

The *Georgics*: Agriculture and Empire

LIT 186B
Fall 2019
MWF 9:20-10:25 AM
Classics Library

Instructor:

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Office Hours: M 10:30-12:30, W 1:30-3:30

Virgil's *Georgics* is a mysterious poem. Although it promises nothing more than instructions on how to farm, the *Georgics* ends up fitting almost every kind of Roman knowledge within this framework—from astrology to medicine to history. The farm becomes a metaphor for the Roman world, while Octavian—now ruler of that world, and one of the poem's addressees—becomes a farmer. In the *Georgics*, Virgil uses agriculture as a lens through which to generate a microcosm of Rome and its Empire.

Over the next ten weeks, we'll read the entire text of the *Georgics*, largely in translation, paying special attention to what the poem has to tell us about the forms and limits of power in early imperial Rome. How does Virgil go about transforming Roman subjects into plants or animals, and what does this transformation say about such subjects' "ruleability?" How do farmers, in the *Georgics*, disrupt Italian ecology? And how, in turn, does this ecology take its revenge, undoing the civilizing work of agriculture?

Required Texts:

Williams, R. D., *Virgil: Eclogues and Georgics*. Bristol Classical Press, 1998.

You'll also need to purchase an English edition of the *Georgics*. I recommend David Ferry's, but any translation is fine. Other required readings will be made available through the course website and as a reader available at the Bay Tree "Bookstore."

Grading

- A major aim of this course is to improve your ability to read and translate Latin. We'll be devoting at least half of every class meeting to this, and so 25% of your grade will be based on attendance and participation in class. You should come to class every day and be prepared to discuss the assigned reading; more than two unexcused absences will count against your grade.

- 15% of your grade will be based on a series of quizzes, to be given on Mondays, beginning with week 3 of the course. Each quiz will be timed for twelve minutes and require you to translate a short passage from the *Georgics*, as well as complete a verb or noun paradigm. If the whole class receives better than 85% on one of these quizzes, you won't have to take them anymore.
- Another important course goal is to prepare you to do interpretive work on the text beyond mere translation. 25% of your grade will therefore come from a pair of take-home exams, one near the midterm and the other near the end of the course. You will be given a weekend to complete the exams, which will require you to offer a gloss and commentary on elements of passages from the *Georgics*.
- You'll be asked to contribute at least two entries to a wiki listing plants and animals that appear in the *Georgics*. You'll also be asked to complete at least one playthrough of *Georgicon Trail*, a "fun," "interactive" "game" designed to help you study the poem. These digital components will count for 15% of your final grade.
- Finally, I'd like you to be able to offer synthetic and original answers to some of the questions that we'll be asking about the *Georgics* over the run of the course. Accordingly, 20% of your grade will depend on a term paper, 1300-2500 words in length, which you will develop in consultation with me over the second half of the term.
- Extra credit will be available: you may, for instance, post more than two entries on the wiki or help me program/debug the aforementioned *Georgicon Trail*.

Academic integrity:

All work submitted for this course must be your own. Any evidence of plagiarism or cheating will be dealt with in accordance with university policy. For more information, please see the University policy on academic integrity for undergraduate students at http://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_integrity.

Accessibility accommodation:

UCSC's Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides resources and support for students with documented disabilities. Any student who thinks s/he is in need of accommodation, based on the impact of a disability, should contact me privately to submit their Accommodation Authorization and discuss specific needs, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. Please contact the Disability Resource Center at 831-459-2089 in room 125 Hahn Student Services or by e-mail at drc@ucsc.edu to coordinate those accommodations.

Mental health resources:

UCSC Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides a wide range of short-term and long-term mental health services. Counseling services are confidential and free of charge to all UCSC students. For more information, contact CAPS at 831-459-2628 or visit <http://caps.ucsc.edu/>.

Course Schedule

Please complete all readings for the dates on which they're listed. What, you may ask, is the difference between an advanced student and a beginner? If you've already taken a LIT 186 course, then you're advanced; if not, then you're a beginner. Beginners may voluntarily move themselves up to advanced level in exchange for a lot of extra credit.

Week 1:

Fri. 9/27 Class introduction. Who's George?

Week 2

Mon. 9/30 *Georgics* 1.1-5 (all)
Wed. 10/2 *Georgics* 1.5-23. (all)
Fri. 10/4 *Georgics* 1.24-42 (all)

Week 3:

Mon. 10/7 *Georgics* 1.43-175. Advanced students read 43-93 in Latin; beginners read 54-70.
Wed. 10/9 *Georgics* 1.176-310. Advanced students read 176-203 in Latin; beginners read 187-203.
Fri. 10/11 Varro, *De agri cultura* 1.49-53.

Week 3:

Mon. 10/14 *Georgics* 1.311-516. Advanced students read 461-514 in Latin; beginners read 493-514.
Wed. 10/16 *Georgics* 2.1-176. Advanced students read 136-176 in Latin; beginners read 136-154.
Fri. 10/18 R. Thomas, "Virgil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference."

Week 4:

Mon. 10/21 *Georgics* 2.177-474. Advanced students read 420-474 in Latin; beginners read 420-425 and 458-474.
Wed. 10/23 *Georgics* 2.475-540. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 490-512.
Fri. 10/25 L. Kronenberg, *Allegories of Farming* (selections)

Week 5:

Mon. 10/28 *Georgics* 3.1-208 (Eng.). **Take-Home Midterm Due.**
Wed. 10/30 *Georgics* 3.264-565. Advanced students read 478-536 in Latin; beginners read 515-536.
Fri. 11/1 M. Gale, "Man and Beast in Lucretius and the *Georgics*."

Week 6:

Tue. 11/4 *Georgics* 4.1-66. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 45-66.
Thur. 11/6 *Georgics* 4.67-115. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 77-94.
Fri. 11/8 N. Morley, "Civil War and Succession Crisis in Roman Beekeeping."

Week 7:

Mon. 11/11 No Class.
Wed. 11/13 *Georgics* 4.116-169. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 125-146.

Fri. 11/15 *Georgics* 4.170-227. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 170-190.
Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* 3.10.

Week 8:

Mon. 11/18 *Georgics* 4.228-280. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 251-270.
Wed. 11/20 *Georgics* 4.281-332. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 295-314.
Fri. 11/22 T. Geue, "Soft Hands, Hard Power"

Week 9:

Mon. 11/25 *Georgics* 4.333-386. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 345-362.
Wed. 11/27 *Georgics* 4.387-452. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 387-410.
Fri. 11/29 No Class.

Week 10:

Mon. 3/8 **Take-Home Final Due.**
Wed. 3/10 *Georgics* 4.504-565. Advanced students read all in Latin; beginners read 504-527.
Fri. 12/6 A. Bradley, "Augustan Culture and a Radical Alternative: Vergil's *Georgics*."

Term papers due 12/12