



A ROMAN ROADS MEDIA *Video Course*

Old Western Culture

A Christian Approach to the Great Books

THE GREEKS

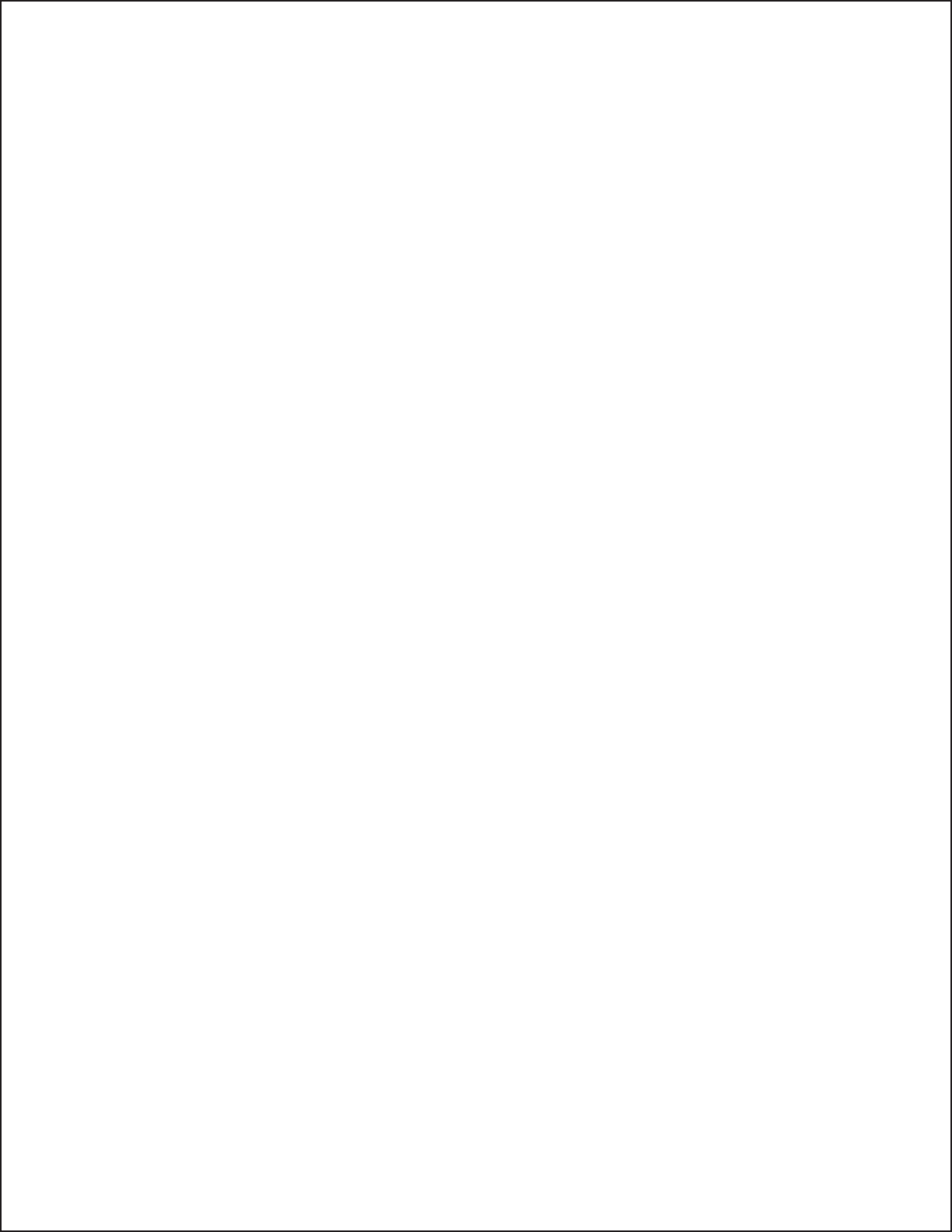
THE EPICS

The Poems of Homer



Wesley Callihan

Teacher Edition





Old Western Culture

A Christian Approach to the Great Books

Year 1: The Greeks

Unit 1

The Epics

The Poems of Homer



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Please Note: *This workbook may be periodically updated, expanded, or revised.
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ABOUT ROMAN ROADS MEDIA



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Roman Roads combines its technical expertise with the experience of established authorities in the field of classical education to create quality video resources tailored to the homeschooler. Just as the first century roads of the Roman Empire were the physical means by which the early church spread the gospel far and wide, so Roman Roads Media uses today's technology to bring timeless truth, goodness, and beauty into your home. By combining clear instruction with visual aids and examples, we help inspire in your children a lifelong love of learning. As homeschool graduates themselves, our producers know the value of excellent educational tools, and strive to ensure that Roman Roads' materials are of the highest caliber.

ABOUT OLD WESTERN CULTURE

Old Western Culture: A Christian Approach to the Great Books is an integrated humanities course designed to give students an overview of Western culture by studying the great books from a Christian perspective. The video series consists of four courses, designed to be completed over four years:

Year 1: The Greeks

- Unit 1: The Epics—The Poems of Homer
- Unit 2: Drama and Lyric—The Tragedies, Comedies, and Minor Poems
- Unit 3: The Histories—Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon
- Unit 4: The Philosophers—Aristotle and Plato

Year 2: The Romans

Currently under development

Year 3: Christendom

Currently under development

Year 4: The Moderns

Currently under development



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Introduction and Overview

If you could take only ten books to a deserted island on which you were to be marooned for the rest of your life, what would they be? As Mortimer Adler says, this is no game—we are all in precisely that position. We are simply unable to read all the books there are; therefore, we had better choose well. Some books exercise our minds by their rigor and move our spirits by their beauty with every reading. Some books help us communicate with our culture because they have been a common element in education for centuries. Some books aid our understanding of the physical world by a clear exposition of careful observations by powerful minds. But only a very few books do any of these things well. And as C. S. Lewis says, old books give us a radically different perspective on life and our assumptions, and no modern books can do this at all, no matter how good they are.

As Christians, we understand that ours is a historical faith, one that originated, developed, and grew in certain times at certain places. To study and understand the long stream of history and thought and to comprehend our place in that stream is to increase our appreciation of our cultural inheritance, our ability to use wisely and build faithfully upon that inheritance, and our ability to understand and respond to God's work in history.



"A Reading of Homer," Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1885

The conclusion we may draw from all of this is that the old books are best, and the best of the old books are the best of all. That is why we read the great books. Join us in Old Western Culture as we explore the best of the old books from a Christian perspective!

ABOUT THE COURSE PRESENTER



Dani and Wes Callihan

Wesley Callihan grew up on a farm in Idaho and earned a bachelor's in history from the University of Idaho in 1983. He has taught at Logos School, the University of Idaho, and New St. Andrews College (all in Moscow, Idaho) and at Veritas Academy in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He has written curriculum for a number of Christian Schools, including several members of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools. Veritas Press has published his great books study guides for homeschoolers. Mr. Callihan speaks regularly at conferences for classical Christian educators in home and private schools and teaches summer intensive Latin courses. He has written columns and short fiction for *Credenda/Agenda* and *Antithesis*, and contributed



to the book *Classical Education and the Home School*, published by Canon Press. In 1997 Mr. Callihan launched Schola Classical Tutorials, a program of live internet courses in the great books and the classical languages, as another ongoing contribution to the growing classical Christian education movement.

