

Classics 101—Interpreting Poetry
LAT 311

In this class we have been learning a lot about how to read Latin poetry: grammar, syntax, rhetorical devices, meter, allusions, etc. Now it's your chance to take a stab at what Classics professors *really* do! (No, we don't argue about ablative absolutes. At least not all of the time!) This paper project will allow you the chance to look at a particular passage of Vergil, learn it inside and out, and present your thoughts on what is important about it. As a culmination of your work, you will produce a 3-5 page interpretation of a 25-30 line selection of Vergil. In doing so, you will become more proficient in translation, more acquainted with Latin poetry and more familiar with what Classicists do on a regular basis. Here are the basic requirements for this important work, which will culminate in your paper:

1. Pick a 25-30 line section from anywhere in the *Aeneid*. The only stipulation is that it **cannot be something we have translated or are scheduled to translate in the future**. This selection should be made and submitted to the instructor by March 4th at the beginning of class.
2. Turn in the following items by the beginning of class on March 21st.
 - a. A precise **translation** of your passage.
 - b. A **fully scanned version** of your passages with metrical marks.
 - c. A **list of literary devices** you see used in the passage.
3. Write a **ROUGH DRAFT** of your 3-5 page paper and submit it to the instructor by the beginning of class on April 15th. Your interpretation should answer the following questions:
 - a. What do you think is important about your passage?
 - b. What literary devices, vocabulary, meter or allusions support your stance?
 - c. How does your interpretation help us gain more meaning from your passage?
4. I will read and comment on each of your rough drafts and return them to you by April 20th.
5. The **FINAL DRAFT** of your 3-5 page paper is due by the beginning of class on April 29th.

****If any of these assignments are turn in late, the highest grade possible on the entire project will drop 5% each day it is late.****

Grading

The rubric for the grading of this assignment is below:

Translation/Scansion	60%
Translation.....	30%
Scansion.....	15%
List of Poetic Devices.....	15%
Paper (see attached rubric)	40%
Thesis Statement.....	10%
Supporting Ideas.....	15%
Organization.....	10%
Editing.....	5%
Total	100%

Rubric for the Paper

Use this guide to help you plan your paper.

CATEGORY	10	8-9	5-7	2-4	0-1
Thesis Statement	The writer's central purpose or thesis is readily apparent to the reader.	The writing has a clear purpose or thesis, but may sometimes digress from it.	The central purpose or thesis is not consistently clear throughout the paper.	The purpose or thesis is generally unclear.	No thesis.
Supporting Ideas	Balanced presentation of relevant and legitimate information that clearly supports a central purpose or argument and shows a thoughtful, in-depth analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains important insights.	Information provides reasonable support for a central purpose or argument and displays evidence of a basic analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains some insights.	Information supports a central purpose or argument at times. Analysis is basic or general. Reader gains few insights.	Central purpose or argument is not clearly identified. Analysis is vague or not evident. Reader is confused or may be misinformed.	Has not researched the topic at all.
Organization	The ideas are arranged logically to support the purpose or argument. They flow smoothly from one to another and are clearly linked to each other. The reader can follow the line of reasoning.	The ideas are arranged logically to support the central purpose or argument. They are usually clearly linked to each other. For the most part, the reader can follow the line of reasoning.	In general, the writing is arranged logically, although occasionally ideas fail to make sense together. The reader is fairly clear about what writer intends.	The writing is not logically organized. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense together. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning and loses interest.	There is no organization.
Editing	The writing is free or almost free of errors.	There are occasional errors, but they don't represent a major distraction or obscure meaning.	The writing has many errors, and the reader is distracted by them.	There are so many errors that meaning is obscured. The reader is confused and stops reading.	Utterly incomprehensible.