COURSE UNIT DESCRIPTION

Course unit title	Code
Greek Culture through Ten Iconic Poems Graikų kultūra per dešimt kultinių eilėraščių	

Lecturer(s)	Department, faculty
Coordinator: prof. dr. Fatima Eloeva	VU Faculty of Philology, Institute of English, Romance and Classical Studies, Department of Classical Philology

Study cycle	Type of course unit
First	Individual studies

Mode of Delivery	Semester when instructed	The Language
Face-to-face	Spring semester	English

Requirements for students	
Requirements for students: English B2 level	**Additional requirements: none**

Subject (module) volume in credits	Full student workload	Contact hours	Self-Study hours
5	130	32	98

Course (Module) Aims		
This course aims to: • analyse a selection of major Greek poetic texts through phenomenological and hermeneutic perspectives; • demonstrate that the understanding of these texts requires reference to the broader context of the Greek literary tradition, Greek history, and world culture; • explore the works of leading twentieth-century Greek poets, as expressions of human experience, historical consciousness, and cultural identity; • employ the method of close reading to develop interpretative and analytical skills in reading poetic texts; • encourage engagement with the diachronic development of the Greek literary tradition and its continuity in modern times; • foster a deeper appreciation of Greek cultural heritage and its enduring place within world culture; • enable students to acquire conversational and comprehension skills of Modern Greek (corresponding to level A2).		
Course (Module) Learning Outcomes	**Teaching Methods**	**Assessment methods**
After completing the course, students will: • understand the key contexts of the Greek poetic tradition and its relation to Greek history and world culture; • be able to analyse selected Greek poetic texts using phenomenological, hermeneutic, and close reading methods; • be familiar with the main concepts, themes, and symbols of twentieth-century Greek poetry and relate them to the broader Greek literary tradition in diachrony; • be able to interpret poetic texts critically, comparing different translations • be capable of connecting literary analysis with historical, philosophical, and	Various techniques developed by communicative, audio-lingual and other methods of language teaching. Problem-focused teaching, text analysis, discussions. Reading scientific and literary texts, analysing and commenting them. Autonomous work of students.	Active participation in seminar discussions; oral presentations based on close reading and rhetorical analysis; written assignments demonstrating independent interpretation of poetic texts; Cumulative score: estimation of work during the seminars and delivered presentations – 25%, writing of paraphrases and essays – 25%, oral examination – 50%.

cultural perspectives; • demonstrate an informed understanding of the continuity and transformation of Greek cultural heritage; • develop independent research and analytical skills in working with poetic and cultural materials.		

Course content: breakdown of the topics	**Contact hours**							**Individual work: time and assignments**	
	lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	**Contact hours**	**Individual work**	**Individual work**
1. Introduction. The Continuity and Uniqueness of Greek Culture. Themes discussed: • The continuity of Greek culture from Antiquity to the modern era. • The uniqueness of the ancient Greek worldview and its formative role in shaping Western thought. • The emergence of the *logos* — the transition from mythic to rational consciousness. George Seferis. "An Old Man on the River Bank." «Ένας γέροντας στην ακροποταμιά» "An Interval of Joy", «Διάλημμα χαράς»	2		2				**4**	**6**	Reading of the specified literature, preparation for discussion.
2. Konstantinos Cavafy. *Perfidy* («Απιστία»). *The Horses of Achilles* («Τα άλογα του Αχιλλέα»). • The Greek synthesis of *mythos* and *logos* — harmony between sacred imagination and rational thought. • Myth and ritual as foundations of cultural consciousness. • Main theories of the origin and function of myth: – F. Max Müller: myth as "a disease of language," – J. G. Frazer: myth and ritual, seasonal cycles, fertility, – B. Malinowski: myth as social charter, – M. Eliade: myth as sacred history and eternal return, – C. Lévi-Strauss: myth as structure of thought. • The transformation and reinterpretation of Greek heritage in European and modern Greek culture.	2		2				**4**	**8**	Reading of the assigned literature, preparation for discussion.
3. C. P. Cavafy *The Alexandrian Kings* («Αλεξανδρινοί βασιλείς»), *Caesarion* («Ὁ Καισαρίων»). The Parallel *Lives* as a means of transforming biography into poetic reflection. Cavafy's	2		2				**4**	**8**	Reading of the assigned literature, preparation for discussion.

