

# Readings In Greek Literature I, Or, What Is a Classic? — GRK 203, Fall '09

Andrew Scholtz, Instructor

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**W**HAT IS A CLASSIC? By most accounts, *Daphnis and Chloe*, which our class will read this semester, is such a creature. But we rarely ask ourselves what, exactly, that means. That *D&C* and works like it evoke a lost past? That the “classical” past, above all, Greece and Rome, set the bar in all sorts of ways? That works like *D&C* somehow stand in a “class” by themselves?

Those and similar questions will provide the focus for this semester’s course of “Readings in Greek Literature I.” Hence the subtitle, “What Is a Classic?” As to our readings, Longus’ tale of young love, though a product of late antiquity, “classicized”: it self-consciously sought to recapture earlier moments in Greek literature and culture even as it treated new themes and explored new ways to spin a tale. Yet to say that complicates, it does not answer, our question. For it ignores the larger issue of what makes not just this novel, but the “The Classics” as a whole, classic.

Addressing, then, this overarching question of what a classic is, our class will focus on the following:

- **GENERIC.** How does *D&C* resemble / differ from other “classics”? What makes it or any so-described work a “classic”?
- **IDEOLOGICAL.** Can we detect governing assumptions, aesthetic values, an *ideology* guiding this or any work’s “classicizing”? And what values does a “classicizing” reception of past work reflect?
- **DISCIPLINARY.** What implications does the aforementioned hold as to what it is we do when we do “classics”?

Put differently, this third-semester course in ancient language aims to offer students the opportunity to exercise, among other things, their *critical thinking skills*. Toward that

end, besides reading and discussing *D&C* (selections in the original Greek, the entire work in translation), we shall examine and discuss modern reflections on the “classics,” what they are and what they’re good for. Related are two projects: a translation-commentary on an extended passage from *D&C* (one attentive to *D&C*’s “classicizing”), and an orally presented exposition of a modern “classic.”

But we’ll also be reviewing Greek grammar and seeking to reinforce our Greek-reading and -translating skills. Because the language of *Daphnis and Chloe* imitates — on the whole, rather closely — the Attic Greek of centuries before, and because its language is, for the most part, quite manageable, not to mention the excellent helps provided by our editor, this is a choice that makes sense.

To further our linguistic goals, we’ll also be doing English-to-Greek translation exercises out of volumes one and two of *Athenaze*. These will be assigned as homework and discussed in class; you’ll be working on grammar-related assignments and *Daphnis* concurrently.

### Terms and Conditions (the fine print)

By enrolling in this course, students agree to abide by all terms and conditions set forth in this and similar documents. That includes the requirement that all students abide by regulations concerning *academic honesty*, as defined and elaborated by the University in the University Bulletin (which see by clicking [here](#)). Note, too, that students enrolled in GRK 203 implicitly consent to textual similarity review by Turnitin.com or other, similar databases or services.

For details, see rules and regulations (including those pertaining to academic honesty, classroom conduct, etc.) set forth in the syllabus for “Persuasion in Ancient Greece,” viewable at:

<http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~clas381a/syllabus.htm>

### Learning Objectives (Goals)

- *To read and enjoy* Longus’ “classic” tale of young love
- *To think, speak, and write critically* about a given issue (what a “classic” is)
- *To review and solidify* one’s grasp of Attic Greek grammar and vocabulary
- *To read* Attic Greek *more fluently* than one will have done prior to taking this course

In other words, on successful completion of this course, students should have applied insight and intelligence to this question of what a “classic” is; also, what the “classics” are as a discipline. They should also expect to have attained a firmer grasp of ancient

Attic prose: its grammar, vocabulary, style, patterns of expression, and so on. That will prepare them for further work in ancient Greek, prose and poetry, at an advanced level (380A and higher).

## Tuition Incentive

Through the generosity of Saul Levin, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Classics, and thanks to his and his family's ongoing commitment to the study of ancient Greek at Binghamton University, students who enroll in this course will be eligible for a monetary award upon receiving a grade of "C" or higher.

For more information, please see the Greek I website:

[http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~grk101/syllabus.htm#tuition\\_incentive](http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~grk101/syllabus.htm#tuition_incentive)

## Texts

### *Required*

Balme, Maurice, and Gilbert Lawall. *Athenaze: An Introduction to Ancient Greek Book I*. 2 ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Print.