Wes and his wife, Dani, have six children, four of them married, and six grandchildren. Wes and Dani and the two remaining kids live near Wes's parents in an old farmhouse in northern Idaho, where they all use the cold winters as an excuse to read and the hot summers as another excuse to read.



The Callihan Clan

HOW TO USE THIS COURSE

Old Western Culture: A Christian Approach to the Great Books is primarily designed to be a four-year, double-credit Literature and Social Studies course. Each year of *Old Western Culture* is divided into four quarters. We recommend spending eight weeks to complete each quarter. This would mean watching two lectures each week and completing the accompanying reading and writing assignments from the workbook. The last two weeks of each quarter are reserved for studying for the final exam and writing a term paper. We expect the average student to spend two to three hours per day on this course, which includes watching the lectures, completing the assigned readings, and answering the workbook questions.

The units that make up *Old Western Culture* may also be used individually as one-quarter electives, or to complement another course of study.

ABOUT THE “GREAT BOOKS” TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The Epics uses two primary texts: *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Wesley Callihan recommends the translations by Richmond Lattimore. Quotations from the text and line references throughout the course and workbook reference the line numbers of Lattimore's translation. However these particular translations are not required. If you own a different version of either book, feel free to use it. Free online versions of these and other classics are also readily available. Lattimore's translations of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* may also be purchased for e-readers at a reasonable price from online retailers.

A NOTE ABOUT SPELLING

You may notice a lot of variation in the spelling of the Greek proper nouns. Most of these variations are the result of different transliterations based on either the Latin or the Greek spellings. For example, most of the painting titles reference names transliterated from Latin, while the student workbook uses Richmond Lattimore's transliterations, which are based on the Greek spellings. An example would be Achilles, whose name we may be more used to seeing spelled Achilles. While this may throw you off the first time you hear it, most of the names are similar enough that you will readily recognize who is being referenced. Both variations are acceptable and students are free to use whichever they prefer.

TERM PAPER

Producing a term paper at the end of each quarter of *Old Western Culture* is a good way for the student to internalize what he or she has learned over the term. The lists of discussion topics at the end of each lesson in the student workbook is a good place to look for paper topics. For those using our grading service we will also send a list of suggested term paper topics. Students should also feel free to come up with their own original topics as long as they are based on the term's lectures or reading. We recommend a paper length of 750–1,200 words.

THE EXAM

The Epics includes a final term exam; however, we do not include it on this DVD because we want the exam to remain fresh and updated. Go to www.romanroadsmedia.com/old-western-culture-exams to download the most recent version of the exam. If you are using our grading service we will send you an exam.


GRADING

If you have purchased the Roman Roads grading service (see website for details) then you will get a grade for each term exam (four per year), a grade for each term paper (four per year), and a final report card at the end of the year.

MATURE CONTENT ADVISORY

Old Western Culture is intended for mature and discerning students. We recommend that your child not start this course before the age of fourteen, even if he or she is advanced in reading. The course deals with mature themes such as paganism, sexual immorality, detailed battle descriptions (mostly in actual reading), and nudity in art. *Old Western Culture* is meant to equip your child with a biblical lens through which to process these themes. We assume your child has a working knowledge of the Bible and basic Christian doctrine. For more information on a Christian perspective on nudity in art, see “The Art” tab on www.romanroadsmedia.com/store/the-epics.php.

INTERACTIVE DVD MENU

You will notice that many of the study questions are marked with this image: , which indicates that they are directly answered in the lecture. Each DVD contains a submenu labeled “Study Questions” where you will find these questions hyperlinked to the relevant scenes in the lecture.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A list of additional resources is kept up to date at www.romanroadsmedia.com/old-western-culture-extras.



Lesson 1

Introduction to Old Western Culture

READING ASSIGNMENT

No reading this week. Don't get lazy.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. According to C. S. Lewis, why should we read old books? ●

In his essay "On the Reading of Old Books," C. S. Lewis says that by reading old books we keep "the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds." Old books often challenge the basic assumptions that we inevitably share with our peers and are often unaware that we have. The authors of old books may have serious errors and shortcomings, but probably not the same shortcomings and mistakes that we have.

2. What does Mr. Callihan mean by "a syncretistic approach to the discovery of truth"? ●

By "a syncretistic approach to the discovery of truth," Mr. Callihan means the attempt to arrive at truth by "triangulating" the ideas of the great books as we listen to the collective voices that make up the "Great Conversation" of ideas throughout history.

3. How does the Christian approach to truth differ from the "syncretistic approach"? ●

A Christian approach to truth recognizes that we can learn valuable things from listening to "The Great Conversation," but this is not the source of truth. A Christian looks to God's revelation as the source of truth, and then analyzes and interprets "The Great Conversation" in the light and context of revelation.

4. Why is there an 800-year gap between St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas in most modern great books collections? ●

Most modern great books collections contain a roughly 800- to 900-year gap that omits many works from the so-called "dark ages." Much of this period was an age of faith, and therefore deemed "dark" by enlightenment standards.

5. What three works of architecture, philosophy, and poetry does Mr. Callihan identify as crowning achievements of the High Middle Ages? ●

Mr. Callihan cites the development of Gothic architecture, Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologica and Dante's Divine Comedy as three crowning achievements of the High Middle Ages.

6. What are some of the great books or authors ignored by Adler? ●

Mortimer Adler's Great Books series ignores Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy, Bede's Early History of the English People, the Rule of St. Benedict, Anselm's theological works (Proslogion, Cur Deus Homo), famous hagiographies, etc. All of these were considered important until just a few hundred years ago.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What distinguishes great book or classic from other books? What are some books published in the last thirty years or so that you think are great books? What recently published best sellers will not be classics, and why?
2. Why is the popular phrase "instant classic" a misnomer?
3. Should the Bible be included in our great books lists? Why or why not?

ASSIGNMENT

Go through a great books series and make a list of which ones you have read. If your family does not yet have a great books collection, search online for a list of great books, such as the one compiled by Mortimer Adler, and note which of those you have read.



Lesson 2

The Backdrop of *The Iliad*

READING ASSIGNMENT

There is no reading assignment for this lesson.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Where did Homer live? What country is this today? ●

Homer lived in Ionia, which is modern-day Turkey.

2. Why does tradition hold that Homer was blind? ●

It is commonly believed that the blind bard (Demodocus) in Book 8 of The Odyssey is Homer writing himself into the story, a belief that gave rise to the traditional account of Homer as blind poet.

3. What were “The Greek Dark Ages”? ●

The Greek Dark Ages was a period from around 1200 BC to around 800 BC during which literacy all but vanished while stories and learning were transmitted orally by bards.

4. How do we know that Homer received much of the information for his poems from previous generations through oral history? ●

We know that Homer relied heavily on previous generations of oral history because he mentions cities that existed before his time that would have been covered in rubble in his own day. Modern archeology has confirmed the existence and locations of these references.

