

Disclaimer: This is an indicative syllabus only and may be subject to changes. The final and official syllabus will be distributed by the instructor during the first day of class.

CLST 1600, Dangerous Books of Antiquity

Summer Session I: May 28th- July 3rd, 2024

Zoom: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:15 pm - 7:15 pm

Instructor: Samantha Taylor (Breecher), sbreeche@upenn.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays & Fridays, 1 pm – 3 pm

Course Description

All books, even those some regard as "classics," are potentially dangerous. This course will survey a selection of texts from ancient Greece and Rome that contain dangerous content, got their authors in trouble, were censored, inspired rebellion, or enabled social (and antisocial) movements, down to the present moment. In this course, we will read ancient literature and investigate the common themes that arise when considering what makes a text dangerous. Topics of discussion will include religion, sex and gender, philosophy, race and ethnicity, nationalism, and magic. The course will make use of brief lectures, presentations, and discussion boards, but will leave as much time as possible for seminar-style discussion. All assigned readings will be made available on Canvas.

Assessments

Participation (40%)

Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions is a central component of this course.

Class Presentations (10%)

One or two brief presentations (~10 minutes each) given on the assigned reading. Presentations should include biographic information of authors and/or historical contextualization of their literary work. Students are encouraged to meet with me during office hours for presentation recommendations and guidance.

Discussion Questions (25%)

By 10 PM the night before each class session, students should post either a thoughtful question about the assigned reading OR respond thoughtfully to a question posted by other students (~200 words). Students presenting the next day are not expected to contribute to the discussion board.

Final Paper Proposal (5%)

In preparation for the final paper, you will submit a one-page proposal that indicates what material you will analyze, what your tentative argument is, and a brief outline of how you will make your argument.

Final Paper Presentation (5%)

Each student will give a 5–7-minute presentation of their final paper, explaining what sources they used, their thesis, and a summary of their argument.

Final Paper (15%)

Write a paper (approximately 10–12 pages) based on one of the writing prompts provided.

Schedule

Week 1

May 28th: *Introductions*

- Syllabus
- What makes a text dangerous?

May 30th: *Dangerous Speech in Archaic Greece*

- Homer, *Iliad* (tr. Lattimore), Books 1 & 2, lines 1-300
- Hesiod, *Works and Days* (tr. Schlegel and Weinfeld), lines 1-273
- Archilochus (selections in Barstone, *Ancient Greek Lyrics*)

Week 2

June 4th: *Socrates in Greek Old Comedy*

- Aristophanes, *Clouds* (tr. Halliwell)
- Plato, *Apology of Socrates* (tr. Grube)

June 6th: *Socrates on Love*

- Plato, *Symposium* (tr. Waterfield)
- Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, Preface
- Zinn, “Hellenism”

Week 3

June 11th: *Sex and Gender in Greece*

- Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazousae*
- Euripides, *Medea*
- Ovid, *The Art of Love* (tr. Green), Books 1-2

June 13th: *Sex and Gender in Rome*

- Martial, Selections (TBD)
- Ovid, *The Art of Love* (tr. Green), Book 3
- Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* (tr. Ruden), Books 1-3.
- Final paper proposals are due by end-of-day **Sunday, June 16th!**

Week 4

June 18th: *Magic: The Social Context*

- Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, books 4-7.
- Apuleius, *Apologia* (tr. Hunink)
- Gager, *Curse Tablets*, Introduction
- Fritz, *Magic in the Ancient World*, Introduction

June 20th: *Magic in the Literature*

- Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, books 8-11.
- Ovid, *Fasti*, Book 2.355 ff.
- Lucan, *Pharsalia*, 6.523-820
- Horace, *Satire* 1.8

Week 5

June 25th: *Dangerous Inventions*

- Tacitus, *Germania* (tr. Mattingly)
- The Invention of Germany, pp. pp. 9-124

June 27th: *Dangerous Inventions*

- The Invention of Germany, pp. 125-173.

Week 6

July 2nd: *Final Paper Presentations*

- Final papers are due by end-of-day **Wednesday, July 3rd!**