The Epistolary Genre in Rome

Code: 104202
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Ancient Studies	OB	3
English and Classics Studies	OB	3

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Teaching groups languages

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Prerequisites

The linguistic knowledge learnt in the first-year and second-year subjects, specially in "Historiografia i Oratòria Llatines" are taken for granted, and will not be explained again.

To attend this subject it is highly recommended to have passed "Historiografia i Oratoria Llatines".

Objectives and Contextualisation

After taking the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply quick comprehension techniques of a Latin text with the help of the dictionary.
2. Understand a Latin prose (eventually in vers) text (1st-2nd centuries aD) without using the dictionary.
3. Translate a text in prose epistolary form up to 15 lines in a 1.30h.
4. Make a grammatical, metric and stylistic commentar about a latin text written in epitolary form.
5. Resolve issues about authors studied and their works and context .
6. Associate the content of texts translated in class with aspects of its reception & subsequent tradition.

Competences

Ancient Studies

- Apply grammatical knowledge acquired in the analysis and comprehension of Latin and Greek texts.
- Be able to express oneself orally and in writing in the specific language of history, archaeology and philology, both in one's own languages and a third language.
- Interpret texts written in Latin and Greek to understand the history and Classical civilisations.
- Interrelate linguistic, historical and archaeological knowledge of the ancient world with knowledge of other areas of the humanities, mainly ancient literature, philosophy and art.
- Make a commentary on a literary texts applying knowledge of genres, metrics and stylistics.

English and Classics Studies

- Apply the methodology of analysis and knowledge of genres, metrics and stylistics to comment on literary texts and analyse the culture and history of English-speaking countries and the ancient world.
- Demonstrate grammatical knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages and its application to the analysis and comprehension of Greek and Latin texts.
- Identify and interpret literary texts of different languages, analysing the generic, formal, thematic and cultural features according to concepts and methods of comparative literature and literary theory.
- Interpret written texts in Latin and Greek to learn about classical history and civilizations.
- Interrelate linguistic and historical knowledge of the ancient world with knowledge of other fields of the humanities, mainly literature and archaeology.
- Produce effective written work or oral presentations adapted to the appropriate register in distinct languages.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze the morphosyntactic components of a Latin text identifying those are specific of a literary genre or a particular linguistic variant.
2. Explain the gist of a text without any need for a prior morpho-syntactic analysis or the use of a dictionary.
3. Extract information from the Greek and Latin texts on aspects of realia especially related to their historical and cultural context.
4. Extract information from the Latin texts on aspects of realia especially related to their historical and cultural context.
5. Identify in the Latin texts the characteristics of a particular literary genre.
6. Preparing an oral and written discourse in the corresponding language in a proper and organized way.
7. Recognise the themes and clichés contained in the Latin works being studied in the European literary and artistic traditions.
8. Recognise the themes and topics emanating from the Greek works studied in the European literary and artistic traditions.
9. Translate fragments of the Latin works proposed.
10. Translate fragments of the proposed Latin works.
11. Use rapid text-comprehension techniques based on the semantic resources provided by a knowledge of Catalan, Spanish and, where appropriate, other Romance languages.
12. Use rapid text-comprehension techniques based on the semantic resources provided by the knowledge of Catalan, Spanish and, where necessary, other Romance languages.
13. Write a morpho-syntactic commentary on a Latin text.
14. Write a stylistic commentary on a Latin text.

Content

I. The epistolary genre in Rome

1. The epistolary genre in antiquity. Limits and definition.

2. The epistolary genre in Rome. Stages, characteristics, and authors.

3. The letters before Cicero. Cornelia to her son Caius Gracus.

4. Cicero's letters, a personal diary.

5. The epistles in verse.

5.1. Horace. Literary epistles.

5.2. Ovid. Fiction (*Heroidum epistulae*) vs. reality (*Tristia* and *ex Ponto*)

6. The Epistles of Pliny the Younger. Naturality vs. facticity

7. The Epistles of Seneca. A didactic-moral correspondence.

II. Anthology of texts

Cornelia to her son Caius Gracus (C. Nepos, *de viris illustribus fragmenta 1)*

Cicero.

Ad familiares 2, 4 (Kinds of letters)

Ad familiares 9, 1 (The friendship of books)

Ad familiares 14, 19-24 (Everyday issues)

Ad Atticum 1, 2 (Fatherhood. Catilina)

Ad Atticum 3, 5 (In exile)

Ad Atticum 4, 1 (Triumphal Return from Exile)

Ad Atticum 15, 15 (Hate for Cleopatra)

Horace, *Ad Pisones* (excerpts)

Ovid

Tristia 3, 7 (Letter to an unknown poetess)

Pliny the Younger, *Epistularum libri decem*

1, 3 (Carpe diem)

1, 6 (Hunting with writing instruments)

1, 11 (Write me, please!)

