CLAS 165A 1 Roman Sex, Violence, and Decadence:  
Selected Survey of Latin Literature in Translation  
Course Syllabus: Readings and Assignments

Brandeis University, Fall 2017
Class Meets: Mon. and Wed., 5:00 - 6:20 p.m., Block M, in  
Mandel Center for the Humanities, Room location: TBA.
Instructor:  Professor Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow  
Chair, Department of Classical Studies, and Co-Director of Graduate  
Studies for Ancient Greek and Roman Studies, MS 092
Office: Mandel Center for the Humanities, room 213, on the second floor.
Email: aoko@brandeis.edu  
Phone: (781)-736-2183 (voice mail messages) and x6-2180 (messages)
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 (On some  
Wednesdays my hours will be 12:30-1:30 p.m. because of university  
meetings), and also always by appointment in my office, MHC office 213, 2nd  
floor. (I shall send LATTE messages for the irregular dates of my office  
hours.)

TA/Course Assistant: Mr. Hunter Bruno (hbruno@brandeis.edu) and Ms. Kelsey  
Latsha (klatsha@brandeis.edu), both candidates in the Ancient Greek and Roman  
Studies M.A. Program.

This course is writing intensive and satisfies the distribution requirement  
in the School of Humanities (HUM).

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis  
University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this  
class, please see me immediately.

Graduate Students in the course (from any program or department)  
should identify yourselves to the professor and CAs on the first day of class so  
that you are sure to receive information about extra work for the course.

For this 4 credit hour course, the expectation is that students will spend  
a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week (ca. 3 hours per class) in  
preparation for class (doing required readings, completing exercises,  
preparing for take-home exams and papers, considering discussion  
questions).

Course Description, Learning Goals and Rationale:

This course examines, in English translation, a substantial body of Roman  
literary works of the late first century B.C.E. and the first two centuries C.E. The  
texts are analyzed from social, historical, psychological, literary, and religious  
viewpoints. The principal theme of the course is the growing estrangement of  
Roman literature from classical ideas and its increasing involvement with exotic,  
private, and unconscious forces of disruption and decay. The concept of “Roman  
decadence” is explored and challenged, both by the Roman literary  
accomplishment itself and by its impact on the literature of subsequent periods.  
(Students in the class who are majoring in Classical Studies and/or are graduate  
students in the Masters program in Ancient Greek and Roman Studies have the  
option to read selected passages of these works in Latin in addition to reading the  
entire works in translation, if they so desire.)
Texts (available in Brandeis bookstore, listed mainly in order to be used in course):


Course Requirements:

1. Class attendance and participation are not only encouraged, but are required for successful completion of the course. More than two absences (without adequate explanation or documentation) WILL have a negative effect on your attendance grade. Students are expected to have read the work in question before class discussion focuses on it. In addition to readings in the required texts above (available in the campus bookstore), other “recommended” assignments (mostly secondary sources that discuss the original texts) are listed below the main readings for most weeks. These additional readings are taken from books on reserve in the library or chapters and articles, and most are (or will soon be) posted in LATTE. Everyone is encouraged to sample, if not to conquer, these suggested secondary readings as the term rolls on. At the very least, they provide good secondary source material for papers you will be writing.

2. Each week (starting a bit later in the term), two or three different students from the class (one may be the principal discussion leader and the other one or two may be his/her alternate or partner or all in the group may have an equal role) will be required to complete one (or more) of the “recommended” readings in order to organize and run a discussion for a part of a class (generally a 10-12 minute segment of a class). Discussions may center on a whole work, an author, or on a topic of choice emanating from the work or author. Students must make a short, formal presentation to the whole class before students are invited into a discussion. This presentation may be a mini lecture, a performance of a scene, a dramatic reading, a quiz show format, a comic routine, whatever seems
appropriate for the points to be made. Many possibilities are available, and cleverness will be rewarded. Lots (drawn from a special urn) will determine the sequence in which students in the class will be required to lead discussions and do their oral presentations. Drawing a lot from an urn, of course, was the method of selection for Roman forced labor, conscription into the Roman army, and deciding the order of gladiator fights in the amphitheater, so we’ll just be following in the Roman tradition for our special brand of “torture”—the student public presentation.

