

## Greek Lyric Poetry: Sappho and Alcaeus GK9903A Fall 2024



*Image: Alcaeus (left) and Sappho (right), both labelled on the vase. Athenian Red-Figure Psykter Kalathos. Attributed to the Brygos Painter.*

*Munich, Antikensammlungen 2416. Photograph by Johannes Kramer. Image taken from the Beazley Archive Pottery Database (<https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/B5FEA88A-4C6C-4E85-A268-282FF82EC27E>).*

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### OVERVIEW

#### Course Information

*Where/When* see Brightspace / W 2.30-5.30

*Instructor* Il-Kweon Sir

*E-Mail*

*Office*

*Student Hours* Fridays 10.30-11.30 am and by appointment.

Please come to student hours (also called “office hours”)! They exist to help you – both regarding this course and for your broader academic development. Drop in if you have questions, but also if you want to talk to me about anything!

*Course Website* see Brightspace

#### Course Description and Objectives

What are we going to do with Greek lyric? The history of Greek lyric scholarship is marked by watershed moments of change in methodology and ideology, spurred by the discovery of new texts: since the first publications of lyric texts on papyri, the field has been gripped successively by Romantic naïveté, teleological theories of *Geistesgeschichte*, the sociological-anthropological paradigm and its historicist and performance-oriented approaches, and the latest so-called “literary turn”. At the same time, Greek lyric has been and continues to be central to the study and contextualisation of early Greek history and language. This is an exciting time to be “in” Greek lyric: in 2024, we are at another methodological juncture, where scholars have dug in their ideological heels in the face of uncertainty about which (as yet unproposed?) model will emerge supreme (though one wonders if supremacy is desirable). Beyond resisting the idea of a single way of approaching Greek lyric, this course has twin goals: (1) to become intimately familiar with Greek lyric poetry,

and (2) to arrive at potential answers to the question “Where is Greek lyric heading?” by asking “What can Greek lyric offer contemporary Classicists?” through an examination of the interests and benefits of different methodological and ideological perspectives, using primarily Sappho and Alcaeus as our textual “sandbox”. Throughout the course, we will consider what Greek lyric can offer for different sub-disciplines in Classics, approaching the materials as textual critics, literary critics, anthropologists, historians, archaeologists; assignments will reflect the diverse disciplinary interests of the participants.

### Required Books

The following two editions will be the set texts for Sappho and Alcaeus. They are frighteningly expensive: you do not need to buy them. I will make both available for consultation in my office (when I am in) and make sure you have copies of necessary fragments.

- C. Neri, *Saffo. Testimonianze e frammenti. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento* (Berlin/Boston, 2021).
- G. Liberman, *Alcée. Fragments* (Paris, 1999).

In addition to the texts of Sappho and Alcaeus, we will read and study texts from the following books. These are more affordable; you do not need to buy them, but I will expect you to dip into them regularly:

- F. Budelmann, *Greek Lyric. A Selection* (Cambridge, 2018).
- W. Allan, *Greek Elegy and Iambus. A Selection* (Cambridge, 2019).
- W. H. Race, *Pindar. Olympian Odes, Pythian Odes* (Cambridge, MA, 1997).

The Loeb editions of Greek Lyric, Elegy, and Iambus are excellent and should be consulted regularly.

## COURSE STRUCTURE AND EVALUATION

### Grading Structure

	Percentage	Components	Timings
Participation	20%	= presentations (10%) + class discussion (10%)	Throughout the term
Examination	10%	= 2 translations + 1 “commentary”	In-class on Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> November
“New Approaches” Project	30%	Project presentation	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> December (titles should be submitted to me at least 1 week before)
Final Project	40%	= research paper (30%) + related research communication/outreach exercise (10%)	Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> December 11.59 pm (titles should be submitted to me by Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> November)

### Assessment Details

#### *Participation*

This is a discussion-based seminar course. The success of the class discussions depends largely on the level of your preparation and willingness to participate. You will be assessed on your class presentations and on the level of participation and engagement in class discussions.

Presentation: This need not be fancy, though a handout would be very welcome. It should be an informal talk of 10 minutes on the topic or texts in the schedule. You are not expected to offer a

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University of Western Ontario

definitive overview or answer, but to present the central ideas to act as a conversation-starter. Though the presentation should be informed by scholarship, please don't be afraid to offer your own "take", bring in material not on the syllabus, or use humour – all these will be highly appreciated by your classmates and by me! Your presentation will be assessed on clarity, originality, and argumentation. We will agree on a schedule for presentations in the first week.

Class Discussions: Although only some people will present in each class, I will expect everyone to have (1) read the primary texts for the week, (2) read the suggested scholarship, and (3) thought carefully about the presentation topics. This means, I will expect everyone – regardless of whether you were the presenter or not – to be able to engage with the presentation, interact with the arguments made in class, and contribute your opinions.