5. What made the location of Troy strategically powerful? 🎯

Troy's location at the mouth of the Hellespont was strategic from both military and economic perspectives. From a military perspective, it could exercise influence over armies crossing between Asia and Europe. And from an economic perspective, commanding the mouth of the Hellespont meant the ability to levy taxes on ships and commerce.

6. How did Eris, the goddess of discord, work her charms at the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis? Summarize the "Judgment of Paris" episode. How did this set the stage for the Trojan War? 🎯

Eris sows discord at the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis by tossing a golden apple with the inscription "To the Fairest" on the table before Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. Zeus refuses to cast a judgment, but just then a shepherd boy (who turns out to be Paris) stumbles out of the woods and agrees to settle the issue. The three goddesses promise him various favors if he will judge in their favor, but Paris awards the apple to Aphrodite, who promises him the most beautiful woman in the world. The only problem is that the most beautiful woman in the world happens to be Helen, who is married to Menelaos. Paris seduces Helen with the intervention of Aphrodite and brings her back to Troy, sparking the conflict of the Trojan War.

7. How does Odysseus reveal Achilles's disguise? 🎯

Odysseus suspects that the "hairy-armed maiden" is Achilles, so he sets up shop as a traveling salesman and lays out a spread of various silks, cloths, and other pleasantries that attract the serving maids. On top of the stack however, he displays a great sword that Achilles immediately reaches for, giving himself away.



8. What is the cause of the plague in the Greek camp? ●

When the daughter of the priest of Apollo is kidnapped by a Greek raiding party, the priest comes to Agamemnon to ask for his daughter back. Agamemnon sends the priest away with insults, so the priest prays to Apollo who sends a terrible plague on the Greek camp.

9. What is distinctive about Homeric Greek? ●

Homeric Greek was a poetic dialect composed in a high style that was not actually spoken, but was still easily understood. In Homer's day it would have felt like Shakespearean English sounds to us today.

10. What is the meter of the original poem? How would you describe that meter? ●

The Iliad is written in dactylic hexameter, meaning that each line contains six metrical feet, and each foot contains a long syllable followed by two short syllables.

DISCUSSION TOPIC

Why don't we write epic poems today?

ASSIGNMENT

Write your own line of dactylic hexameter.



Lesson 3

The Anger of Achilles

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *The Iliad* Books I-IV.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who is responsible for our current division of *The Iliad* into twenty-four books? ●

The Alexandrian scholars of the third century BC

2. According to the opening lines of the poem, what is the theme of *The Iliad*? ●

The anger of Achilles and its consequences.

3. What is an “epic question”? What is the epic question of *The Iliad*? ●

*An epic question is a question within the exordium (introduction) that sets the plot of the poem in motion. The epic question of *The Iliad* is “What god was it then that set them together in bitter collision?”*

4. What does it mean when we say that *The Iliad* begins in medias res? ●

It means that, like in many movies today, the poem begins in the middle of the story. In medias res is a Latin phrase that literally means “in the middle of the thing,” and denotes the literary technique wherein the relation of a story begins either at the midpoint or at the conclusion, rather than at the beginning.



5. What do we learn about the character of Achilles and of Agamemnon in their quarrel in Book 1.101-303?

Both Achilles and Agamemnon are hotheaded, proud, motivated by honor, and quick to anger.

6. What is the cause of Achilles's quarrel with Agamemnon? ●

Achilles tells Agamemnon that he should appease the wrath of Apollo by returning the daughter of Apollo's priest to her father, a girl Agamemnon received as battle loot. Agamemnon is insulted at this suggestion, considering it a slight to his honor. He threatens (and does in fact later) take Achilles's own battle prize, the girl Briseis. Achilles is enraged at this dishonor.

7. Why is Agamemnon's insult more damaging to Achilles than it would have been to any other Greek? ●

Agamemnon's insult is more damaging to Achilles than it would have been to any other Greek because Achilles knows of the prophecy that says he will either go to war and die with great glory, or stay home to live a long life. By going to war for the sake of great honor, Achilles has already given up the prospect of a long life. But now, his honor, the one thing for which he was willing to give up long life, has been taken from him.

8. According to Thucydides, how large was the Achaian army? ●

According to Thucydides, the Achaian army was approximately 100,000 men.

9. What does Achilles ask his mother to do for him in Book 1.407-412, and why does he ask this?

Achilles asks his mother to request that Zeus punish the Achaians by giving the Trojans victory until they realize that they need him. Achilles asks this so that Agamemnon will regret dishonoring him.

10. In Book 1.446-474, what similarities do you see between the ceremony to Apollo and Old Testament Israel's sacrifices to Yahweh?

Just as in the Old Testament, the ceremony to Apollo included animal and grain offerings sacrificed by fire.

11. In Book 1.493-530, how does Thetis move Zeus to answer her request?

Thetis took a supplicant's pose, left arm hugging Zeus's knees, right hand cupping his chin, and made reference to her son's short life, her usual honor to Zeus, and her own dishonor if he did not grant her request.

12. In the next passage, what is Hera's reaction to Zeus granting Thetis's request?

Hera upbraids Zeus for making plans behind her back to do something that she doesn't like.

13. Through Homer, we see "stock epithets," that is, multi-word adjectives that are almost always attached to a person's name. Here are some examples from Book 1; what do you think they mean, and why might they be appropriate for each person?

a. line 17: "strong-greaved Achaians" *The greaves were part of the Achaian soldier's armor, and to be strong-greaved signifies that the Achaians were well-fitted warriors.*

b. line 195: "Hera the goddess of the white arms" *Hera's epithet denotes her beauty and her status as queen.*

c. line 489: "Achilleus of the swift feet" *This epithet focuses on one strength of Achilles, his speed as a runner.*

d. line 551: "the ox-eyed lady Hera" *Another description of Hera's beauty, identifying her by her big brown eyes.*

e. line 311: "crafty Odysseus" *Odysseus was known for his cunning and persuasive speech.*

f. line 440: "Odysseus of the many designs" *Odysseus was known for his cleverness and cunning when it came to planning things.*



14. Why does Agamemnon tell his troops they should return home (Book 2.72-75)? What is their response (Book 2.142-210)? What do we learn about Odysseus's character in this episode?

Agamemnon wishes to test his troops to see if they want to stay and fight by first offering them the opportunity to flee home. At first, they all take him at his word and run for their ships. However, Odysseus, at Athene's instigation, stops them all with his clever persuasion, and they all go back to their seats around Agamemnon. This episode shows how much power Odysseus wields by his clever persuasion, and also shows that he honors the gods and will act as they command.

15. Why do you think Homer put such long lists of people and places in the last part of Book 2?

The lists provide a way to memorialize and honor those who fought in the war. They also provide a concrete example of the sheer multitude of Greeks gathered for the war (lines 488-492).

16. What solution does Paris propose in Book 3 to end the ten-year war? 🎯

Paris proposes a duel of champions to settle the war.

17. How does the duel proposed by Paris appear to end?

Menelaos comes close to killing Paris multiple times, but in the end Aphrodite carries him out of the duel and back into Troy.

18. How is the truce broken in the first part of Book 4?

Hera persuades Zeus to create discord between Trojans and Greeks once again, and so he sends Athene to convince Pandaros to let an arrow fly at Menelaos, thereby breaking the truce.

