ANT2700/4700 "Ancient Literature in Translation"
Spring Semester 2016
Periodisk evalueringsrapport

Type of course and target audience
This was a new course which was freshly designed and taught for the first time in spring 2016. This course will be part of a new one-year study programme called *Antikkens Kultur*, which will be taught in autumn 2016 / spring 2017 for the first time. In addition to this, the course was (and will continue to be) open to students from all subjects and all faculties (also *enkeltemnestudenter*).

Goals of the course
The main goal of the course was (and will continue to be) that students read some of the most important and most influential classics from Greek and Roman literature in translation. In this context, they should also get a broader insight into Greek and Roman literature as well as some of the most important methodological tools with which ancient literary texts can be analysed and understood (e.g. from narratology and intertextuality).

Syllabus
I chose the following classics for the syllabus:

- Homer: *The Odyssey.* Trans. Robert Fagles. 1996.
- Sophocles: *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus.* Trans. Robert Fagles. 1982 (paperback 1984).
- Plato: *The Symposium.* Trans. M.C. Howatson & Frisbee C.C. Sheffield. 2008.
- Virgil: *Aeneid.* Trans. Stanley Lombardo. 2005.
- Ovid: *Metamorphoses.* Trans. Rolfe Humphries. 1955 (repr. 1983).

Structure of the course programme
The course programme was structured as follows:

- Session 1 Organisation; general introduction
- Session 2 Overview of Greek literary history
- Session 3+4 Homer, *Odyssey*
- Session 5+6 Sophocles: *Antigone*; *Oedipus the King*; *Oedipus at Colonus*
- Session 7+8 Plato, *Symposium*
- Session 9 Overview of Roman literary history
- Session 10+11 Virgil, *Aeneid*
- Session 12+13 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
- Session 14 Concluding discussion; feedback

Teaching format
The course was largely taught in lecture format, with occasional discussions and time for questions etc. in between. I used powerpoint presentations and podcasted all lectures, which then were made available on Fronter. The teaching language was English.

Compulsory activities and final examination
As a compulsory activity during the semester, the students had to hand in a short essay (3–4 pages); they could choose between three topics which I assigned to them at the beginning of the semester. Everyone received written feedback on their essay. The final examination consisted of a written exam (four hours). I divided the final exam into three parts: Part I: knowledge test (multiple choice) – Part II: essay – Part III: essay (for the two essays, the students could choose from three topics/questions). It was important for me that the final exam comprised both knowledge questions as well as essay questions in which the students had to develop their own thoughts and arguments based on their acquired knowledge.

Optional activities
I designed and uploaded three knowledge tests incl. keys in which the students could test their knowledge about the syllabus and the content of the lectures. At the same time, these knowledge tests were meant to provide the students with a rough idea of what I expected from them in the final exam regarding knowledge of facts and data. I also regularly uploaded non-compulsory (but highly recommended) further reading, such as chapters from handbooks and companions.

Student numbers
According to Fronter, roughly 60 students were enrolled in the course. During the lectures, ca. 15–20 were present in average (as I podcasted the lecture, I did not make attendance a compulsory requirement). 25 submitted their compulsory mid-term essay; 22 of them were finally accepted and allowed to take the final examination. All 22 passed the exam (final characters ranged between A and D).

- Remark: The discrepancy between the large number of enrolled students and the fact that fewer than half of them handed in their mid-term essay is, in my view, to be explained by the fact that many students may have been enrolled for the course, but then did not actually follow it at all. I would not count this as *frafall* in the actual sense of the word.

Results of the course evaluation (excerpt/summary)
For the course evaluation, I used the faculty's *Student evaluation questionnaire for courses offered at the Faculty of Arts*, with some modifications and some extra questions that specifically concerned my course. Only 9 students filled and handed in the evaluation form.

The overall result of the evaluation was pleasingly positive. Here are some excerpts from the questionnaire: all 9 students who had handed in the evaluation form thought that the teaching was engaging, well structured, clear and comprehensible. 7 of 9 said that reading the syllabus was demanding, but rewarding; 2 were of the opinion that this was too much work. Along similar lines, 8 of 9 thought that doing research for, and writing, the mid-term essay was demanding, but exciting. When asked for the reason(s) why they chose this course, 7 of 9 answered that it was their interest for the topic(s), 2 because it suited their schedule, 1 because he wanted to take a course with me. Regarding the lecture style and the overall satisfaction with the course, on a scale from "very satisfied" to "very unsatisfied", 7 answered "very satisfied" and 2 "satisfied". As far as the syllabus is concerned, a majority was very pleased with Homer, Sophocles and Ovid, whereas Plato and Virgil were slightly less popular.

In the last session, I presented the results of the evaluation to the students in detail and discussed certain points and aspects. One point of criticism that came up during the discussion was that some students would have wished for more precise information about the precise content of the final examination. Another point was that some students said they had wished for a slightly later deadline for the mid-term essay so that they could have followed more lectures before they had to decide on their preferred essay topic.

- Remark 1: It is beyond my comprehension that only 9 students handed in the evaluation form, although I emphasised several times that I was interested in their opinion and that this would be an opportunity for them to have a proper say in the further development and improvement of the course.
- Remark 2: I agree with the criticism RE: more information about the exam and a slightly later deadline for the mid-term essay.
- Remark 3: A full overview of all the results of the course evaluation is available upon request.

Conclusion
I am of the opinion that the course in its entirety was a success, both with regard to its content and its format/lecture style etc. I will teach the course again in spring 2017, using the same (or a similar) syllabus and the same teaching style (with slight modifications and improvements). I will make sure that the students get sufficient information about the form and the content of the exam at the beginning of the semester, and that the deadline for the mid-term essay will be a bit later next time.

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