*Examination*

There will be a 2-hour exam in class on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November. This exam will consist of 2 translations and 1 "commentary", where each translation and commentary will be worth the same. There will be a choice of passages both for translations and for comment. Passages for translation and comment will be selected from:

- Budelmann's and Allan's Green & Yellow editions;
- Pindar's *Olympian* 1 and *Pythian* 9 from Race's Loeb.

*"New Approaches" Project*

In our final seminar (Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December), each student will give a 20-minute presentation to the class on a new approach they would like to consider for application to Greek lyric studies. It doesn't need to be a whole new theory or a paradigm-shifting idea, but it could be the application of Greek lyric to an area that could be improved by it, or bringing in methodologies or theories from other areas of Classics/disciplines/fields, or developing existing approaches, or thinking of a new topic within Greek lyric. I expect to be really generous here: the emphasis is on learning how to come up with a new research project. Try to treat the presentation as a friendly conference talk: it should be a performance and include a PowerPoint, and a handout. Titles of the presentation should be sent to me at least by the penultimate seminar (27<sup>th</sup> November), though earlier is encouraged.

*Final Project*

The final project comprises a research paper and a related research communication/outreach exercise. Both are due on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December.

Research Paper: This should be a 5000-word essay including footnotes (I will read up to another 500 words) on a topic of interest to you: this means you should choose an approach that suits you and your area of study (e.g. if you are an archaeologist, you might do an essay on the relationship between the portrayal of X in Greek lyric and on Greek vase paintings or an essay discussing papyri as archaeological artefacts or how archaeological research can shed new light on the poetry). I only ask that you include at least some literary discussion of the Greek lyric text: literary interpretation should benefit your topic and vice versa. Please consult with me to formulate an appropriate essay title; you should have a final essay title by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November.

Research Communication/Outreach Exercise: It is a crucial skill to communicate your research to those beyond your field and to the general public (remember: the public often funds our research and should be able to access the new knowledge created). You can decide the format of this research

communication/outreach exercise, but it should explain the topic, findings, and significance of the research you did for your research paper and it should be short, sweet, and aimed at a lay audience. Potential formats include a podcast episode (approximately 15 minutes solo or 20 minutes in conversation), a YouTube-style video, an outreach talk delivered to an imaginary group of high-school students, or a detailed teaching-plan for a guest lecture to undergraduates.

### SCHEDULE

N.B. An annotated general bibliography for the whole course and a week-by-week bibliography for readings will be distributed separately.

#### Week 1 (Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Sept)

##### **The Kinds of Greek Lyric**

Presentation 1: “What is Greek Lyric?”

Presentation 2: “Genres in Greek Lyric”

Texts for translation in class: Alcman, Alcaeus, Sappho, Anacreon in Budelmann

#### Week 2 (Wed 18<sup>th</sup> Sept)

##### **Lyric and its Sources**

Presentation 1: “How do the sources of lyric affect our understanding of lyric?”

Presentation 2: “The Cologne Sappho”

Presentation 3: “Alcaeus fr. 347”

Texts for translation in class: Stesichorus, Ibycus, Simonides in Budelmann; Callinus, Mimnermus in Allan

#### Week 3 (Wed 25<sup>th</sup> Sept)

##### **Lyric and Language**

Presentation 1: “The Lesbian Dialect of Sappho and Alcaeus”

Presentation 2: “The Doric Dialects of Lyric”

Presentation 3: “The Ionic Dialects of Lyric”

Texts for translation in class: Pindar’s *Olympian* 1 and *Pythian* 9 in Race; Hipponax, Solon in Allan

#### Week 4 (Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct)

##### **Lyric and History**

Presentation 1: “Greek Lyric Fragments in Herodotus”

Presentation 2: “Tyrants in Greek Lyric”

Presentation 3: “Reconstructing Mytilenean History in the Archaic Period”

Texts for translation in class: Archilochus, Tyrtaeus, Semonides, Xenophanes, Theognis, Simonides in Allan

#### Week 5 (Wed 9<sup>th</sup> Oct)

##### **Lyric and Anthropology: Poets and their “Groups”**

Presentation 1: “Private and Public: the Symposium and the Festival contexts”

Presentation 2: “Sappho and her Audience”

Presentation 3: “Alcaeus and his Audience”

### FALL READING WEEK

#### Week 6 (Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct)

**Lyric beyond Anthropology**

Presentation 1: “Poet and Autobiography”

Presentation 2: “Lyric as Event”

Presentation 3: “Performance and Reperformance”