19. What specific lines in the episode of Athene and Pandaros suggest that he is just as responsible for his crime as Athene is for provoking it?

Book 4.104 says that Athene "persuaded the fool's heart" in Pandaros.

20. Why does Zeus “need” the war to continue? ●

Zeus intervenes to break the truce and continue the war so that he can keep his promise to Thetis, that he would make the Achaians suffer damages without Achilles and realize their need for him.

21. In Book 4.422-445, what is the contrast between the advance of the Danaan (Achaian) armies and that of the Trojan armies? What is one explanation suggested here for the chaos of the Trojan army?

The Danaan armies march forward, wave after wave, with strength, whereas the Trojan armies mill around like sheep waiting to be milked. One explanation of the meandering confusion of the Trojans is that they share no common tongue, and so lack a means of receiving a command to march together as a unit.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Pandaros breaks the truce, even though it was made by his king, and he never swore to it personally. What does this tell us about the ancient understanding of covenants?
2. The two sides seal the truce with a blood sacrifice. Why do you think blood sacrifices were so common in the ancient world? Why are they less common in modern societies, particularly in Western civilization?
3. How did the ancient Greeks in Homer’s world view honor and pride differently than we do today? How might this be related to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus?



Lesson 4

The First Critical Turning Point

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *The Iliad*, Books V-IX.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What was the ancient name for Book 5 of *The Iliad*? What does the Greek word *aristeia* mean? 

The ancient traditional name for Book 5 of The Iliad was "The Aristeia of Diomedes." "Aristeia" (from the Greek word "aristos," meaning "best") refers to a battle scene in which a hero has his finest moments.

2. Which two gods or goddesses get wounded in the fighting in Book 5? Which side were they fighting on?

Diomedes wounds Aphrodite, who is defending a Trojan, and Ares, who is also fighting for the Trojan side.

3. What effect does it have on our impression of Diomedes when he fights with and wounds gods?

It seems that Diomedes must be a greater warrior than most, if he can fight and wound gods, especially Ares, the god of war.

4. In the following lines are extended similes. (Remember that a simile is a comparison of one thing with another to make the first thing clearer.) For both, what event in the story is the simile making clearer?

a. 5.136-142 *The simile in 5.136-142 describes Diomedes's battle-rage by comparing it to the rage of a wounded lion attacking a flock of sheep.*

b. 5.554-558 *The simile in 5.554-558 explains the death of Orsilochos and Krethon in terms of two young lions (even including information about how Orsilochos and Krethon were raised) who wreak havoc until they in turn are finally killed.*

5. In Book 6.37-65, what difference do we see between the character of Agamemnon and that of Menelaos?

This passage shows that Menelaos could show mercy even when he had just cause to kill his enemy. Agamemnon, on the other hand, would not be willing to spare his enemy.


6. Briefly describe the encounter that takes place in Book 6.119-236. What does this tell you about the code of ethics warriors followed in battle?

Glaukos and Diomedes meet in battle, and before Diomedes fights with Glaukos he asks him for his family background. When Diomedes learns that his own father and Glaukos' father gave each other hospitality in the past, he puts down his spear and says that he will fight the myriad other Trojans but will not fight with Glaukos, the son of his father's guest-friend. But the two men exchange armor as a symbol of their families' undying friendship.

7. What does Hektor's encounter with his wife at the end of Book 6 tell us about his character?

In this encounter, his wife expresses her fear of losing him, and he in turn shows his bravery, not wishing to abandon his men. He also tells his wife that above all else he dreads the thought of the Greeks dragging her to slavery. He would rather fight to the death to protect her.



8. What seventeenth-century poet echoes Hektor's response to Andromache about duty and honor? 


Richard Lovelace echoes the sentiment of Hektor's response in his poem "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars." He concludes with the lines, "I could not love thee, Dear, so much, / Loved I not honour more."

9. What do the golden scales in Book 8.68-74 represent?

The golden scales weigh the fate of the Trojans and the Achaians, and the passage says that the "Achaians' death-day was heaviest."

10. What is the situation of the armies at the end of Book 8 (lines 489-565)?

At the end of the book, nightfall saves the Achaians from complete destruction, and Hektor calls his troops to rest and feast to prepare for the coming dawn, and to build up their fires so that the Achaians cannot go sailing away in the dark.

11. In the epic simile at the end of Book 8, what does Homer compare the Trojan campfires to? 

Homer compares the Trojan campfires to the stars of the night sky (Book 8.555-561).

12. According to Book 9.39, what are the two gifts Zeus gave Agamemnon? How does this explain Agamemnon's frequent inability to make decisions and his readiness to give up the war?

This passage says that Zeus gave Agamemnon a scepter and honor, but he did not give Agamemnon a brave heart. Though Agamemnon has a position of power, he does not have the heart to wield that power.

13. In Book 9, what does Odysseus say to Achilles to try to persuade him to return to battle? How does Achilles respond?

Odysseus tells Achilles how badly the Trojans have beaten the Achaians back to the ships and tells him that he is their last hope before complete destruction. Odysseus reminds Achilles that his father had warned him to watch out for his anger, to avoid quarrels that would cloud his judgment. Odysseus also lists the many gifts that Agamemnon has offered to Achilles to try to restore the honor due him. Odysseus appeals to Achilles to have mercy at least for the Achaians' sake, even if he cannot forgive Agamemnon, and promises Achilles great honor among the Achaians for his battle prowess.

14. Why does Achilles reject Agamemnon's offer of restoration? What does Agamemnon offer Achilles? Is Agamemnon's offer reasonable?

Agamemnon offers Achilles a tremendous share of treasure, a third of his own kingdom back home, and the hand of his daughter in marriage—a very reasonable offer of restoration by any standard. Achilles rejects the offer, not because it isn't sufficient, but because his bitterness has taken such deep root that he does not want restoration on any terms.

15. In Book 9, what does Diomedes say about Achilles to Agamemnon when the ambassadors return unsuccessfully?

Diomedes says that Agamemnon's request to proud Achilles has only driven him deeper into his unforgiving pride. Diomedes's speech also foreshadows Achilles's return to battle, saying that he will return in his own time, when his own heart cannot hold onto pride any longer.



DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. In Book 8, Zeus weighs the fates of the Trojans and the Achaians, and finds that “the Achaians’ death-day was heaviest.” (Book 8.73) What does this episode with the scales seem to tell us about the relationship between Zeus and fate? Is Zeus bound by fate? Does he “have his thumb on the scales”?
2. In *The City of God*, St. Augustine says that pride is the defining characteristic of the City of Man. (City of God, Book 24) In this sense, how is *The Iliad* a pagan commentary on the City of Man?
3. While Agamemnon’s offer of restoration was extremely generous, it was entirely material in substance. Do you think Agamemnon was trying to “buy Achilles off,” or would the extravagant offer itself amount to a public restoration of honor?



Lesson 5

The Deception of Zeus

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *The Iliad* Books X-XV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is Diomedes happy to have Odysseus as a companion on the spying raid? 

Diomedes is happy to go on the spying raid with Odysseus because Athena loves Odysseus, and because Odysseus is renowned for his cunning.

