The Greek Set Book 2012/13: Homer: The Odyssey

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A selection of books/units from books 5-12 and 19-20 is taught from the original. The course aims at a familiarity with, and appreciation of, the poem’s distinctive character: language and style; its oral features (e.g. the folk-tale element, typical scenes, frequent types of similes); thematology (nostos ‘homecoming’ being the big theme); geography (‘far-off’/marvellous lands and near ones/Ithacan society and the world of the (royal) oikos); ethics and society/ies; heroic attributes; the gods and their relationship with humans; the sophistication of the epic narrative; analogies and differences with the Iliad; intertextual resonances. Classes are interactive, and translation and commentary of the text (from the linguistic, metrical, historical and socio-cultural perspectives) will occupy us for the most part of the class, but selective secondary reading will also be discussed in the sessions.

Translations (two recommended prose ones)
Hammond, M., with intro by J. Griffin (2000, Duckworth, London)
Shewring, W., with intro by G. S. Kirk (1980, Oxford World’s Classics)
[The Loeb edn., containing the original, with A. T. Murray’s (1919) trans. revised by G. Dimock (repr. with corrections, 1998) is useful to have].

Commentaries - Companions

Vocabulary, language, metre
LSJ³d [= Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon] is of course indispensable, especially until some Homeric vocabulary and mastery of the dialect have been acquired.
Autenrieth, G., Homeric Dictionary, 1984 [1873] is also very good and saves time.
West, M. L., Introduction to Greek Metre (Oxford, 1987) [See also ‘Metre’ in the Introductions of Rutherford 1992 (his section on ‘Grammar’ is also very helpful) and Garvie 1994 (above)].
Bibliography

Some introductory reading
Griffin, J., *Homer* (Bristol, 1980a) (with short notes on further reading and translations at the back).

General
Cohen, B. *The Distaff Side. Representing the Female in Homer’s Odyssey* (New York, 1995).
Crotty, K. *The Poetics of Supplication* (New York, 1994).
Foley, J. M. Homer’s Traditional Art (Pennsylvania, 1999).
Nagy, G., *Homer the Preclassic* (California, 2009), (esp. ch. 4).
— *Homer the Classic* (Harvard, 2009)

**On Homeric society**
Haubold, J. *Homer’s People: epic poetry and social formation* (Cambridge, 2000).

- **Religion**
Griffin 1980 (see above), pp. 144-204.

**On narrative technique**
Gröthlein, J. and A. Rengakos (eds) *Narratology and Interpretation* (Berlin, 2009)  
[containing contributions on Homer and the Odyssey].

**On orality**

**Collective volumes**
Myrsiades, K (ed.) *Approaches to Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey* (New York, 2010).
Afterlife

A useful online resource is that of the Centre for Hellenic Studies of Harvard University [http://chs.harvard.edu/wa/pageR?tn=Publications&bdc=12&mn=0](http://chs.harvard.edu/wa/pageR?tn=Publications&bdc=12&mn=0)

Assessment
• **BA degree (final exam + coursework)**
Final examination counts for 70% of the course mark. Each of the two 2,500 words essays counts for 15% of the course mark.
Essay 1 (Autumn term): to be submitted by **Mon 10 December 2012, by 6pm.**
Essay 2 (Spring term): to be submitted by **Mon 18 March 2013, by 6pm.**

• **MA degree (coursework)**
One 5,000-word essay to be submitted by **1 May or 15 June 2013.**
Please arrange in time with me to submit a draft to comment on before the deadline.
The Odyssey is one of two major ancient Greek epic poems attributed to Homer. It is, in part, a sequel to the Iliad, the other Homeric epic. The Odyssey is a fundamental work in the modern Western canon, being the oldest extant piece of Western literature, second to the Iliad. Scholars believe the Odyssey was composed near the end of the 8th century BC, somewhere in Ionia, the Greek coastal region of Anatolia. Homer: The Odyssey Translated by S. H. Butcher and Andrew Lang. Table of Contents. The Odyssey (Fiction, 700 BC, 355 pages) - Additional author: S. H. Butcher and A. Lang (translators). This title is not on Your Bookshelf. [Add to Shelf] (0 / 10 books on shelf). © 2003-2012 LiteraturePage.com and Michael Moncur. All rights reserved. For information about public domain texts appearing here, read the copyright information and disclaimer.