1, 15 (Invitation to dinner)

3, 14 (A master murdered by his serfs)

4, 19 (In praise of Calpúrnia)

5, 18 (Plini is happy for his friend)

6, 20 (What did Pliny do during eruption of Vesuvius)

7, 5 (Love for Calpurnia)

8, 9 (The value of friendship)

8, 17 (The floods of Tiber)

9, 36 (A normal day in the life of Plini)

10, 96 & 10, 97 (Christians)

Seneca, *Ad Lucillium epistulae morales*

1, 7 (Secluded life)

1, 8 (True Freedom)

III. Grammar

Students must have assimilated the linguistic contents of the previously studied subjects of "Latin Philology" in the first and second courses. Grammar will focus on:

- NOMINAL SYNTAX: infrequent and / or singular uses of cases
- PRONOMINAL MORFOSYNTAX
  interrrogative & indefinite pronouns
  numerical, ordinal & distributive pronouns
- VERBAL MORFOSYNTAX
  nominal uses of the participle
  use of the subjunctive in independent phrases
- SYNTAX OF THE COMPLEX SENTENCE:
  completive subordinate clauses
  adverbial subordinate clauses: causal (*quod*), conditional, consecutives, final, and comparative sentences
  ways to express purposE

IV. Prosody and stylistics

- The elegiac distich

V. Reception and tradition of authors and texts

Inthis subject, gender perspective will be taken intoaccount in the following aspects:

1. Including contentsof both a general nature (role of women in the Roman society of the 1st century BC) as specific (female senders and recipients).
2. Not allowing a sexist use of language in the students' oral and written contributions.
3. Guaranteeing in the classroom an atmosphere respectful with thediversity and plurality of ideas, people and politics.
4. Avoiding gender stereotypes in examples.
5. Writing, in the references, the full names of authors, instead of only the initial.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Reading comprehension	4	0.16	6, 2, 11, 9, 10, 12
Theoretical contents	6	0.24	5, 8, 7
Translation & comentary of texts	40	1.6	1, 14, 13, 6, 3, 4, 5, 8, 7, 9, 10
Type: Supervised			
Exercies of prosody and translation	5	0.2	14, 3, 4, 5, 8, 7
Reading comprehension and morphosintactical exercises	5	0.2	1, 13, 6, 2, 11, 12
Type: Autonomous			
Daily translation exercices	45	1.8	1, 13, 6, 11, 10, 9, 12

Required readings	15	0.6	3, 4, 8, 7
Study of lexicon & grammar	15	0.6	1, 14, 13

The classes will be eminently practical. The professor will dedicate time to:

- Read, translate and comment on the proposed selection of texts.
- Provide students with mechanisms that allow them to progressively increase the volume of translated text.
- Read and understand texts in sight without the use of the dictionary.
- Correct the texts translated daily by students.
- Discuss the linguistic, literary and sociocultural content of translated texts, with a singular emphasis on aspects related to their later tradition.
- Explain the grammatical, metrical and stylistic contents based on the text.
- Explain *de realia* contents that help contextualise the text.

Students will have to use a bilingual university dictionary; they will not be allowed to use a school dictionary

Students will be responsible for bringing the proposed text for translation and commentary daily.

Note: 15 minutes of a class will be reserved, within the timetable established by the centre/title, for the complementation by the students of the assessment surveys of the teaching staff's performance and the assessment of the subject

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
House exercices	10%	7	0.28	1, 13, 10, 9
In-class exercices	15%	2	0.08	1, 13, 2, 11, 9, 12
Translation and commentary of a passage previous commented in class	10%	3	0.12	1, 14, 13, 6, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 7, 9, 10
Translation of a fragment not previously commented in class (up to 15 lines)	45%	2	0.08	1, 14, 6, 3, 4, 5, 8, 7, 9, 10, 12

Translation of a short passage not previous commented in class (up to 10 lines)	20%	1	0.04	14, 6, 11, 9, 10, 12

This subject/module does not incorporate single assessment

I. Assessment

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Final exam. Translation and commentary of a passage not previous commented in class (up to 15 lines)
- Midterm. Translation of a short passage (up to 10 lines) not previous commented in class.
- Homework and/or in-class exercises
- Translation and commentary of a passage previous commented in class
- Active participation in class

II. Please note:

1. The delivery of 5 of the assessment items (assignments / exercises / exams) excludes the possibility of obtaining the status of *No avaluable* as a final course grade.
2. The 2.5 points distributed between the exercises done at home (1 point) and the exercises done in class (1.5 points) will be obtained as a result of the average of the grades of the total of the exercises proposed in each block. For the purposes of the average, it is understood, therefore, that the grade of an exercise not presented is 0.
3. To be able to pass the subject (passed-MH), the student must, at a minimum, have completed the final test of translation of an unseen text and have obtained a grade =/> 4. If the sum of the weighting of the grades is 5, but this minimum requirement is not met, the student will be graded with a 4.5 (failed).

III: Reassessment

For the Re-assessment the following conditions are applicable:

- The student must previously have been evaluated for activities that equal to 2/3 parts of the final grade.
- The student will only can do a content-synthesis test (= 45%).

In the event that a student is unable to attend a partial test, final test or make-up test on the scheduled day,
In the make-up test, which will be scheduled by the Faculty Dean's
The delivery of periodic exercises will be determined by the teacher

IV. Calendar of assigments:

- Midterm exam. Thursday 23-10-2025
- Final exam. Thursday 15-01-2026
- Translation and commentary of a passage previous commented in class. Tuesday 13-01-2026

V. Procedure for Reviewing Grades Awarded

On carrying out each evaluation activity, lecturers will inform students of the procedures to be followed for reviewing all grades awarded, and the date on which such a review will take place.

VI. Plagiarism and copying

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

VII. IA use

This subject allows the use of AI technologies exclusively for support tasks such as bibliographic or content-based searches, text correction or translations, where applicable. Other specific situations may be contemplated, as deemed appropriate by the teacher. The student must clearly (i) identify which parts have been generated using AI technology; (ii) specify the tools used; and (iii) include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the
process and final outcome of the activity. Lack of transparency regarding the use of AI in the assessed activity will be considered academic dishonesty; the corresponding grade may be lowered, or the work may even be awarded a zero. In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

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Software

None

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	2	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed