiod that we get the imagery of: Prometheus in conflict with Zeus over *bios*, the livelihood of which man has been deprived by Zeus; Pandora as the gift-curse to Prometheus' brother Epimetheus ('Afterthought'); the five races of mankind (gold, silver, bronze,

heroic, iron, representing an allegory for the ages of a man); justice as a woman who leaves cities that spurn her, but who stalks the evil-doer on a lame leg; the justice loving city as an oak dripping with honey from the bees that make their hive in her. The imitations of these themes are too numerous to mention – from Frankenstein as Prometheus, to Renaissance paintings of the golden age, to Winnie the Pooh in the honey tree, to the wounded sheriff limping to get his man in westerns. All literature after the founding of Alexandria looks to Hesiod as its ultimate source, and with good reason: Hesiod's pose as a country farmer who earns a living from his hard work defines the 'moral economy' of civilization (cf. Lincoln's criticism of slavery as 'you grow the wheat and make the bread, and I'll eat it'); yet this pose exposes itself as a fiction when we consider that the world of the allegorical poet is not that of the humble country farmer. Hesiod is unlikely to have been the persona that he creates to narrate his poem. And if his persona is a fiction, so also, in all likelihood, is the entire conflict between city and country with his brother. Once again we find ourselves asking how to evaluate allegories within layers of fiction (lies) that are used to frame such important moral questions.

Textbooks:

- Homer, *Odyssey* VI-VIII, with notes and facing vocabulary by Geoffrey Steadman (https://geoffreysteadman.com/homers-odyssey-6-8/)
- Homer, *Odyssey* IX-XII, with notes and facing vocabulary by Geoffrey Steadman (https://geoffreysteadman.com/files-odyssey-9-12/)
- Hamilton, Richard, ed. *Hesiod's Theogony* (Bryn Mawr Commentaries 1981) 9780929524153
- *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, abridged, the "Oxford's Little Liddell" with enlarged type for easier reading (Martino Fine Books) 9781614277705

Grading:

Translation	20%	A 93-100, A- 90-92
4-page paper on an interpretive problem of Homer, dealing with the Greek	40%	B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82 C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70-72
4-page paper on an interpretive problem of Hesiod, dealing with the Greek	40%	D+ 67-69, D 63-66, D- 60-62 F 0-59

You will be graded largely on the degree of your preparation. I expect you 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. At first this will be difficult. But with application, facility will come.

Planned meetings: one hour per week by interactive video; email will be used for daily questions and submission of papers. Schedule of assignments:

Unit 1 5/18-6/10	Homer's *Odyssey*. Read V-XII in English. Translate the following passages from the Greek: *Od.* 8.266-369 *Od.* 9 all *Od.* 10.210-43, 274-347 *Od.* 11 all **First 4-page paper due.**

Unit 2 6/11-22	Hesiod, *Works and Days*, Read the whole in English, translate lines 1-382 from the Greek
T June 23	**Final 4-page paper due**

Meter:

Both Homer and Hesiod write in dactylic hexameter. A dactyl is composed of a long and two shorts. The two shorts may be resolved into another long (a spondee, and more rarely, the first long may be resolved into two additional shorts). Sometimes the last short of the line may be omitted:

– ⏑⏑ / – ⏑⏑ / – ⏑⏑ / – ⏑⏑ / – ⏑⏑ / – x

First syllabify. Ignore word boundaries and begin at the end of the line, working backwards. There are as many syllables as vowels or diphthongs. Let each vowel or diphthong begin with a consonant if it can. Split double consonants. If a syllable ends in a consonant it is a "closed" syllable, if in a vowel, an open syllable. Vowels are either long or short, but so are syllables and it is the quantity of the syllable that matters for the meter. Closed syllables are long metrically (regardless of the quantity of the vowel). Open syllables are long if the vowel is long and short if it is short. The quantity of vowels is as follows:

Always short	Always long	Long or short (look up)
ε	η, ω	α
ο	ει ευ	ι
	οι ου	υ
	αυ υι	αι*

αι is often long, but is short in 1st decl. nom. pl. Open syllables that end in α, ι, or υ may be long or short and have to be looked up in a dictionary since they vary word by word. But it is rare to be unable to reason out the line by analyzing the known quantities first. Thus the word *οὐλομένην* would be syllabified as: *οὐ-λο-μέ-νην*. The first syllable is open and ends in a diphthong, so is long; the 2nd and 3rd are open and end in a short vowel, and so are short (notice the importance of letting syllables start with consonants so that the 3rd syllable is *με*, rather than *μεν*, which would incorrectly suggest a closed long syllable). The last is closed and therefore long : — ⏑ ⏑ — .

*Note: Certain combinations of consonants may be left together or split as the meter demands, the so-called "mute-liquid rule". Any two of the following may be split or left together as needed:

	Mutes			Liquids
	palatal	dental	labial	λ, μ, ν, ϱ
voiceless	κ	τ	π	
voiced	γ	δ	β	
aspirated	χ	θ	φ	
sibyllated	ξ	(σ)	ψ	

When a closed syllable is needed, the sibyllated version of the consonant may be regarded as two letters and split in half: *ξ = κ + ς; ψ = π + ς*. There are also instances of elision that affect consonants.

Elision occurs when the final vowel of prepositions and conjunctions is dropped: thus for *ἐπὶ ᾧ*, the final -ι is dropped and the *ἐπ'* comes under the influence of ᾧ which has a rough breathing. The breathing alters ἐπ' and produces the aspirated form φ, thus the final written form is *ἐφ' ᾧ*, It is important to be aware of such changes especially with prefixed verb forms (e.g., *ἐπὶ + ἵστημι = ἐφίστημι*).

Lastly, there are a great many rules about exceptions to the normal pattern of the dactylic hexameter. For these, consult the good summary in Stanford's introduction. Some have hypothesized that these variations were due to the influence of oral tradition.

As for pronunciation: at first, simply work on correct pronunciation and accent. In the fullness of time, add longs and shorts as a subtle feel beneath the pronunciation, and in the end make accents musical (raise your voice a fifth) rather than stressed. The effect should be to turn Homer's words first into poetry, then into song.

Late submission of work and make-up for missed assignments may be allowed with an excuse I find acceptable (e.g., medical, personal and family crises). For information about severe weather and university closings, see http://www.ecu.edu/alert/. East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 ((252) 737-1016 (Voice/TTY). Academic integrity is expected of every East Carolina student. Cheating, plagiarism (claiming the work or ideas of another as your own), and falsification, will be considered a violation of Academic Integrity (http://goo.gl/l6QsdU).