2. In Book 10.319-327, why does Dolon volunteer for the Trojan spying expedition?

He says that his own heart and proud spirit urge him to go be a spy for Hektor, for he desired to win the renowned horses and chariot of Achilles as his prize.

3. Who kills Dolon? Why?

Odysseus promises Dolon safety in exchange for intelligence regarding the Trojan positions. Diomedes, however, slaughters him anyway for fear that Dolon would give away information about the Achaians if he got back to his people.

4. Which Achaian heroes are wounded in Book 11?

In Book 11, Asaios, Antonoos, Opites, Dolops, Opheltios, Agelaos, Aisymnos, Oros, and Hipponoos are wounded.



5. When Thetis asked Zeus to make the Achaians lose for a little while, it was a simple request, and Zeus said that he would grant it. Why is the fulfillment of his promise so intermittent and sporadic? ●

Zeus is sporadic in keeping his promise because he keeps getting distracted. He is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, so as soon as he turns his attention away from the plains of Troy, other factors come into play.

6. What is Nestor's idea for Patroklos? ●

Nestor tells Patroklos that he should ask Achilles to borrow his armor and lead the Myrmidons into battle, the very sight of which would terrorize and demoralize the Trojans.

7. How does Poseidon rally the Achaians in Book 13?

Poseidon rallies the Achaians by taking on the form of Kalchas, who spurs on the Aiantes, striking them with his staff to fill them with "powerful valor" and lighten their limbs and hands.

8. In Book 14, what does Agamemnon advise in the council of wounded heroes in the face of their setback? Who responds and how?

Agamemnon counsels the men to retreat into the ships closest to the water and wait until nightfall to rescue the rest of the ships, thereby making their escape. Odysseus then chides Agamemnon for advice that he calls ruinous.

9. Why is the dysfunctional marriage of Hera and Zeus particularly ironic? ●

The dysfunctional marriage between Zeus and Hera is particularly ironic because Hera is the goddess of the wedding vow.

10. In Book 15 when Zeus wakes and sees what is happening, of what punishment does he remind Hera?

Zeus asks Hera if she remembers "that time you hung from high and on your feet / I slung two anvils, and about your hands drove a golden / chain, unbreakable. You among the clouds and the bright sky / hung, nor could the gods about tall Olympus endure it / and stood about, but could not set you free."

11. In an epic simile at the end of Book 15, what does Homer compare Aias to as he jumps from deck to deck of the Achaian ships?

Homer compares him to an "expert rider of horses" who acrobatically jumps from horse to horse as they gallop.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. What do you think of Homer's portrayal of the gods? Are their problems loftier or pettier than those of men? Why do you think this might be?
2. In *The Iliad* Books 10-15, Odysseus interacts with multiple characters. What do these interactions tell you about Odysseus' own character?



Lesson 6

The Second Critical Turning Point

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *The Iliad* Books XVI-XXI.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Under what condition does Achilles agree to let Patroklos wear his armor? What two reasons does Achilles give for the stipulation?

Achilles lets Patroklos wear his armor under the condition that he return to the camp after driving the Trojans back from the ships, and not attack Troy or even drive the Trojans back to the city, because it might rob Achilles of glory. He also says that Apollo loves and protects the Trojans, and he wouldn't want Patroklos to die assaulting the city.

2. What is Achilles's prayer to Zeus in Book 16.233-248, and how does Zeus answer?

Achilles prays, "Let glory...go forth with [Patroklos], / make brave the heart inside his breast, so that even Hektor / will find out whether our henchman knows how to fight his battles / by himself..." (Book 16.241-244).

3. Why is it significant that Patroklos kills Sarpedon? (Remember whose son he is.)

Zeus answers Achilles's request to make Patroklos's heart brave, to give him victory as he pushes the Trojans back from the Achaian ships, and in the battle, Zeus's own son Sarpedon dies by Patroklos's sword.

4. In Book 16 as Patroklos lies dying, who does he say really killed him?

As he lies dying, Patroklos says that "deadly destiny" from the hands of Zeus and Apollo have killed him, and that even among men, it was Euphorbos who gave the crippling blow. "You are only my third slayer," he tells Hektor.

5. In Book 17, what does Menelaos do when he sees Patroklos fall at the hands of the Trojans? Does he succeed? What happens during the greater part of this book? Which side finally claims the body of Patroklos?

Menelaos stands over Patroklos's body and protects it from the Trojans. The battle lines meet for a long time over Patroklos's body, with the Trojans sometimes pushing the Achaians back, while the Achaians do their best to hold fast. Athene and Apollo choose sides and help the opposing armies, and finally Menelaos sends a messenger to Achilles himself with the news that Patroklos is dead. In a last-ditch effort, the Achaians take Patroklos's body up on their shoulders and make a guarded retreat back to the ships.

6. Patroklos dies as a result of breaking his promise to Achilles. Would Achilles himself have kept such a promise though?

Achilles knows that he would never have kept such a promise himself. A warrior would always pursue his advantage when he has his enemy on the run.

7. Mention four things which Aias does to help the Achaians in Book 17.

First, Aias helps Menelaos guard Patroklos's body from Hektor. Second, when the Trojans try to drag away the body, Aias kills Hippothoos, who has Patroklos by the foot. Third Aias identifies to the others that Zeus has helped the Trojans and suggests that someone run and tell Achilles what has happened to his companion. Fourth, Aias (Telamonian) and the other Aias (Son of Oileus) form a rear guard to protect Menelaos and Meriones while they carry the body of Patroklos out of the battle.



8. What does Achilles compare his own bitterness to? ●

In Book 18:108 Achilles says, "...and gall, which makes a man grow angry for all his great mind, / that gall of anger that swarms like smoke inside of a man's heart / and becomes a thing sweeter to him by far than the dripping of honey."

9. How does Achilles's own description of his bitterness help us make sense of his rejection of Agamemnon's first offer of restoration? ●

When Achilles describes his own bitterness that has become "sweeter to him than the dripping of honey," we realize that Achilles's anger was no longer about a public restoration of honor. His bitterness had grown so deep that he could not let go of it, not matter what Agamemnon offered him.

10. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, what metaphor is used to describe bitterness that is a revealing portrayal of Achilles's condition? ●

In Hebrews 12:14-15, bitterness is compared to a root in the ground that springs up and defiles many.

11. What does Thetis do for Achilles in Book 18? ●

Thetis has the smith god Hephaestus (Vulcan) make new armor, including an especially famous shield, for Achilles.

12. In Book 18, how does Achilles help the Achaians even before receiving his new armor?

Achilles stands in view of the Trojans and shouts a battle cry. With the help of Athene, he appears and sounds so terrifying that the Trojans quake with fear.

13. If we think of the Shield of Achilles as an epic simile, what does it tell us about life in Homer's day? What kinds of things receive attention?

The shield depicts two cities from Homer's day. In one of these cities we catch a glimpse of bridal ceremonies lit by flaming torches and accompanied by song and dance as well as a legal proceeding with an arbitrator and finally a jury of elders to decide how the case should end. In another city we see a siege and the deliberations of war, and also of the gods represented in gold and much larger than the men around them. The shield depicts the ploughing of fields, the reaping of harvests, the herding of cattle, the pasturing of flocks. It depicts a dance attended by young men and women, happy and in the prime of life. The shield gives us a picture of war-time and peace, of farming and festivals, weddings and wars.