**Week 7 (Wed 30<sup>th</sup> Oct)**

**Lyric beyond Lyric**

Presentation 1: “Lyric in Tragedy: Euripides’ *Medea*”

Presentation 2: “Lyric in Theocritus’ *Id.* 28-30”

Presentation 3: “Lyric Personalities: Sappho on Vases”

**Week 8 (Wed 6<sup>th</sup> Nov)**

**Lyric beyond the Text: Textual Criticism as Creation and Interpretation**

Presentation 1: Alcaeus fr. 50

Presentation 2: Alcaeus fr. 38A

Presentation 3: Alcaeus fr. 45

[FRI 8<sup>th</sup> NOV: TITLES FOR FINAL PROJECT ESSAY DUE]

**Week 9 (Wed 13<sup>th</sup> Nov)**

**Lyric and Aesthetics I: To be Lyric**

Presentation 1: Review of Culler

Presentation 2: “Lyric and Narrative”

Presentation 3: “Lyric beyond Utility: Appeal and Pleasure”

**Week 10 (Wed 20<sup>th</sup> Nov)**

**Lyric and Aesthetics II: Emotion**

Presentation 1: “Love and Passion in Sappho”

Presentation 2: “Anger in Alcaeus”

Presentation 3: “Whose emotion is it anyway?”

**Week 11 (Wed 27<sup>th</sup> Nov)**

**IN-CLASS EXAM (1.5 hrs)**

Presentation by IKS: “The Lyric Experience”

[WED 27<sup>th</sup> NOV: TITLES FOR “NEW APPROACHES” PROJECT PRESENTATIONS DUE]

**Week 12 (Wed 4<sup>th</sup> Dec)**

**Lyric and the Future**

**“NEW APPROACHES” PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

[FRI 6<sup>th</sup> DEC: FINAL PROJECT DUE]

**POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Content Notice and Etiquette**

This is a discussion-based class, which can only succeed in a safe and inclusive community that learns from the many different perspectives of its participants. Ancient Greek poetry often treats many topics which affected the daily life of people (ancient and modern) – including death, violence, sex and gender, sexuality,

race, and age – in ways that appear to us to be insensitive or offensive. All participants must be respectful of others in the classroom. If you ever feel that the classroom environment is affecting your participation and learning in a negative way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

### **Religious Accommodation**

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at: <https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

### **Accessibility and Accommodation Policies**

I am committed to teaching a course that is fully inclusive of all students. Please let me know as soon as possible if you foresee or encounter any barriers and we will determine if there are any adjustments or accommodations that can be implemented. I am open to creative solutions and to work with you.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf).

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity policies are about equity. Academic writing is a product of labour and so appropriating others' work without credit or attribution is theft. You can also see plagiarism as a form of censorship as incorrect citation or omission of authorship can amount to the silencing of scholarly perspectives and identity.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf). You are responsible for knowing and avoiding misconduct.

I encourage you to make sure you understand and know how to avoid plagiarism before submitting any work for assessment. The University offers an Academic Integrity Tutorial for Undergraduate Students on OWL; students who complete the tutorial will earn a certificate: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/dc11302e-3b48-41b2-bdf6-05a2d96c86cc>. Western Libraries also offers resources on plagiarism: <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>.

I do not mind which referencing system you use as long as it is consistent and complete. I suggest using the style of a respected journal in our field, such as *Phoenix* or *TAPA*. The Western Libraries website offers handy guides to citation styles: <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/essayhelp/index.html>.

### **Statement on the Use of Plagiarism-Checking Software**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com

(<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Use of AI**

In this course, the use of AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT) are strictly prohibited for the purposes of gathering information or generating ideas: not only do such uses of AI tools go against and hinder the aims of this course, but the issues of large language models fabricating (or “hallucinating”) facts and sources are also well known, making them unhelpful as sources of information in an academic setting. For what it’s worth, no essay that I have generated using ChatGPT as a test case (even with further prompts) seemed likely to achieve a B grade, even at the undergraduate level. AI tools (e.g. Grammarly, or ChatGPT with commands such as “reword”) may only be used to edit work in a limited way (e.g. to check grammar or as a thesaurus) – that is, they may only be used as a linguistic aid; they may not be used to produce partial or entire drafts and they may not be used to generate, inspire, or alter your argument in any way. (A very limited exception is the use of AI image tools to create humorous images for illustrative purposes – for example, memes – in informal presentations, as long as the use of AI is acknowledged; these cases are clearly contributing to the presentation of your thinking and not replacing thinking.)

### **Absences and Extensions**

If medical accommodations due to mental or physical health issues become necessary, please contact me, your supervisor, and the Graduate Chair.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Mental Health Support**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **Gender-based and sexual violence**

Western University is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

### **Learning Development and Success**

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.