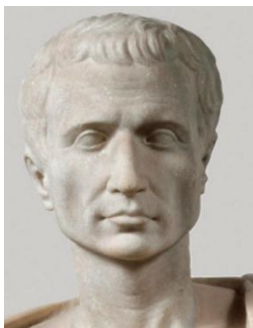


**GAIUS IULIUS CAESAR: *COMMENTARII DE BELLO CIVILI*.**



VS



**Instructor:**

Massimo Betello ([mbetello@buffalo.edu](mailto:mbetello@buffalo.edu))

**Class time:**

Monday and Wednesday 3.30 – 5.00 PM

Schedule is subject to change: some of the field trips in/around Rome might overlap with our class time. In that case I will try to reschedule the class to a different day/ time, if possible.

There is no class during the field trips to Campania and Sicily.

**Required Texts**

Textbook

- Caesar, Julius, and Renatus Du Pontet. *C. Iuli Caesaris Commentariorum Pars Posterior Qua Continentur Libri III De Bello Civili : Cum Libris Incertorum Auctorum De Bello Alexandrino, Africo, Hispaniensi*, Oxford Classical Texts; Oxford Uni. Press.  
Any publication year is accepted, as long as it is the right Series and Publisher.  
ISBN: 0198146035; 9780198146032  
Approximate cost: 44\$ (new), 10\$ (used)

Dictionary

You will need to use a dictionary in this class, and any good quality dictionary will do the job. The Centro library has a dozen copies of Latin dictionaries for you to use, but you might want to have your own.

You can use an on-line dictionary, Apple apps, computer dictionary, or bring with you a physical dictionary.

If are going to buy a dictionary and are unsure which one, I suggest

- Simpson, Donald Penistan. *Cassell's Latin dictionary: Latin-English, English-Latin*.  
Any publisher and publication year is fine. I do not recommend the concise version.  
ISBN: 0-02-522580-4  
Approximate cost: 25\$ (new), 6\$ used

Failure of the internet, cell phone connections and on line dictionaries will not be considered an excuse for not completing the assignments.

**Suggested Texts (not required)**

Grammar book

If you have the feeling that your knowledge of Latin grammar is or will need some touch-ups, I suggest that you bring a Latin grammar.

On a more basic level there is:

- Wheelock, Frederic M. , and Richard A. LaFleur. *Wheelock's Latin. 6th Edition (Revised)*: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005.  
ISBN: 0060783710  
Approximate cost: 20\$ (new), 4\$ (used)  
(You may substitute it with the 2011 edition)
- Or, for those more grammatically oriented
- Allen, Joseph Henry, J. B. Greenough, and Mahoney Anne. *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar for Schools and Colleges : Founded on Comparative Grammar*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2001.  
ISBN: 1-58510-027-7 (paperback), 1-58510-042-0 (hardcover)  
Approximate cost: 35\$ (new), 12\$ (used)  
This grammar book is also available FREE of charge at Project Perseus (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>)
  - Bennett, Charles E. *New Latin grammar*.  
Any publisher and publication year is fine. It is not as comprehensive as Greenough's, but it is a good one anyway.  
It is also available for FREE at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/bennett.html>  
You may substitute with any other good grammar guide.

### Course description

Gaius Iulius Caesar (100-44 BC) was a primary actor in the period which saw the collapse of the Roman republican system and the rise of an Imperial institution. We are lucky enough to have his memoirs (*commentarii*) about his conquest of Gallia (*Commentarii de bello gallico*) and about the subsequent fight for power between him and Pompeus Magnus (*Commentarii de bello civili*). In this class we will be reading his work about the civil war of 49-48 BC, and it will be interesting to see which different approaches and means Caesar used to describe a war between citizens compared to his wars of conquest.

At the end of his governorship in Gallia (March 49), Caesar was going to return a normal citizen, losing the legal immunity granted to a Roman magistrate. This was putting him in danger of being prosecuted for some acts which his enemies deemed illegal, and he needed support in the Senate. Pompeus and Caesar were still officially allies, but the former had been wavering in his assistance, and now seemed to side with a Senate mostly hostile to Caesar. The *commentarii* start at this point, with the Senate in disarray and the issuing of an *ultimum senatusconsultum* against Caesar. His and his army response was the crossing of the river Rubicon, the boundary of his province, into Italy. This action started the civil war, which Caesar will describe until the defeat of Pompeus at Pharsalus, and his assassination in the harbor of Alexandria.

Caesar's text has not been the subject of much academic attention lately (we will also try to understand why); nonetheless it is an important piece of Latin literature which has been often overlooked in favor of more popular and pompous authors.

Caesar has been long considered an example of clarity and simplicity of style. We are going to see that this simplicity does not correspond to a plain and artless construction of the narrative of the events: Caesar carefully selected what to write, trying to elicit a series of reactions from the readers of his work.