14. Book 19.290-300: Why does Briseis weep for Patroklos? What had he promised her, and why might that have been a comfort to her?

Briseis weeps because Patroklos had comforted her with promises of making her Achilles's lawfully wedded wife when they returned home. This promise meant for her that she would not simply serve Achilles as a slave, but would have the rights and station of the wife of a Greek hero.

15. Book 20.293-308: Why does Poseidon save Aineias? What is his destiny?

Poseidon saves Aineias because he is guiltless and gives gifts that are pleasing to the gods. Also, Aineias is destined to carry on as the survivor of the people of Dardanos (the Trojans), for though Zeus had doomed the family of Priam, he still did not wish the whole Trojan race to die out.

16. In Book 21, how is Achilles saved from the river?

Achilles appeals to Zeus for help and Poseidon and Athene come to his aid, telling him, "it is not your destiny to be killed by the river" (Book 21.291).



DISCUSSION TOPIC

In what sense is Achilles's description of his own bitterness an interpretive key to understanding *The Iliad*?



Lesson 7

The Death of Hektor

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *The Iliad* Books XXII-XXIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How are Achilles and Hektor compared in Book 22.158?

Homer says, "It was a great man who fled [Hektor], but greater far better he who pursued him [Achilleus]."

2. What god and goddess interfere in the battle between Achilles and Hektor? What do they do? 🎧

Athena impersonates Hektor's brother, Deiphobos, telling him that he will stand and fight beside him. When both heroes throw their spears and miss each other, Apollo disappears from Hektor's side, leaving him to face Achilles alone, and returns a spear to Achilles.

3. In Book 22, how does Andromache hear of Hektor's death?

Andromache heard sounds of mourning in the city and ran out to the wall. There she saw Hektor being dragged by horses around the city.

4. Diagram the chiasmic structure of the six speeches from the walls of Troy. 🎧

A: Hektor's speech

B: Hekabe's speech

C: Priam's speech

C': Priam's speech

B': Hekabe's speech

A': Andromache's speech



5. Why was it so important that Patroklos's body receive a proper burial? ●

The spirit of Patroklos comes to Achilles requesting a proper burial because the Greeks believed that your soul could not rest comfortably in the land of the dead if your body did not receive proper burial.

6. In Book 23, what things are involved in the funeral rites for Patroklos?

The Myrmidons drove their horses three times around Patroklos body, and they wept. They proclaimed a funeral chant and Achilles made promises to avenge his dead friend. They ate a funeral feast, slept, and then created a pyre out of logs for Patroklos's body. They wrapped his body in animal fat and placed the slaughtered animals to burn beside Patroklos. When the fire had burned all night, they put out the fire and gathered Patroklos's bones and put them in a jar. Then the men participated in funeral games in Patroklos's honor.

7. At the end of Book 23, is the anger of Achilles finally sated after the death of Hektor and burial of Patroklos? ●

Even after killing Hektor and burying Patroklos, the anger of Achilles burns on. He continues to drag the body of Hektor around and around the beach.

8. What do the gods tell Priam to do in Book 24? ●

The gods tell Priam to go to the Achaians' camp and ask Achilles for the body of Hektor.

9. Describe Priam's journey to Achilles's camp.

Priam took ransom gifts in a mule cart and rode behind in his chariot towards the Achaian ships. Zeus helped Priam to enter through the walls of the Achaian encampment and Priam goes straight to Achilles's shelter.

10. What posture does Priam assume before Achilles? ●

Priam assumes the position of a suppliant, bowing before Achilles and kissing his hands.

11. What is Fatalism? ●

Fatalism is a doctrine that events are fixed in advance so that human beings are powerless to change them.

12. What is nihilism? ●

Nihilism is a doctrine that denies any objective ground of truth and especially of moral truths.

13. What is existentialism? ●

Existentialism is the philosophical and cultural movement which holds that the starting point of philosophical thinking must be the experiences of the individual.

14. How does the last book of *The Iliad* end?

The Iliad ends with the funeral of Hektor.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. What is the relationship between human free will and the will of the gods in *The Iliad*? Are humans responsible for their actions? Whom does Hektor credit with his death?
2. How is Priam's supplication of Achilles different than Agamemnon's offer of reconciliation?
3. Do you think Homer's worldview leads to despair? Why or why not?



Lesson 8

The Telemachy

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *The Odyssey* Books I-IV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why do some scholars propose that *The Odyssey* was composed by a woman? ●

Some scholars have suggested that The Odyssey was composed not just by a different poet than the Iliad, but by a woman. They point to the softer touch of The Odyssey in such things as the emphasis on nature, animals, and domestic life, as well as the sympathetic portrayal and perhaps identification with the princess Nausikaa. Tradition has always held that the same poet, Homer, composed both works.

2. What is the old meaning of a “comedy”? ●

A comedy is a story with a happy ending, often culminating in a wedding celebration.

3. How is *The Odyssey* a “romance” in the old sense of the word? ●

The Odyssey is a romance in the old sense of the word because it is an adventure story.

4. Why are there fewer epic similes in *The Odyssey* than in *The Iliad*? ●

There are fewer epic similes in The Odyssey because all of the background is more in focus, especially the natural world.

5. What is the chief characteristic of Odysseus in both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*? ●

Odysseus is a man of "mind" (Greek word "nous"). He is intelligent, thoughtful, clever, and circumspect.

6. What stock epithet is used to describe Penelope in *The Odyssey*? ●

Penelope is referred to as "circumspect Penelope."

7. What is the ancient name for the first four books of *The Odyssey*? ●

The first four books of The Odyssey have traditionally been called "The Telemachy."

8. The first 7 lines of *The Iliad* told us what the story was about—the anger of Achilles and its devastation. What do the first ten lines of *The Odyssey* tell us the subject is?

In the first ten lines of The Odyssey, we learn that the subject will be Odysseus's journey home with its many pains and toils as he struggles to save his companions and bring them home.

9. In Book 1.26-95, what is decided at the council of the gods?

At the council of the gods, Athene reminds Zeus that "godlike Odysseus" has always honored the gods, including Zeus himself, "making sacrifice in wide Troy" by the ships of the Argives. Unlike Agamemnon, he does not deserve the misfortune that he suffers at the hands of Poseidon, who nurses a grudge against him for blinding the Cyclops. It is decided that Odysseus shall come home, and that Poseidon shall put away his anger, "for all alone and against the will of the other immoral gods he [Poseidon] can accomplish nothing."

10. In Book 3, what character from *The Iliad* does Telemachos go visit? ●

In Book 3, Telemachos visits King Nestor.



11. In Book 3.103-327, what information does Nestor give to Telemachos about the “nostoi” (Greek for “homecomings” or “returns”) of the Achaians generally and Agamemnon specifically?

