Latin Lovers:
A Survey of the Great Roman Love Poems

The 1st-century Roman poet Catullus, a naughty darling of the muses, put the thrall and throes of love to papyrus: *odi et amo*...“I hate and I love,” and *vivamus, mea Lesbia*...“we shall live, Lesbia mine.” True. Two thousand years after he tried, in Yeats’ words, “to flatter beauty’s ignorant ear,” Catullus still speaks to us. An iconoclast and rebellious young man at the center of an aesthetical (and ethical) revolution, Catullus favored the perfectly polished poetry of the small scale and made love its theme, thus spearheading the quartet of Roman elegists: Cornelius Gallus, the inventor of the elegiac genre, followed by the learned Sextus Propertius and the bucolic Albius Tibullus—both of whom addressed serious questions in their frivolous writing—and the playfully parodic Ovid, possibly better known for his *Metamorphoses*. They were, in all likelihood, joined by the mysterious Sulpicia, one of the very few female voices to reach us from antiquity.

In this course, we will read a selection of the elegists’ poetry, explore love as a provocative alternative lifestyle to Roman militarism, reflect on the elusive “poetic I,” replay the detective work of scholarship that went into profiling Cornelius Gallus, and gain a new appreciation of the “good things in small packages,” which have exerted a considerable influence on later poets, some of whom we will look at in the final session.

**Preliminary Syllabus** (all secondary readings will be made available):

1. **Week (03/30):**
   **A naughty darling. Catullus and the “Revolution” in Roman Poetics.**
   1. Assignment: Please read Catullus’ poems up to 68, the introduction (to either Green’s or Lee’s translation), and FELDHERR (“The Intellectual Climate,” CtC).

2. **Week (04/06):**
   **The Founding Father: Cornelius Gallus.**
   2. Assignment: Please finish Catullus’ poems along with WRAY (“Catullus, the Roman love elegist,” CtRE). Please read GIBBSON (“Gallus, the first Roman love elegist,” CtRE), then the fragment of Gallus (which can be found here: 1), then PARSON (LRB).

3. **Week (04/13):**
   **“And now Propertius of Cynthia.”**
   3. Assignment: Please read Propertius’ first book of poetry along with the following selection (TBD) and JOHNSON (“Propertius,” CtRE) and HALLET (“Authorial Identity in Latin Love Elegy,” CtRE).

4. **Week (04/20):**
   **“The most terse and elegant:” Albius Tibullus.**

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1 [http://classics.uc.edu/~parker/paleography%20files/gallus.html](http://classics.uc.edu/~parker/paleography%20files/gallus.html)
5. Week (04/27):
   **A Female Voice: Sulpicia.**
   5. Assignment: Please read the third book attributed to “Tibullus” along with HALLET (“The eleven elegies of the Augustan Poet Sulpicia”).

6. Week (05/04):
   **“A Roman of the City;” Ovid**
   6. Assignment: Please read Ovid’s first book of love poems (at least) along with BOOTH (“The Amores,” CtO) and TBD.

7. Week (05/11):
   **How to love: Ovid’s Art**

8. Week (05/18):
   **“To flatter beauty’s ignorant ear;” love across the ages**

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**Required texts (they can be purchased at the Stanford Bookstore)**


**Additional bibliography**