3. The written and oral requirements for the course (indicated in the syllabus below with an asterisk *) are the following:
   *Paper #1*: textual explication of a poem of Catullus, with formal directions to follow, 3-4 typed, double-spaced pages, to be uploaded in LATTE, due, Wed., Sept. 27;
   *Paper #2*: required rewrite of paper #1--required, that is, for all students, but optional if your grade was B+ or better. A rewrite is a NEW paper, due, Mon., Oct. 16;
   *Paper #3*: expanded textual explication with more analysis this time of a passage from Vergil, 5-6 typed, double-spaced pages, due, Wed., Oct. 18;
   *Paper #4*: rewrite of paper #3, if your grade was lower than a B+, A rewrite is a NEW paper, due, Wed., Nov. 15;
   *Paper #5*: take-home, midterm essay exam--identification of texts, authors, and exegesis of short passages within the context of the whole, due, Mon., Nov. 6;
   *Paper #6*: 5-7 typed, double-spaced pages with footnotes and bibliography, which involves preparation of one response to a choice of essay questions, due Wed., Dec. 6, last day of our class for the semester.
   Total # of pages of writing for the term: 25-30 pages, if you take advantage of the two rewrites.

**Grade Calculation for Course Requirements:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation (includes attendance)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #1 and rewrite (#2)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #3 and rewrite (#4)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #5 Midterm Essay Exam (take-home)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #6 Final Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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100%

N.B. Graduate students in the class will have extra assignments to complete. Be sure you identify yourselves to me, your professor, ASAP. If there are 4 or more graduate students signed up for the course, we shall hold extra graduate sections (exclusively for graduate students) once every other week for the semester.
Course Overview of the Lecture/Discussion Topics for the semester:

All class lectures and discussions are correlated to the texts, which are read in chronological order according to the following provisional lecture schedule:

1. “Introductions--Decadence and Roman Literature”
2. “That’s Funny: Roman Comedy” (1 class period)
3. “Early Latin, the Roman Stage, Roman Laughter, and Plautus”
4. “Laughing at the Expense of the ‘Other’”
   Reading: Plautus’ Miles Gloriosus and Pseudolus (optional)
5. “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum”—Sondheim & Plautus”
6. “Catullus and his Lesbia—Expressions of a New Kind of Love”
   Reading: Catullus’ Lesbia Poems, selections of others
8. “Love as a Game / Love as a Goal?”
   Reading: Ovid, Art of Love, selections
10. “Vergil’s Aeneid--Greek? anti-Greek?, Roman?, or anti-Roman?”
11. “Is Vergil’s Aeneid the end of a genre? Or is it the beginning of something new for literature, film, and art?” Reading: Vergil, Aeneid
12. “Uses of Mythology and Mythic Themes in Modern Film”—Black Orpheus and Others
   Reading: Seneca, Four Tragedies and Octavia, selections
15. “A Dinner that Eats its Guests”
16. “Life’s Ship-Wrecks and Desperation”
   Reading: Petronius, Satyricon
17. “Fellini’s Satyricon and Italy in the 1960s”
18. “Juvenal’s City of Despair” and “Fellini’s Roma: Reusing and Abusing Antiquity in Fascist Italy”
   Reading: Juvenal, Satires, selections, and Fellini’s Roma
19. “Suetonius: Historical Hindsight?”
20. “Suetonius: Or Hysterical Hindsight?”
   Reading: Suetonius, Twelve Caesars, selections “Robert Graves and I, Claudius”
21. Introduction to Apuleius and Second Century Rome
22. “Apuleius: Escape or Damnation?”
23. “Apuleius: Love and Soul”
24. “Apuleius: Why are Women so Evil?”
25. “Apuleius: The Savior is Female after all”
   Reading: Apuleius, Golden Ass
26. “Our Roman Connection/ Class Wrap-up”
   Total: 26 class periods

Student Presentations (2-3 per class period, starting on Oct. 23 for ca. 10-13 classes, ending when everyone has been able to present)
Film selections (4-5 class periods)

Academic Honesty (last, but hardly least):
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Brandeis University policy on academic honesty is contained in your Student Handbook in section 5 under “Rights and Responsibilities.” Instances of cheating, plagiarism, or other alleged dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. The adjudication process is also outlined in your Handbook. Potential consequences of academic dishonesty include (in addition to an “E” on the assignment in question) failure in the course, disciplinary probation, and suspension from the University. A record of any offense will remain in a student’s disciplinary file in the Office of Student Affairs throughout his or her career at Brandeis. Please know that I take this code very seriously. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask me or our TA.