---. *Athenaze: An Introduction to Ancient Greek, Vol. 2*. 2 ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Print.

Byrne, Shannon N., and Edmund P. Cueva. *Longus' Daphnis & Chloe: Introduction, Greek Text, Notes*. Annotated ed. Wauconda, Ill.: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2005. Print.

Longus. *Daphnis & Chloe*. Trans. Paul Turner. Penguin Classics. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989. Print.

Various readings accessed as PDFs via Blackboard course site "Assignments."

### *Recommended*

Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon: Founded upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1990. Print.

Online @ <http://perseus.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/cgi-bin/resolveform>

Smyth, Herbert Weir, and Gordon M. Messing. *Greek Grammar*. Rev. ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984. Print.

Online @ [Textkit: Greek and Latin Learning Tools](#)

Marinone, Nino. *All the Greek Verbs*. London: Duckworth, 2006. Print.

## Grading

Participation:	35%
Weekly quizzes:	30%
Translation-cum-commentary project:	20%
Oral presentation on a modern "classic":	15%

## Online Components, Communication, etc.

This course will make much use of **Blackboard** for such things as:

- Online access to documents like
  - this Syllabus
  - readings
- Schedule of Assignments
- Discussion Board
- Announcements

Please access the above via the following "breadcrumb trail":

Blackboard (<http://blackboard.binghamton.edu>) > MyBb@BU > My Courses > Readings In Greek Literature I-FALL09

It will also be important for students *to check E-mail on a regular basis, i.e., at least once a day*. E-mail will serve as the principal medium of student-instructor contact. *Always use your Binghamton (@binghamton.edu) address.*

## Course Work

### *Attendance*

*Required!* Unexcused absence will compromise your grade, as I will not have evidence of your presence or participation for the affected class meeting.

- If an excusable absence (e.g., illness, job interview, family obligation, *not* vacation travel, alarm malfunction, etc.), *please*, E-mail me (@ [ascholtz@binghamton.edu](mailto:ascholtz@binghamton.edu)) ASAP, both to be credited for the class and to arrange for any necessary make-up. While I reserve the right to ask for doctor's excuse or similar, I usually take it on trust that students are straight with me about excusable absence. (Otherwise, it represents academic dishonesty.) Note that make-ups, late assignments, etc. need to be handled on a timely basis.

### *Methodology: Critical Thinking*

As I have elaborated what I mean by "critical thinking" elsewhere, I will not devote inordinate space to the matter here. Nor, admittedly, can we really afford dedicate a lan-

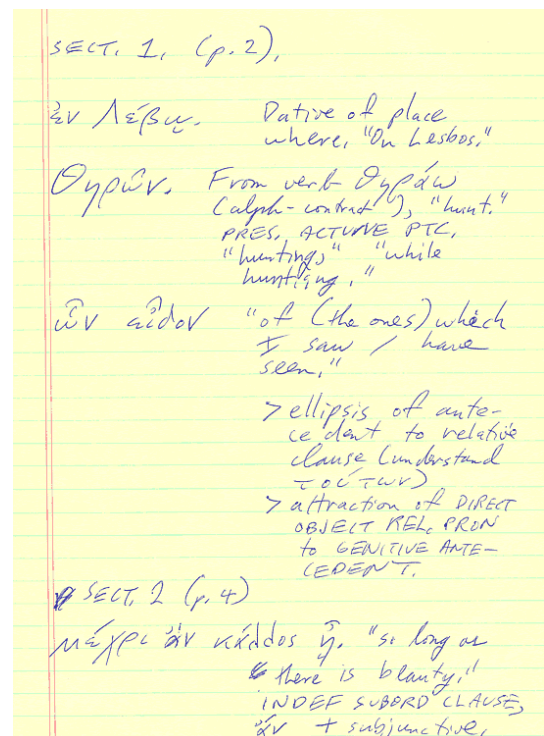
guage course exclusively to the cultivation of this skill. Yet neither should we ignore the opportunities our course affords. Very briefly, then, we can understand “critical thinking” as “the art of formulating well-reasoned and well-supported arguments, and of analyzing and evaluating arguments, whether those of others or one's own” (*Persuasion* “Writing Issues” page). For our purposes, that means being able to “interrogate” — to think critically about — the novel at the center of our course, and to approach our question (viz., what a classic is) from a well-informed and intellectually sound perspective.