Nestor tells Telemachos that “Zeus in his mind devised a sorry homecoming for the Argives, since not all were considerate nor righteous; therefore many of them found a bad way home.” Numerous quarrels and factions broke out among them. After parting ways with Agamemnon, Menelaos was blown so far off course that he wasn’t able to return home for years. Meanwhile Agamemnon returned home without his brother and was murdered by his adulterous wife.

12. According to the Roman poet Virgil, what three signs ought to have warned the Trojans about the horse?

In *The Aeneid*, the Roman poet Virgil says that three things should have warned the Trojans that something was suspicious about the horse. First, the priest of Neptune (Poseidon) warns that it is a trick, throwing his spear into the side of the horse, which thrums with a hollow sound. Second, Cassandra, who has been cursed with always telling the truth and never being believed, prophesies that it’s a trick. And third, when they drag the horse over the broken down wall, they hear the rattle of metal inside the horse.

DISCUSSION TOPIC

Why do you think the suitors are cast in such a bad light? What is their crime?



Lesson 9

The Court of Alkinoös

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *The Odyssey* Books V-VIII.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Whom do the gods send to tell Kalypso to release Odysseus? ●

The council of the gods sends Hermes, the messenger god, to tell Kalypso to let Odysseus go.

2. What god shipwrecks Odysseus? ●

Poseidon destroys Odysseus's raft in a storm.

3. As Odysseus is shipwrecked in Book 5, what does he wish for? What is his reasoning?

As Odysseus is tossed and turned by the waves, he wishes that he had died on the plains of Troy because he thinks that he's going to die an anonymous and inglorious death here at sea. At least he would have died with recognition and glory at Troy.



4. At the beginning of Book 6 and the beginning of Book 7, how does Athene involve herself in Odysseus's adventures?

Athene is always looking out for Odysseus, preparing the way for him and predisposing others to favor him. At the beginning of Book 6, she appears to Nausikaa in a dream, "likening herself to the daughter of Dymas, famed for seafaring, a girl of the same age, in whom her fancy delighted." Athene plants the idea in Nausikaa's mind to go wash her garments by the river the following day, which will conveniently bring her into contact with Odysseus. At the beginning of Book 7, once again, Athene steps in to protect Odysseus, veiling him in a magical mist this time to hide him from the men of the city who "do not have very much patience with men from the outlands."

5. What god is responsible for gold and silver dogs that Odysseus marvels at in the palace of Alkinoös?

The dogs made of gold and silver were fashioned by the smith god Hephaistos in his craftsmanship and cunning, to watch over the palace of great-hearted Alkinoös."

6. What does the bard in the court of Alkinoös sing about? 🎵

The bard, Demodokos, sings stories of the Trojan war, including tales of Odysseus himself.

7. Why do the Phaiakians not inquire of Odysseus his name and story straightaway? 🎵

The Phaiakians do not ask Odysseus for his identity and story straightaway because the ancient code of hospitality required that you not inquire of a stranger's story until he has been received hospitably and given refreshment.

8. Who might Homer be writing into his poem through the character Demodokos? 🎵

Homer may be writing himself into the story through the character Demodokos.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Why do you think gardens (especially secret or magical gardens) show up so often in literature? What is the symbolism of gardens? What role do gardens play in Scripture?
2. How does the behavior of Odysseus in the court of Alkinoös highlight the differences between Odysseus and Achilleus?



Lesson 10

Odysseus Tells of his Wanderings

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *The Odyssey* Books IX-XII.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the first example of the “foolishness” of Odysseus’s men that we see in Book 9? What is the result? ●

Odysseus's men insist on staying around after sacking the city of the Kikones in order to eat, drink, and rest. The allies of the Kikones attack during the night and wipe out many of Odysseus's men.

2. Why does Odysseus attack the city of the Kikones? ●

Odysseus attacks the Kikones because they are allies of Troy.

3. What nineteenth century Victorian poet wrote a poem titled “The Lotus Eaters”? ●

Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote a poem called “The Lotus Eaters” that captures the feel of this episode with soft, slow, and languid diction.

4. Who is the god of the guest-host relationship, and what is the code of hospitality that we see in Homer? Why do the Cyclopes not honor the code of hospitality? ●

Zeus is the god of the guest-host relationship, a code of hospitality in which guests have a right to good treatment when they wander and hosts have an obligation to treat their guests hospitably. The race of the Cyclopes, according to Homer, do not honor the code of hospitality because they don't fear the gods.

5. When Polyphemos the Cyclops finally falls asleep, Odysseus starts planning how he's going to kill him. But something stops him. What does Odysseus realize would happen if he were to kill the Cyclops then and there?

Odysseus decides not to kill the Cyclops on the spot when he realizes that "there we too would have perished away in sheer destruction, seeing that our hands could never have pushed from the lofty gate of the cave the ponderous boulder he had propped there."

6. How does Odysseus save his men from Polyphemos the Cyclops? 🎯

After getting the Cyclops drunk, Odysseus and his men put out his eye with a sharpened ship mast. They then escape the cave by clinging to the underside of Polyphemos's rams as he lets them out of the cave.

7. What does Odysseus tell the Cyclops his name is in the cave? 🎯

Odysseus tells the Cyclops that his name is "Nobody" or "NoMan."

8. Why is it a mistake for Odysseus to reveal his true identity to the Cyclops? What is the result? 🎯

By identifying himself by name, Odysseus can be cursed by name. The Cyclops prays to his father Poseidon, who curses Odysseus and gives him toil and hardship as he "wanders many ways" on his journey home.

9. What does Aristotle's Rhetoric say about revenge? How does this inform the episode with the Cyclops? 🎯

In his Rhetoric, Aristotle says that revenge has to be personal. If Odysseus had simply sailed away without identifying himself, he would not have fully avenged the death of his men.



10. Why do Odysseus's men open the bag of winds? ●

Odysseus's men open the bag of winds in jealous suspicion that Odysseus is keeping some treasure secret from them.

11. In Book 10, what does Aiolos answer Odysseus when he asks for help a second time?

When Odysseus asks for help again and explains what happened to the first bag of winds, Aiolos answers, "O least of living creatures, out of this island! Hurry! / I have no right to see on his way, none to give passage / to any man whom the blessed gods hate with such bitterness. / Out. This arrival means you are hateful to the immortals."

12. How is Odysseus able to overcome the magic of Circe's spells?

Hermes appears to Odysseus and gives him an herb called "moly" that will protect him from Circe's spell.

13. What is Odysseus's reaction when Circe tells him that he must go to Hades?

Even the mighty Odysseus is obviously terrified. He says that "the inward heart in me was broken, / and I sat down on the bed and cried, nor did the heart in me / wish to go on living any longer..."

14. What spirit does Odysseus seek in the land of the dead? ●

Odysseus is seeking the soul Tiresias, the old prophet of Thebes.

15. Teiresias tells Odysseus that he must go far inland and make a sacrifice to Poseidon to appease his anger. What does Teiresias say the sign will be that he has travelled far enough inland?

Teiresias tells Odysseus that he must travel so far inland that the inhabitants are ignorant of seafaring. The sign that he has come far enough will be when a wayfarer mistakes the oar Odysseus carries for a winnow-fan. There Odysseus must plant the oar and sacrifice to Poseidon.