Lecture topics for the entire semester are listed below by date, along with due dates for assignments (indicated by an asterisk *) and any other special events. Assigned and recommended readings are included.

Homework Assignments FT17 (subject to possible modification)

DUE DATE:
AUGUST:
Wednesday, Aug. 30    Introduction to the Course—to each other, to your professor, to reading ancient texts, and to the concept of decadence in Roman literature and life.

Assignment for Wed., Sept. 6: Buy texts for course, start reading Plautus’ Miles Gloriosus. Try to read at least the first act, and two, if possible.

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SEPTEMBER:
Monday, Sept. 4    No Class. Labor Day

Wednesday, Sept. 6    “That’s Funny!—Roman Comedy”

Monday, Sept. 11      “Early Latin, the Roman Stage, Roman Laughter and Plautus”

Wednesday, Sept. 13      “Laughing at the Expense of the ‘Other’”
Last day to add a class.


Recommended Reading for Plautus:
(3) Anderson, William *Barbarian Play: Plautus’ Roman Comedy* U. of Toronto 1993 chpt. 1 “Plautus and the Deconstruction of Menander,” 3-29, chpt. 3 “Plautus’ Plotting: The Lover Upstaged,” 60-87, and chpt. 6 “Plautus and His Audience: The Roman Connection,” 133-151 (Reserve PA6585 .A63 1993);
(4) Watling, E. F. (trans.) *Plautus: The Pot of Gold and other Plays* Penguin 1987 (Reserve PA6570 .A3 W28 1965) - if you would like to read other plays of Plautus; or

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Monday, Sept. 18       “‘A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum’—Sondheim and Plautus”
Deadline for Pass/Fail Option
Required Reading (due today): Read Catullus’ Lesbia poems (specific numbers TBA).

Wednesday, Sept. 20    “Catullus and his Lesbia: Expressions of a New Kind of Love”
Required Reading (due today): finish Catullus’s Lesbia poems and some others selections (TBA).

Thursday, Sept. 21    No Classes. Rosh Hashanah.

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Monday, Sept. 25      “The Mechanization of Pleasure”
*Wednesday, Sept. 27  
Paper #1 due on Explication of Catullus
“Love as a Game / Love as a Goal?”


Recommended Reading for Ovid:

OCTOBER:
Monday, Oct. 2  
“The National Ideal and the National Hero”


Wednesday, Oct. 4  
“Vergil’s Aeneid--Greek? anti-Greek?, Roman?, anti-Roman?”

Professor AOK-O in Italy for conference, but CAs will run class and attendance will be taken.


Recommended Reading for Vergil:
6. Mandelbaum, Allen (trans.) The Aeneid of Virgil U. California Berkeley 1971 (Reserve PA 6807 A5 M23);
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Thursday, Oct. 5 No Classes. Sukkot.

Monday, Oct. 9 “Is Vergil’s Aeneid the end of a genre? Or is it the beginning of something new for literature, film, and art?”
Professor AOK-O in Italy for conference, but CAs will run class and attendance will be taken.

Required Reading (due today): Vergil, Aeneid 9-12 in Mandelbaum, Allen (trans.) The Aeneid of Vergil Bantam (ISBN 0-553-21041-6) also on reserve: PA 6807 A5 M23 on which we shall complete discussion.

Wednesday, Oct. 11 No class. Brandeis Thursday.

Thursday, Oct. 12 No classes. Shemini Atzeret.

*Monday, Oct. 16 More discussion of Vergil after Prof. AOK-O returns from the Sibyl’s Grotto, the entrance to the Underworld and the magical forest where she will have seen the Golden Bough!

The Use of Mythology in Modern Film—Black Orpheus and Others

Rewrite of Paper #1 due.

