Fall, 2012
Comparative Literature 210: Reception of Virgil’s Aeneid

Team-taught:
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Office Hours: 2-3 Monday; 11-12, Tuesday, and by appointment (811 Sproul Hall).
Meets: Sproul Hall 104, 4-7 PM Monday

This seminar examines the place of Virgil’s Aeneid in world literature and the fundamental role of Virgil’s work in the growth of Western literary, cultural and philosophical tradition. In this seminar we accomplish three things. First, we begin by reading the epic and comparing the original Latin with its Greek original in Homer. Second, we read selected works and excerpts of works in the European tradition directly inspired by the reading of Virgil: Augustine’s City of God, Dante’s Divine Comedy, Marlowe’s Tragedy of Dido, Hermann Broch, The Death of Virgil, Coetzee, Age of Iron. Third, we examine the contribution of the Aeneid to the various mythologies of the hero, the nation, the state, and the Empire in Western civilization (Johnson, Darkness Visible) as well as its use by counter-traditions (Marlowe’s Dido, Queen of Carthage and selections from Ovid, Proba, and Augustine, to Dante, Christine de Pisan, Broch, and Coetzee). Latin and Greek useful, but not required. Students with an interest in the Western literary tradition, the formation of canon, and counter-canon, as well as the dynamics of empire, nation, and transnationalism and the role of literary works in this trajectory will benefit from this course. Co-taught. Seminar format. Each week, we would like a short response paper on the week’s assigned readings. The seminar paper will be due on the scheduled day and time of the final exam. Presentations of seminar papers will begin in the sixth week.

Texts ordered:
Vergil, Aeneid, tr. A. Mandelbaum
Dante, Inferno, tr. Anthony Esolen; Dante, Purgatorio, tr. Anthony Esolen (Modern Library)
Marlowe, Dido, Queen of Carthage in Complete Plays. Penguin.
J.M. Coetzee, Age of Iron. Penguin. 0 14 02.7565 7
Reader, available at Campus Copy Shop on 3rd and A

Week 1 (October 1)
Virgil’s Aeneid, Books 1-4.
Ralph Hexter, “On First Looking into Vergil’s Homer,” in the Reader (pp.22-26).

Week 2  (October 8)
Virgil’s Aeneid, Books 4-8.

Week 3 (October 15)
Virgil’s Aeneid, Books 9-12.
Post-Virgilian, Late Antique receptions: Ovid, Heroides 7, Tertullian, Proba, Macrobius, Jerome in the Reader (pp. 54-75).
Charles Martindale, “Introduction: Thinking Through Reception,” from Classics and the Use of Reception, in the Reader (pp. 76-88).
W.R. Johnson, Darkness Visible on reserve in the library.

Week 4 (October 22)
Post-Virgilian, Late Antique receptions and twelfth-century vulgarizations:
Augustine, selections from City of God and Confessions; Fulgentius; Geoffrey of Monmouth, History of the Kings of Britain; Roman d’Eneas in the Reader (pp. 89-140).

Week 5 (October 29)
Dante, Inferno, trans. Esolen.
Kevin Brownlee, “Dante and the classical poets,” from The Cambridge Companion to Dante, ed. Rachel Jacoff in the Reader
Peter Hawkins, “Descendit ad inferos,” in “Dante and Virgil,” in Hawkins, Dante’s Testaments, in the Reader (pp. 141-158).

Week 6 (November 5)
Read Dante, Purgatorio. Read Cantos 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 21, 22, 27 and 30. Cantos 15-17, Paradiso in the Reader.

Week 7—no class Veteran’s Day November 12

Week 8 (November 19)
Petrarch, *Rerum familiarium libri* 24.1; 5.6; *Collatio laureationis; Rerum senilium libri* 4.5; *Secretum* 1.124; Boccaccio, “On Dido or Elissa, Queen of the Carthaginians,” from *De Claris Mulieribus*; selection from *Genealogy of the Gods*; Geoffrey Chaucer, from *Book 1 House of Fame*; “Dido, Queen of Carthage,” from *Legend of Good Women*; Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies* in the Reader (pp. 170-210).
Marlowe, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*.

Week 9 (November 26)
Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas* and its reception.
Read the Opera Libretto
Dean Jessie Ann Owens, HArCS will lead the seminar.

Week 10 (December 3)
Early Lives of Virgil in the Reader (pp.221-250).
H. Broch, *Death of Virgil*.

Make-up? (December 10)
J. M Coetzee, *Age of Iron*. 