There will not be enough time to read/translate this entire work in Latin, but just a meaningful selection of passages. What we do not translate in class will be assigned as reading in English (available at the Centro).

## Learning objectives

At the end of the semester, the student will

- ✓ demonstrate an increased knowledge of his/her Latin vocabulary
- ✓ have a stronger grasp in his/her understanding of Latin grammar
- ✓ have improved his/her proficiency in Latin translation
- ✓ be able to analyze and evaluate the text in regard to the stylistic and narrative choices operated by Caesar
- ✓ demonstrate a comprehension of the events described in the text and of their location
- ✓ have understood the possible reasons behind the choice of the characters described in *De bello civili*
- ✓ be able to evaluate Caesar's work in light of other similar texts

## Grade system

Class preparation/participation	20%
Attendance	10%
Weekly quizzes	20%
Midterm exam	25%
Final exam	25%
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100%</i>

## Course requirements

Class preparation/participation: every student is supposed to come to class prepared and with the assignments completed. I also expect *active participation* in the class, discussing the style, history, commenting on the material, and voicing their views.

*It is essential that every student uses a ring binder*, where to keep all the assignments in order. Every time I will assign a translation, please come to class with the translation handwritten (not typed) on a dated page(s) of your binder, together with the most important grammatical points annotated at the bottom. Please, do not write the translation or take notes between the lines of the textbook, use your binder instead. I will randomly collect and check the assignments over the semester.

The use of cell/smart phones, computer tablets, laptops etc in class is allowed only if directly related to the course (no facebook, checking email, twittering, texting etc). Violation of this policy will lower your grade and might cause disciplinary actions.

### Attendance

Attendance is required at every class. Unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade by one degree (e.g. from A to A-). Every absence not due to an emergency (which needs to be proved by official documentation), or not agreed upon beforehand with the instructor will be considered an unexcused absence.

The faculty will make every possible effort to accommodate requests by students for an excused absence on a religious holiday of their tradition.

Lecture notes and assignments missed on account of any kind of absence must still be made up by the students. Quizzes and exams can be made up only for excused absences. It is not the faculty's responsibility to deliver a lecture a second time. It is permitted (see note on academic honesty below) to obtain a copy of another student's notes after an absence.

### Weekly quizzes

Every week on Wednesday, for the last 20 minutes of class, you will take a quiz on the materials of the week. The format of the quiz is subject to change according to the

necessities of the class; likewise the time allotted might increase or decrease. Ideally the quiz will deal with questions about the storyline illustrated in the passages translated/read, will require you to translate passage(s) already assigned as homework, will require you to answer grammatical questions, and questions on other topics which we might have discussed/read (style, readership, rhetorical choices, geography of the locations of events etc).

I will drop one lowest quiz grade.

While these quizzes will help me to pace the course and provide feedback on how well you are mastering the materials, they will also help you keep on top of the reading.

### Midterm/Final exam

Both midterm and final exam will likely take the form of class-long quizzes, with passages to translate, grammatical questions, storyline questions, style questions etc (see above: weekly quizzes).

Their dates are TBA (ideally the 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> week of classes respectively). Midterm will deal with the material of the first half of the semester, the final exam with the material of the second half of the semester. Again, their format will be liable to changes deemed necessary to increase class performance.

### **Class organization**

You will not receive a complete syllabus for this course at the beginning of the semester. Instead the length of the assignments will depend on the pace of the class.

Very likely we will not have the time to read/translate the three books of the *Commentarii de bello civili* in Latin, but just a meaningful selection of passages. What not translated will be assigned to be read in English (available at the Centro).

We will also read a selection of scholarly works about this text and related topics, which will be available at the Centro.

The assignments will be given on Wednesdays for the week ahead.

In order to help your memorization and ability to use vocabulary and grammar there might be some sight translations in class.

### **Academic honesty**

It is expected that all assignments for this course which do not explicitly require collaboration will be completed solely by the student handing it in for credit. All work handed in must properly acknowledge intellectual debt to other sources. This is serious: failing to cite a source accidentally (negligence) is as serious an infraction as deliberately cutting and pasting someone's work into yours (plagiarism). Cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be penalized by failure of the assignment and, if sufficiently grave, will result in failure of the course at the discretion of the instructor in consultation with the Professor in Charge. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty for the purposes of this course, please do not hesitate to ask.

### **Grade breakdown**

A+	100 - 97	B-	82.99 - 80
A	96.99 - 93	C+	79.99 - 77
A-	92.99 - 90	C	76.99 - 73
B+	89.99 - 87	C-	72.99 - 70
B	86.99 - 83	D	69.99 - 60
F		59.99 >	