

**Graduate Seminar Ancient History 2010:
Lucian: Four Philosophical Lives**

Important dates:

22 October: electronic submission of essay on scholarship.

25 November: electronic submission of essay with new perspectives.

15 December: submission of final paper.

First Stage: from Week 1 to Week 7

Week 1: Friday 3 September:

Lucian, Alexander of Abonoteichos, 1-30:

Week 2: Friday 10 September:

Lucian, Alexander of Abonoteichos, 30-61:

Week 3: Friday 17 September:

Lucian, Peregrinus of Parion, 1-32:

Week 4: Friday 24 September:

Lucian, Peregrinus of Parion, 32-45:

Week 5: Friday 1 October:

Lucian, Demonax.

Week 6: Friday 8 October:

Lucian, The Wisdom of Nigrinus.

Second Stage: from Week 7 to Week 10

Week 7: Friday 15 October:

No meeting: Research for first essay on Lucianic scholarship.
Week 8: Friday 22 October

No meeting: Submission of essay: discussing scholarship.

Week 9: Friday 29 October:

Discussing the results of your submissions.

Third Stage: from Week 10 to Week 12

Week 10: Friday 5 November:

Discussion of prospects for researching Lucian's four philosophical lives.

Week 11: Friday 12 November:

No meeting: research of new perspectives.

Week 12: Friday 19 November:

No meeting: research of new perspectives.

Wednesday 24 November: submission of second essay.

Fourth Stage: from Week 13 to Week 14

Week 13: Friday 3 December:

Research.

Week 14: Friday 10 December:

Research.

The objectives of this graduate seminar are as follows:

To investigate four works by Lucian, a second-century AD satirist from Samosata. We will start with Alexander the False Prophet or Alexander of Abonoteichos, followed by the lives of Peregrinus Proteus, Demonax and Nigrinus. We will read these four texts without any prior knowledge of second-century AD literature and without any background information on Lucian. Our principal mission in the first six weeks is to read and understand the four texts which are assigned for this seminar without plugging back into our reading any preconceived ideas about the second century, about Lucian as a writer, and about the four characters whose lives are sketched. Our focus will be on the way in which the four works have been constructed, with major attention to the form and composition of each individual work. I have chosen this deliberately naïve reading in order to maintain a fresh approach to Lucian. The obligatory personal disclosure is that I have read these texts before, but I have not studied them in great detail. My intentions here are purely academic.

After the reading stage has been completed you will start analyzing the scholarship on the four texts. You will start with an article by Diskin Clay, 'Lucian of Samosata: Four Philosophical Lives (Nigrinus, Demonax, Peregrinus, Alexander Pseudomantis)', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 36.5 (1992), 3406-3451, which you have received electronically as a PDF-file. In order to avoid any misunderstanding I would like to note the following. The fact that I sent this article to all of you does not mean that I consider the argument to be superior to all other possible arguments or that it is a seminal study which agrees with my own point of view (at this moment I have no point of view). I have chosen the article because it discusses all four pieces written by Lucian (and we do not have to accept that as a given either; we are free to make connections and cross-connections as much as we want). It is your objective to read Clay's article critically and to make an attempt to map what part(s) of the texts have received most scholarly attention. In addition, you will study the books that are put on reserve in the Greek and Latin Reading Room for further information. You will write a five page essay (1.5 spacing) on the scholarship that you have read. The idea is to write up an argument, which means that you are not supposed to use bullet-points and list everything that you have seen or read. You are encouraged to select an overarching theme which subsumes a number of smaller or less important themes, and it is not necessary to be complete. To cover everything is not a virtue and in many cases it is pointedly wrong. Of course, in order to arrive at the point where you make new connections or new inferences you need to have read or at least to have consulted everything and then extrapolate what you need. You will submit your essay on 22 October and all essays will circulate amongst all of the students in the course. You will receive personal feedback from me in the following couple of days, and that material will not be shared with the other students. Since no meeting is planned for 15 October you have from 8 until 22 October to research this subject. The essay should be submitted on 22 October no later than 12:00 AM. On Friday 29 October we meet again to have a group workshop on the ideas that have been submitted.

The next meeting, on 5 November, will be the most important meeting of the semester. It is here that we initiate stage three of our exploration. On this Friday we will discuss how we can breathe (new) life into the study of these four Lucianic texts. What do we find particularly worthy of study? With which current trend in Classics, Ancient History or cultural history of the past do we wish to connect our research? Have we noticed anything

in our reading that has been overlooked by scholarship on Lucian? Has it been justifiably overlooked or can it be turned into an exciting research project? No meetings are planned for 12 and 19 November so that you can focus on developing your ideas. The second essay should be submitted on Wednesday 24 November no later than 12:00 AM. Once again, the essay is supposed to be 5 pages in length (1.5 spacing). This time the essays will not be circulating, and you will receive personal feedback from me. The revised essay will become the basis for a ten page final essay (1.5 spacing) that you will submit on or before 15 December no later than 12:00 AM.

Your final grade will consist of the following components:

1. first essay: 25%.
2. second essay: 25%.
3. final essay: 40%.
4. attendance and participation: 10%.