See further the page cited above (click [here](#)). You can also do a “critical thinking” [search](#) via the *Persuasion* site.

### Preparation: D&C

Remember that most Mondays you'll be quizzed on the previous week's D&C reading in Greek (more below). Otherwise, for the typical class, expect to prepare as follows:

- Read aloud, “construe” (work out translation and analysis of), *interpret* (ponder meaning and implications of) assigned Greek. *Try to review material the morning of class, that to maximize retention*
- In preparing, *use supplied notes and vocabularies*. Be prepared, in other words, to discuss vocab and grammar, not just to translate
- Published “trots” can help, and in valid ways, but only if used intelligently. Skimming through with a Loeb does more harm than good. Recommended is consulting the Penguin for a “reality check” on sense and structure. Glossaries, too, need to be used intelligently. Don't stop with definition #1; *find the sense the fits*.
- Write out *no translations* of passages. Or, if you do, keep them out of sight, as we want to keep our encounters with the Greek direct — no reading from self-service “trots”
- Prepare a dual-use, and detailed, vocabulary-and-grammar commentary: troublesome words/phrases on the left, explanation of grammar and/or meaning on the right — “dual-use” because. . .
  - use it as aid in class
  - use it to study for quizzes



*Preparation: Athenaze*

I shall also assigned strategically selected grammar readings and exercises out of *Athenaze* 1 & 2. Grammar exercises will consist *entirely* of *ENGLISH-TO-GREEK TRANSLATION*, that to fast-track review.

Though required, these won't be collected. They'll count, in other words, toward participation. Expect to go over these in class, whether via group-work or students' sentences at the chalk board.

Please, though, bear in mind that, while I don't expect anything like perfection (actually, we'll learn better if students make mistakes!), I *do* expect students to put effort into the exercise. Hence:

READ THE ASSIGNED GRAMMAR READINGS and review the relevant paradigms (forms, etc.).

CHECK YOUR WORK. Students should not guess forms, etc., they should look them up.

*Preparation: Topical Readings, Discussion Board*

Finally, not every class, but several, will involve reading and discussion of assigned parts of books, including *D&C* in translation, articles, etc.

To prepare for class, students will, as and if requested on the "Schedule of Assignments" (Bb), post comments to the Blackboard discussion board — comments regarding issues, questions, concerns, etc. worth addressing. An important part of participation (with which it will be graded), this is your chance to shape the things.

## Weekly Quizzes

Please expect to be quizzed every Monday on a *very* brief passage (a sentence or so) plus vocab. words from the previous week's reading *in Greek*.

(That will apply each and Monday for which we've had any reading in Greek at all the previous week. Hence you should not expect to see quizzes noted on the Blackboard assignment schedule.)

As to the quizzing, and therefore study, of

QUIZ 26-Aug 2009. *D&C* 1.1.

VOCAB. Just translate:

έν.

άλσει, from τὸ ἄλσος, τοῦ ἄλσους.

περιττήν, from περιττός, -ή, όν.

[etc.]

PASSAGE. Just translate.

Καλόν μὲν καὶ τὸ ἄλσος,  
πολύδενδρον, άνθηρόν,  
κατάρουτον.

vocabulary, you should expect neither really obvious nor really easy words, nor rare or obscure ones, but *important* words that have caused some difficulty. (See example.)

## Translation-*cum*-Commentary/Essay Project

Students will, in consultation with the instructor (see Bb "Assignments" for selection timetable, due date, etc.), prepare a translation-*cum*-commentary (or close-reading essay) on a passage from *D&C*, one not covered in class.

TRANSLATION. Not literal but "literary," of a passage ca. four sections in length, and representing a more or less self-contained, coherent segment of narrative and / or description, one lending itself to. . .

COMMENTARY or DISCURSIVE ESSAY BASED ON CLOSE READING of passage translated. These will be interpretive and issues-oriented, esp. as to the "classical" or "classicizing" aspects, that in line with the theme of our class.

