

Latin 181a, Advanced Latin: Apuleius (and Pliny the Elder)

Fall 2017

TTh 2:45

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While this class was billed as “Apuleius and Pliny the Elder,” we will focus on Apuleius, with a few interludes. We will be reading selections from Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* (or *Golden Ass*) in Latin, and we will also read the entire *Metamorphoses* in English along with some secondary readings and readings from other “ancient novels.” An Advanced Latin class moves beyond grammar and translation (though we will do plenty of that) and includes serious discussion of the works as literary and cultural entities. You will be writing a paper toward the end of the class.

Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* is a marvelous oddity from many points of view: cross-cultural, magical, religious, erotic, disjointed, stylistically experimental, generically a bit anomalous, late by classical standards. We will read and enjoy it, and discuss it from numerous angles including: How does the language and how does the genre connect with other writings of the Graeco-Roman world? What does it all mean? Why would a man turn into a donkey and how do we read his story? Why Isis? How does the main plot intersect with all the “embedded tales”? What is the importance of thinking about Apuleius’ origins in the Roman province of Africa, if any? How do we read Apuleius’ anomalous and rather difficult style? Is Lucius a man or an animal and does Apuleius draw a line? (This is where Pliny the Elder comes in.)

Apart from reading and loving Apuleius, another goal of the course is to improve your Latin. Don’t lean on a translation even if you may need to consult one sometimes. Always pick apart the syntax of every sentence. Apuleius writes strange Latin and breaks Classical “rules.” He is often deliberately obscure. Work at understanding his style and it will get easier.

Texts:

James Ruebel, ed., *Metamorphoses of Apuleius Book 1*

Ellen Finkelp Pearl, *An Apuleius Reader*

Handouts/selections from Pliny the Elder

You should also have a copy of the whole *Metamorphoses* in English so that you can read the parts we are not reading in class. I recommend Lindsay’s translation or Relihan’s or Ruden’s. Kenney is fine. Just don’t get some terrible unreadable version off the internet.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the class, students should have improved Latin reading abilities, a familiarity with the style of Apuleius and its differences from Classical Latin, and an understanding of the genre of the Ancient Novel.

Requirements:

In-class translation and discussion: 15%

Quizzes (3?): 15%

Report on criticism: 10%

Exercise on close reading and style 10%

Midterm: 15%

Final Exam: 20%

Paper due late in the semester: 15%

Readings will mainly be drawn from the commentaries by Ruebel (Book 1) and Finkelppearl (selections), but, if time permits, we will also throw in some other passages:

The wonders of hair 2.8-9

More Fotis: 2.16-17

The robber-tales in Book 4 (4.9-21?)

Some isolated passages in Book 9: 9.39-40, the Roman soldier; 9.14, the Christian (?)

Book 10: The stepmother tales, sex with the matrona, Lucius in the theater.

Book 11, perhaps a longer selection

Initial assignments (as with most intermediate/advanced Latin and Greek classes, the syllabus is going to be worked out once we have a better idea of how much we are able to read per class. At the beginning, we will see how it feels to read three sections per class)

T August 29: Introduction, background, Augustine on Apuleius, Apuleius' style, prologue, Pliny the Elder on animals.

Th August 31: Translate Book 1, sections 1-3.

T September 5: Book 1, 4-6.

Th Sept 7: I WILL HAVE TO MISS CLASS FOR MY DAUGHTER'S WEDDING!!! I KNOW IT'S EARLY FOR A QUIZ, BUT: Quiz and secondary readings on prologue.

T Sept 12: 1.7-10

To be continued as we see how it goes.

Lector intende, laetaberis!