Required Reading (due today): Be sure you have finished reading Vergil’s Aeneid.

Recommended Reading for Seneca:
(3) Costa, C. D. N. (ed.) Seneca Routledge and Kegan Paul 1974 (Reserve PA 6675 Z9 C67) chpt. IV. “The Tragedies,” 96-115 (Costa) and (see below)
(4) chpt. VI. “Seneca and English Tragedy,” (G. K. Hunter) 166-204.

*Wednesday, Oct. 18 Paper #2 due, expanded explication of Vergil.

“The Baroque Consciousness of Death—
Syllabus:

**Seneca and His Techniques**

**Required Reading (due today):** Watling, E. F. *Four Tragedies and Octavia* Viking/Penguin (ISBN 0-14-044174-3)  
"Thyestes," 43-93.

**Recommended:** "The Trojan Women," 153-204.

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*Monday, Oct. 23*

**Student Presentations Begin**

Introduction to Petronius: “Sex and the Anti-Hero”


**View selections from** *Catch 22, Midnight Cowboy,* or *The Usual Suspects*—the anti-hero in modern film.

*Wednesday, Oct. 25*

**Student Presentations**

“A Dinner that Eats its Guests”


**Recommended Reading on Petronius:**


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*Monday, Oct. 30*

**Student Presentations**

“Life’s Ship-Wrecks and Desperation”

**FILM, Satyricon** by Fellini, selections, and Italy in the 1960s.


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**NOVEMBER:**

*Wednesday, Nov. 1*

**Preregistration for ST18 Begins (to Mon., Nov. 6)**

“Juvenal’s City of Despair”

“Fellini’s Roma: Reusing and Abusing Antiquity in Fascist Italy”

Recommended Reading for Juvenal:
(1) Green, Peter (trans.) Juvenal The Sixteen Satires Penguin 1974 (Reseve PA 6447 .E5 G7) notes especially recommended

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*Monday, Nov. 6  
Take-Home Midterm Essays due (covers Plautus, Catullus, Ovid, Virgil, Seneca, Petronius, and Juvenal (optionally Suetonius) 
Student Presentations  
“Suetonius: Historical Hindsight?”  
Required Reading (due today): Suetonius on Augustus, 54-112, in Graves, Robert (trans.) Twelve Caesars Viking/Penguin (ISBN 0-14-044072-0)  
Recommended Reading on Suetonius:  

*Wednesday, Nov. 8  
Student Presentations  
“Suetonius: Or Hysterical Hindsight?”  
Required Reading (due today): Suetonius on Nero, 213-246; Vespasian 278-291; and Domitian, 299-314, in Graves, Robert (trans.) Twelve Caesars Viking/Penguin (ISBN 0-14-044072-0)

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*Monday, Nov. 13  
Student Presentations  
Introduction to Apuleius and Second Century Rome  

*Wednesday, Nov. 15  
Student Presentations  
Rewrites of Paper #2 on Vergil due.  
“Apuleius: Escape or Damnation?”  

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*Monday, Nov. 20  
Student Presentations  
Surprise for those who can make it to class!  
“Apuleius: Love and Soul”  
Recommended Reading on Apuleius: Tatum, James
*Apuleius and the Golden Ass* Cornell 1979 (Reserve PA 6217 .T3)
select any section from Apuleius’ original eleven books of
Metamorphoses for the topic of discussion.

**Wednesday, Nov. 22**
No classes. Thanksgiving Break
(Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, November 22, 23, 24 and through Sun., Nov. 26)

**Monday, Nov. 27**
Student Presentations
“Apuleius: Why are Women so Evil?”
Required Reading (due today): *GA*, Chpt. 9, pp. 177-206; and *GA*, Chpt. 10, pp. 207-232.

**Wednesday, Nov. 29**
Student Presentations
“Apuleius: The Savior is Female After All”
Discussion of Take-Home Midterm Essays in preparation for final papers.

**DECEMBER:**
*Monday, Dec. 4*
Student Presentations (if necessary)
Review of All Authors and Issues.

*Wednesday, Dec. 6*
Student Presentations (if necessary)
Our Connection to the Romans/ Course Wrap-up”
Final Papers due.