In selecting a suitably allusive or "intertextual" passage, you'll need to use a published scholarly commentary or similar; see the bibliography at the end of this document. If you choose the commentary option, please "lemmatize" it: key your comments into relevant words, phrases, etc., arranged in order of appearance in the text. (For a "lemmatized" commentary, see Byrne and Cueva's *D&C*.)

Your commentary/essay will need to be researched, not heavily, but enough. Think of it as a compare-and-contrast-style *close reading*.

LENGTH. The commentary/essay should fill perhaps five double-spaced pages.

FORMAT. MLA throughout. CITATION, BIBLIO. Again, MLA.

Find detailed help at:

[http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~clas381a/papers.htm#major\\_papers\\_mla\\_format](http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~clas381a/papers.htm#major_papers_mla_format)

<http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~clas381a/honesty.htm> (includes guidance on honesty, research, citation)

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Also the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (copy available on permanent reserve, Newcomb Reading Room near LN coffee kiosk, as well as elsewhere in the University's libraries).

## Oral Presentation on a Modern "Classic"

Each student will, in consultation with the instructor, choose a modern "classic" (poem, film, movie, graphic novel, whatever) to present to the class, that to try to put into use some of the ideas we'll be developing.

For these, please try to *avoid* secondary research, apart from texts assigned for class: *it should come from you*. No biblio, no PowerPoint or handout, except as needed for purposes of “showing.” (If a film or similar, please bring DVD; better to focus on a discrete scene or section. In general, aim for focus, not diffuse treatment of too many things.)

Still, this needs to be polished. Prepare notes/script, not to read to class robotically, but to perform orally.

Twenty minutes tops, to be presented end of semester — see Bb “Assignments” for precise timetable, etc.

### Schedule of Assignments (via Bb)

Please consult **Blackboard** for the Schedule of Assignments. That Schedule will remain stable throughout the semester, except:

Insofar as the instructor reserves the right to alter it as needed.

Insofar as applies to READINGS IN GREEK. For the most part, *D&C* in Greek will be assigned on a class-by-class basis, as I intend we work out all Greek and need, therefore, to keep near constant tabs on rate of progress. Thus it will not be possible to predict progress through the text. Note that the following subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.) Please, in most cases, expect those assignments to be announced at the end of a given class.

### Select Bibliography

- Anderson, Graham. *Ancient Fiction: The Novel in the Graeco-Roman World*. London and Totowa, N.J.: Croom Helm; Barnes & Noble, 1984. Print.
- Balme, Maurice, and Gilbert Lawall. *Athenaze: An Introduction to Ancient Greek Book I*. 2 ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Print.
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- Byrne, Shannon N., and Edmund P. Cueva. *Longus’ Daphnis & Chloe: Introduction, Greek Text, Notes*. Annotated ed. Wauconda, Ill.: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2005. Print.
- Hanson, Victor Davis, and John Heath. “Who Killed Homer?” *Arion* 5 2 (1997): 108–54. Print.
- Hunter, R. L. *A study of Daphnis & Chloe*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Print.
- Laird, Andrew. “Approaching Style and Rhetoric.” *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*. Ed. Tim Whitmarsh. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 201–17. Print.

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- Panayotakis, Stelios, M. Zimmerman, and Wytse Hette Keulen, eds. *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*. Leiden, Netherlands and Boston: Brill, 2003. Print.
- Paschalis, Michael, ed. *The Greek and the Roman Novel: Parallel Readings*. Eelde Groningen: Barkhuis; Groningen University Library, 2007. Print.
- Porter, James I. "What Is 'Classical' about Classical Antiquity? Eight Propositions." *Arion* 13 1 (2005): 27–61. Print.
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- Wills, Garry. "There's Nothing Conservative About the Classics' Revival." New York, 1997. New York Times. 26 September 2009.  
<<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/02/16/magazine/there-s-nothing-conservative-about-the-classics-revival.html?scp=1&sq=garry+wills+classics&st=nyt>>.
- Wills, Gary. "There's Nothing Conservative About the Classics' Revival." *New York Times* 16 February 1997, sec. 6. Print.
- Zeitlin, Froma. "Gardens of Desire Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*: Nature, Art, and Imitation." *The Search for the Ancient Novel*. Ed. James Tatum. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994. 148–70. Print.