The Medieval Latin Text Seminar is offered primarily to all PhD students (but is also open to interested MA students), whose level is above Intermediate, i.e., who have taken at least four semesters of Latin at CEU or the equivalent elsewhere, and who would like to improve their skills in reading and interpreting Late and Medieval Latin. Participants in the class should have a solid grasp of Latin morphology and adequate knowledge of Latin syntax. Given the specific objectives of this type of seminar, the Medieval Latin Text Seminar will not focus on the teaching of language as such or on reading and translating a large amount of text, but will rather explore a limited amount of text from multiple perspectives (textual transmission, historical and cultural background, literary qualities, and linguistic makeup).

The main objective of the seminar is to offer the students a chance to get acquainted with and explore in some depth fragments of three late antique commentaries on Vergil's Aeneid, namely, that composed by Servius in the first decades of the fifth century CE, the Interpretationes Virgilianae of Tiberius Claudius Donatus (probably second half of the fourth century CE), and the remains of the commentary produced by Aelius Donatus (fl. ca. 350 CE) surviving in the so-called Servius Danielis. During our course we will read, translate, discuss, and annotate parts of these commentaries referring to select passages from the ninth book of Vergil's Aeneid (vv. 176-449), which contain the story of Nisus and Euryalus, with an eye to the various textual, lexical, stylistic, historical, and literary issues involved. We will read passages from all three commentaries to the same verse(s), so as to better appreciate the different approaches to interpretation of Vergil's poetry in Late Antiquity as practiced by both grammarians such as Servius and Donatus and an educated intellectual with rhetorical interests such as Ti. Claudius Donatus. Our reading will also focus on changes in linguistic usage witnessed in the three commentaries. A first, obvious aim of the course is to explore the linguistic aspects of the text (morphology, syntax, vocabulary), so as to enable students to familiarize themselves with characteristic features of Postclassical Latin. At the same time, the students will be encouraged to prepare detailed annotations of the excerpts read focusing on the historical and cultural background of the texts (insofar as this is recoverable). Special attention will be paid to the specific conventions that inform our texts (rhetorical, literary, ideological) as well as to the specialized areas of research which mediate scholarly access to these (such as studies on late antique intellectual history, later Roman literature, etc.). In addition to discussing the different approaches to Vergil's text and their ideological foundations, we will also explore issues such as, but not limited to, the impact of Christianity on Latin usage (or lack thereof), interpretation techniques and their diverse products (glosses, scholia, commentaries), as well as gender stereotypes, construction of heroic masculinities, and late antique attitudes towards same-sex eroticism and their social contexts.

Goals

-To enhance the students’ working knowledge of various aspects of Postclassical and Medieval
Latin morphology, syntax, specific vocabulary and stylistic features through the translation of medieval sources
-To offer the students theoretical insights into as well as practical demonstrations of various aspects of translating sources written in Postclassical Latin
-To provide basic background information on the culture and spirituality which inform sources written in Postclassical Latin
-To foster a better understanding of concepts such as “ancient scholarship,” “literary and rhetorical commentary,” and “fictional narrative” as they emerge in the various types of discourse expressed in Postclassical Latin
-To provide students with the knowledge (through both theoretical methodology and practical examples) necessary for producing annotated translations of late antique and medieval sources

Learning outcomes

-The ability to analyze primary source materials, i.e., to select relevant primary source material and read it in the source language with an awareness of the linguistic and cultural background implied. Assessed regularly through independent translation of the texts provided (homework) followed by discussion in class.
-The ability to select, synthesize, and disseminate academic knowledge relevant to a wider audience through annotations and comments accompanying a modern translation of a medieval source. Assessed regularly through independent annotation of the texts provided (homework) followed by discussion in class as well as through the end-of-term written assessment.
-Multicultural understanding as manifested in the awareness of and respect for points of view deriving from other national, social, or cultural backgrounds. Assessed regularly through discussions in class of passages from the readings that offer relevant topics.

Readings


Recommended readings

Kaster, Robert A. Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity.
Weekly outline

Week 1  General introduction. Vergil, his *Aeneid*, and his late antique commentators.  
[Format: lecture]

Week 2  Servius, the *Servius Danielis*, and Ti. Claudius Donatus: texts, contexts, I interpretations.  
[Format: lecture]

Week 3  Introducing the Heroes (I).  
[Format: interactive translation seminar]

Week 4  Introducing the Heroes (II).  
[Format: interactive translation seminar]

Week 5  A Night of Adventure (I).  
[Format: interactive translation seminar]

Week 6  A Night of Adventure (II).  
[Format: interactive translation seminar]

Week 7  A Night of Adventure (III).  
[Format: interactive translation seminar]

Week 8  The Tragic End (I).  
[Format: interactive translation seminar]

Week 9  The Tragic End (II).  
[Format: interactive translation seminar]

Week 10  The Tragic End (III).  
[Format: interactive translation seminar]

Week 11  Posterity.  
[Format: interactive translation seminar]

Week 12  Concluding Discussion.  
[Format: interactive lecture]
Requirements and Assessment:

Attendance in class is required (min. 80 %). Student performance will be assessed throughout the semester through the translation of selected texts as independent work (homework), which will be then commented upon in class (formative assessment). The final (summative) assessment will take place at the end of the semester by means of a written take-home assignment consisting of translating a fragment of a Latin text from the reading of the course and annotating it with the help of a list of relevant secondary literature and reference materials provided by the instructor. In the final assessment, the ratio between class participation and final assessment will be 10% to 90%.

Elective for PhD students