



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

BBN-ERA-228

Magic in classical antiquity

Prof. György Németh

The seminar investigates the evidence from the Greek and Roman worlds for the practice and representation of magic and witchcraft and the practical manipulation thereof. Subjects include the wide range of curse tablets, voodoo dolls, Greek magical papyri, and amulets.

The goal of this seminar is to:

- Consider the evidence from the Greek and Roman worlds for the practice and representation of magic and witchcraft.
- Analyse curse tablets; voodoo dolls; Greek magical papyri; amulets and intaglios; and some of literary sources.
- Examine the mechanisms of magical technology (*officina magica*), and the issues surrounding the representation of magical practitioners.

Form of assessment

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| Essay | 2000 words |
| Oral presentation | 15 mins |
| Test | 10 questions |

Core reading

- Németh, G. 2013. *Supplementum Andollentianum*. Zaragoza, Budapest, 3-83.

Background reading

- Faraone, C. 1999. *Ancient Greek love magic*. Cambridge, MA.
- Faraone, C., and Obbink, D., eds. 1991. *Magika hiera*. New York.

BBN-ERA-221:2

Reading ancient Greek Comedy (Aristophanes's *Assemblywomen*)

Gábor Bolonyai

Aristophanes's comedy (399 BC) is about emancipation of women, communism, and Athenian democratic governance. The women of Athens, led by Praxagora, decide to take over the city's parliament, the Assembly, arguing for a number of radical reforms. Women, asserting themselves more capable than men, should have all the power in Athens, all property should be held communally, and there should be complete sexual liberation, with people free to go to bed with whomever they choose.

In the seminars we will read several passages of the drama with close reading and discuss the main issues brought up in the text.

Knowledge of Greek is welcome but not required.

The assessment consists of two parts: 1. active participation in class work (i. e. reading/translating the text, week by week, with the help of commentaries and auxiliary materials); 2. an argumentative essay of 15 000 characters, containing a discussion of an interpretational problem, or an analysis of the comedy. Both partial marks contribute equally to the final mark.

Recommended commentaries:

A. Sommerstein, *Aristophanes's Ecclesiazusae*. Warminster, 1999.

R. G. Ussher, *Aristophanes's Ecclesiazusae*. Bristol, 2007.

A good analysis to Aristophanes's oeuvre:

A. M. Bowie, *Myth, Ritual, and Comedy*. Cambridge, 1993.

BBN-ERA-218:3

Latin language course

Ádám Rung

The course is going to consist of reading and grammar exercises in Latin, and it is to be tailored to the needs of the students who take it (hence the tentative nature of the syntax-based curriculum below). Its main target audience are Erasmus visiting students of Classics, but others are also welcome, if their knowledge (of Latin and English) is similar to them.

The materials of the course will be chosen either from standard and widely available textbooks, or, should the students be more advanced, from primary texts and linguistic analyses.

Translated material from Hungarian-language grammar books will be preferred if available, as that is the least available anywhere else.

Attendance is compulsory, but up to three absences will be tolerated, especially if substantially explained, preferably in advance. The final grade of the course is to be based on short weekly quizzes, but attendance and classroom participation will also be considered when rounding.

The lessons are going to be conducted in English by a non-native teacher who (apart from Classics and teaching Latin) also holds a degree in teaching English as a foreign language.

TENTATIVE CURRICULUM:

1. Introduction & Survey
2. Clauses and Aspects
3. Temporal Clauses I. (cum ← quom)
4. Temporal Clauses II.
5. Causal Clauses
6. Concessive Clauses
7. Conditionals
8. Final Clauses and Reported Jussives
9. Comparative Clauses
10. Consecutive Clauses
11. Relative Clauses
12. Revision & Assessment

Pagan, Jewish and Christian heritage in Emperor Julian the Apostate

Gábor Buzási

In this seminar students will be introduced to the work and thought of the last pagan emperor of Rome. Julian, born in Constantine's family in 331, was raised as a Christian, studied rhetoric and philosophy, and secretly converted to pagan Neoplatonism at about the age of 20. He was sole emperor for less than two years (361-363) but his religious reforms, manifesting in his writings, legislation and political action, made a lasting effect on subsequent generations. In this seminar we will read and analyse those treatises, orations (including a satire) and letters of the emperor in which he criticises the Bible, Christianity and Judaism, and expounds his ideas about a Platonic religion that could unify the various traditions of the empire. In the seminar we will focus on the following themes: (1) the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus's school as Julian's key to the interpretation and evaluation of religious and philosophical traditions; (2) the methods of interpreting sacred texts (especially the Bible and Plato) and sacred traditions in Julian and his time; (3) paganism ("Hellenism"), Judaism and Christianity in the 4th century – differences and similarities; (4) the influence of Christianity and Judaism on Julian's paganism; (5) the reception of Julian and his theology (especially in Byzantium and the Italian Renaissance). We will read the source texts and the secondary literature in English but, depending on the students' language proficiency, we may read some of the sources in the original Greek.