

Latin 401: Plautus

Fall 2015

T/R 9.30-10.45, AXT 301

Office Hours: T 2-3, W 9:30-10:30; R 1-2; by appointment

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Welcome to Latin 401! In this course we will explore the world of Roman comedy and more colloquial Latin through a close reading of Plautus' *Amphitryo* and other selected texts. Plautus' Latin is likely to be unlike anything you've read before. Consequently, we must pace ourselves, slowly increasing our reading class by class. We will seek to better understand Roman humor by examining Plautus within the context of Roman culture. Occasionally themes and tropes emerge in the text that seem out of place from a modern perspective. Our goal is situate the text historically and culturally in order to appreciate how comedy itself reflects the norms of the culture that produces it. As Erich Segal note, "Laughter is an affirmation of values."¹

Texts: *Amphitryo*, ed. Christenson; text #2, to be determined (*Menaechmi*, *Miles Gloriosus*).

All readings in English will be posted on the course website. You can find the website here: go/plautus

Course Website: This is where you will find the syllabus, all readings assigned in English, and information about the midterm, final, and the research paper.

Requirements: You must attend regularly. This class meets twice times a week. You are expected to be in class all days and to participate. Here are some expectations for this class. They may seem self-evident, but are worth noting nonetheless.

- Prepare all lines assigned in the previous class and complete all readings in English. Be ready to both translate the Latin assigned and to discuss the readings in English. All supplementary readings are intended to contribute to our reading of the play. As you are reading, consider how the article or chapter contributes to and shapes your understanding of Plautus' *Amphitryo* and Roman comedy more generally.
- If you see a form that you do not recognize, or if your translation seems like gibberish, double check to make sure that you haven't missed an archaic or colloquial form.
- Do not write out translations. Sometimes students like to make vocabulary notes in the margins of the text. While this is certainly better than writing out a translation, this strategy will not help you learn new vocabulary.
- Do keep vocabulary lists for each assignment. You may consult this list as you are translating. When you are preparing, try to look up as few words as possible. If your translation does not make sense, then consult a dictionary and make any necessary notes. When you have finished going through the assigned lines in this manner, translate the Latin again, consulting your notes when needed. The more often you review your Latin, the easier translating will be.
- In a perfect world, one would read through the lines translated in class in the afternoon.
- Most importantly, you must demonstrate engagement with the readings and material. Consequently...

Computer/Cell Phones: Please do not use them in class.

Grading: There are five different types of assignments on which you will be graded.

1) Preparation/Participation (25%): If you come to class prepared and you participate, you will receive full credit for preparation/participation. Please feel free to email me if you have any questions.

2) Article/Chapter Presentation (15%): On these days an article or book chapter will be assigned (the number of lines to be translated on these days will be fewer). Everyone must read the article/book chapter assigned, but one person will be responsible for reporting on the article/book chapter and leading the class in a discussion. The articles/book chapters will introduce you to Plautine scholarship and help you identify a possible research paper topic. These days are listed on the syllabus as research days and are marked by asterisks. Two students will present on each day. I will bring to class a list of articles/book chapters for you to select from on Thursday, September 24. You will also sign up for a day to present on the 24th. If you already know which day you would like, please send me an email.

¹ Erich Segal, *Roman Laughter* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968) vii.

- 3) Research Paper (20%):** Research papers will be discussed on Nov. 5. Your research paper should be 6-10 pages. You must use a minimum of five secondary sources.
- 4) Midterm (20%):** The midterm will cover all lines read since the beginning of the semester.
- 5) Final Exam (20%):** The final exam will cover all lines read since the midterm.

Readings: The dates for the lines and readings listed below reflect the day on which they will be translated and discussed in class. Please note that the syllabus is subject to change. All readings will be posted on the course website.

Week One (R 17 Sept) Introduction

Week Two (T 22 Sept) *Amphitruo*, lines 1-85; Panayotakis, Costas. "Comedy, Atellane Farce and Mime." *A Companion to Latin Literature*. Ed. Stephen Harrison. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007. 130-46.
(R 24 Sept) *Amphitruo*, lines 86-145. Konstan, David. *Roman Comedy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983. ("Introduction, pages 15-32.)

Week Three (T 29 Sept) *Amphitruo*, lines 146-224.
****(R 1 Oct) *Amphitruo*, lines 225-262; research day.

Week Four (T 6 Oct) *Amphitruo*, lines 263-330.
****(R 8 Oct) *Amphitruo*, lines 331-381; research day.

Week Five (T 13 Oct) *Amphitruo*, lines 381-462.
(R 15 Oct) *Amphitruo*, lines 463-530.

Week Six (T 20 Oct) *Amphitruo*, lines 531-632.
****(R 22 Oct) *Amphitruo*, lines 633-685; research day.

Week Seven: (T 27 Oct) **Midterm**
(R 29 Oct) *Amphitruo*, lines 686-771.

Week Eight: (T 3 Nov) *Amphitruo*, lines 772-872.
****(R 5 Nov) *Amphitruo*, lines 873-934; research day; discussion of research papers.

Week Nine: (T 10 Nov) *Amphitruo*, lines 934-1034.
(R 12 Nov) *Amphitruo*, lines 1035-end.

Friday, Nov. 13, 7.59 pm: Please send me a brief (250 words) description of your research topic.

Week Ten: (T 17 Nov) TBD
(R 19 Nov) TBD

Week Eleven: (T Nov. 24) TBD

Week Twelve: (T Dec. 1) TBD
(R 3 Dec) TBD

Week Thirteen: (T 8 Dec) TBD
(R 10 Dec) TBD

Friday, December 11, 7.59 pm: Research paper due. Please send your paper to me as a word or google doc (be sure to give me permission to view your paper).

Final Exam