16. What sentiment does Achilles express to Odysseus that is inverted by Satan in *Paradise Lost*? 🎯

Achilles tells Odysseus that he would rather be a slave in the real world than rule the underworld, a sentiment that Milton's Satan inverts when he tells the fallen angels that it is "better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven."

17. What do the Sirens tempt Odysseus with? 🎯

The Sirens tempt Odysseus with the promise of knowledge.

18. What is Eurylochos's justification for slaughtering the cattle of the sun god Helios? What does he say they will do to make it up to the god? What biblical story does this remind you of?

Eurylochos says that "All deaths are detestable for wretched mortals, / but hunger is the sorriest way to die and encounter / fate." Eurylochos justifies the disobedience by saying that they will build a temple to Helios and offer many sacrifices if they ever make it back to Ithaka—a rationalization with an uncanny similarity to Saul's reasoning when God commanded him to save no spoil from the Amalekites.



19. How many of Odysseus's men survive the judgment of Zeus after eating the sacred oxen of Helios? ●

Zeus destroys all of Odysseus's men for eating the sacred oxen, leaving only Odysseus alive but shipwrecked until Kalypso saves him.

DISCUSSION TOPIC

How is the Cyclops's treatment of Odysseus and his men a reversal of the guest-host relationship? Discuss the role of hospitality in *The Odyssey*.

ASSIGNMENT

Research the Greek understanding of the underworld. Where was Elysium? Tartarus? How do you think these categories relate to the biblical terminology of Sheol? What about "Abraham's bosom"?



Lesson 11

The Homecoming of Odysseus

READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *The Odyssey* Books XIII-XXIV.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why do local inhabitants of Western Greece today identify a sail-shaped island as the ship that carried Odysseus to Ithika? 🎧

Local inhabitants of Western Greece will to this day identify a sail-shaped island off the mainland as the Phaiakian ship that carried Odysseus to Ithika because Poseidon cursed the Phaiakians for helping Odysseus and turned their ship to stone.

2. When the Phaiakians see the ship turned to stone, what do they do in hopes that the rest of the prophecy will not come to pass?

When the Phaiakians see the ship that bore Odysseus turned to stone, they sacrifice twelve bulls to Poseidon to appease his anger in hopes that he won't pile a mountain above their city, fulfilling the rest of the prophecy.

3. Why does Odysseus take on the role of a beggar in his palace? 🎧

Odysseus takes on the role of a beggar to scout out the political landscape in his palace.



4. Where does the beggar (Odysseus) claim to be from when he speaks with Penelope in Book 19? What does he say Odysseus was doing there?

The beggar (Odysseus) says he is from Crete, and claims to have met Odysseus there when Odysseus was blown off course on the way home.

5. Which reformer quotes a scene from Book 18 of *The Odyssey* in reference to the tension of free will and divine sovereignty?

In book II, chapter 2, section 17 of his Institutes of the Christian Religion, John Calvin quotes The Odyssey on the role of fate in human affairs.

6. What is Penelope's dream? What does Odysseus say the dream means?

Penelope dreams that she has a flock of geese that are destroyed by an eagle. Odysseus confirms to her that the eagle represents Odysseus who will soon kill the wicked suitors.

7. How does the maidservant Eurykleia recognize Odysseus?

Eurykleia recognizes a scar on Odysseus's leg that he had received from a boar hunt when he was young.

8. What is the crime of the suitors?

The suitors are not just "eating Odysseus out of house and home," they are also guilty of treason, and are even willing to murder Telemachos to that end.

9. What question does Odysseus ask the oxherd and the swineherd in Book 21?

Odysseus asks the oxherd and the swineherd what they would do if Odysseus came back; would they fight for the suitors or for Odysseus?

10. Describe the contest of the bow. What kind of axes are these? How could you fire an arrow through them? 🎯

At the instigation of Athena, Penelope proposes a test. Penelope says she will marry whomever can string Odysseus's old war bow and fire an arrow through twelve axes lined up. The axes are ornamental with eyelets approximately two inches across in the center of the double bladed axe heads, such that you could theoretically fire an arrow through the eyes of all twelve axes if you were accurate enough.

11. How does Penelope test Odysseus to verify his identity? 🎯

Penelope tests Odysseus by suggesting that the servants pull the bed out of her bedroom for Odysseus to sleep on, knowing that only the true Odysseus would know that to be impossible since he built their bed himself, using a living tree as one of the posts.

12. According to the narratives of Dante and Alfred Lord Tennyson, why was Ulysses (Odysseus) destroyed? 🎯

According to Dante, Ulysses was destroyed for pushing the limits of human knowledge too far when he sailed within sight of Mount Purgatory, a mountain that no living man should ever see. Tennyson picks up on this story in his poem Ulysses.

DISCUSSION TOPIC

Why is treason punishable by death in many societies? Is this just and appropriate?

ASSIGNMENT

How many characters from *The Odyssey* can you identify in the movie *O Brother Where Art Thou?*



Lesson 12

The Legacy of Homer

READING ASSIGNMENT

There is no reading assignment for this lesson.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What primary texts did the Roman Grammaticus use as a springboard to teach from? ●

The Roman Grammaticus would primarily teach from the works of Homer and Virgil, lecturing on various subjects as they came up in the texts.

2. What site did Julius Caesar consider as a new location to move the capital city to? Where did Constantine end up establishing “New Rome,” approximately 300 years later? ●

Julius Caesar contemplated moving the city of Rome to the site of ancient Troy. Constantine established the new capital of Constantinople approximately three hundred years later.

3. Why did the pagan emperor Julian the Apostate pass a decree forbidding the Christians to teach the pagan epics? ●

Flavius Claudius Julianus Augustus (Julian the Apostate) passed a decree banning Christians from teaching the pagan epics because the Christians were doing such a good job of teaching Christ and the Christian worldview through these works that it undermined his efforts to return the empire to its ancient pagan roots. He wanted the Christians to mind their own business and just teach the Bible—an interesting case study on the “threat” of Christian education!

4. What major historical event occurred in AD 1453 that prompted a renewal of Greek learning in the Latin West? ●

The fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire in AD 1453 prompted a renewal of Greek learning in the Latin West as Byzantine Christians from the East began to flood into Europe, bringing Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, and other Greek texts with them.

5. How would the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire have identified themselves after the fall of Rome in the fifth century? ●

What we call the Byzantine Empire was a genuine continuation of the old Roman world. The Byzantines would have thought of themselves as the Eastern Roman Empire.

6. How did the arrival of Homer (and Greek learning in general) into Europe contribute to the Reformation? ●

The revival of Homeric learning and criticism in Europe set the stage for the return to the original Greek New Testament that played such an important role in the protestant Reformation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The King James translation of the Bible has had a tremendous impact on the English language, as demonstrated by the montage of biblical allusions in this lecture. (There are hundreds more!) How should the relationship between biblical literacy and a culture's language affect our opinions and attitudes towards Bible translation?
2. Research the story of Julian the Apostate. Why do you think he was happy to let Christians mind their own business so long as they only taught from the Bible? Why was he threatened by the concept of Christian education, specifically Christian education that dealt with pagan literature?

ASSIGNMENT

Study for the end-of-term exam.

