Emne: GRE4102 Gresk paleografi og edisjonsfilologi

Emneevaluering

Fall 2019, completed by Boris Maslov

The course effectively serves as an introduction to the discipline for MA students in Greek, taking the place of what internationally is termed the «proseminar». The need for such a general methodology-oriented introductory course is particularly strong at UiO since students who enter the program upon completion of the BA program in Greek, while adequately trained in Ancient Greek, only have a very supeficial appreciation of the general subject matter of Classics and the Humanities, have read almost no secondary literature, and have had no first-hand familiarity with ancient works relevant to literary theory (Aristotle's Poetics, Plato's Republic, Pseudo-Longinus) and minimal if any exposure to modern linguistics and literary studies. As a result, students are ill-prepared for independent research in any particular sub-field of Classical philology.

In view of this, the emphasis on textual criticism and paleography in the current version of the pensum is hardly conducive to the aims of the MA program. The instructor is placed in a difficult position of trying to find a balance between basic instruction in reading Medieval manuscripts with more general discussion of the history of textual transmission, differences in ancient, Medieval and modern perception of classical texts of different genres, historical hermeneutics, and the formation of scientific discourse on Classical texts.

It is recommended that both the title of the course and the syllabus be adapted to fit the broader purposes of this course, while leaving the instructor the freedom to spend more or less time with paleographical matters. (One possibility would be to rename the class «Transmission and intepretation of ancient texts».)

The number of hours – 10 double-hours – is clearly insufficient to deliver a satisfying course that would help MA students in their intellectual growth. For that reason, in Fall 2019, each class meeting was extended, on voluntary basis, so that students had a chance to benefit from an extra hour of instruction every week. This is clearly not a desirable permanent arrangment as it is unfair to the teacher and puts an extra strain on the students whose work in the course, after the 15 percent cut in instruction hours enforced in 2019, is condensed from 14 to 10 weeks.

Infrastructural support for the course is adequate.

The exam form («semesteroppgave») fits the aims of the course well, provided the course covers a broad spectrum of topics related to the transmission of knowledge about Classical texts.

Of the 2 students who took the couse in Fall 2019, one completed an excellent final paper, the other failed to submit the final exam.

It appears that a reassessment of the entire BA program in Greek is likely to result in changes in the conception of the introductory methodology seminar for MA students. It is in any case important, given the small enrollment in the MA program, that the instructor has considerable freedom in adapting the syllabus in view of the needs and priorities of the students.