reinterpretation of Plutarch's notions of virtue, destiny, and moral example in a modern, ironic, and existential key.									
4. *God Abandons Antony* («Ἀπολείπειν ὁ Θεὸς Ἀντώνιον») — the clearest example of Cavafy's creative re-reading of Plutarch's *Life of Antony.* Comparison of Cavafy's poem with the passage in Plutarch's *Life of Antony* (75.3–5).	1		2				**3**	**8**	Reading of the assigned literature, preparation for discussion.
5. *Anna Dalassini* (Άννα Δαλασσηνή).	1		4				**5**	**10**	Reading of the assigned literature, preparation for discussion.
6. *Waiting for Barbarians* («Περιμένοντας τους βαρβάρους»). Civilization and decline, political inertia, the psychology of expectation, irony, and historical allegory.	2		4				**6**	**10**	Reading of the assigned literature, preparation for discussion.
7. Angelos Sikelianos, *The Sacred Road* («Ιερά Οδός»). Symbolism, spirituality, and Hellenic revivalism. The discussion of Greek cultural continuity and mythopoetic consciousness — especially as a counterpoint to Cavafy's historical irony. The revival of the Eleusinian mystery as a metaphor for spiritual rebirth and national regeneration.	1		2				**3**	**8**	Reading of the assigned literature, preparation for discussion.
8. Odysseas Elytis, *Marina of the Rocks* («Η Μαρίνα των βράχων»). The expression of metaphysics of light and the aesthetic of Hellenic sensuality — the human body and the natural world as sacred, radiant presences.	1		2				**3**	**10**	Reading of the assigned literature, preparation for discussion.
Seminar presentation.								**30**	Selection of bibliographical material, text analysis, thesis writing.
	12		**20**				**32**	**98**	

Evaluation strategy	Weight	Assessment Period	Assessment Criteria
Participation in the discussions during seminars.	20%	During the semester.	The following aspects of the work are evaluated: • active participation in seminar discussions; • thorough engagement with the texts under study and the secondary literature.
Seminar presentation.	20%	In accordance with the preliminary fixed date.	The following aspects of the work are evaluated: • clarity and thoroughness of presentation; • depth of understanding of the chosen topic and presentation of the problem; • relevance and appropriateness of the bibliographic sources.
Oral examination.	60%	At the end of the semester or during the exam session.	**Evaluation Criteria for the Oral Examination** 1) Analysis of the chosen and pre-approved topic, and the soundness of conclusions – 6 points: • **6 points:** excellent knowledge of the material; analysis is thorough and well-structured. The student selects appropriate and illustrative examples, contextualizes them convincingly, and offers critical evaluation. Arguments are coherent, original insights are presented, and conclusions are well-founded; • **5 points:** good knowledge of the material; analysis is detailed and coherent. Examples are

			appropriate and contextualized, though not always with full depth. The student demonstrates critical thinking and originality. Conclusions are sound; • **3–4 points:** the student understands and can identify the main aspects of the topic but discusses examples without full contextualization or depth. Analysis is mostly descriptive rather than critical. Conclusions are reasonable but somewhat limited; • **1–2 points:** The student shows partial understanding of the topic and attempts some analysis but arguments lack depth and precision. Discussion remains largely descriptive. Conclusions are only partially supported; • **0 points:** The analysis is incomplete; arguments and conclusions are unsupported.

Generative Artificial Intelligence Use
Generative AI tools must be used and declared in accordance with the procedures established by the Faculty of Philology at Vilnius University. Any undeclared use of such tools, or any use that violates these procedures, constitutes a breach of academic integrity.

Author(s)	Date of Publication	Publication Name	Publication No. or publication volume	Publisher or web link
Required Literature				
Homer. Trans. Robert Fagles.	1990	*The Iliad*		New York: Penguin Classics.
Homer. Trans. Emily Wilson.	2018	*The Odyssey*		New York: Norton, 2018. https://books.galacticjunk.com/%21fantasy/%21Fantasy%20E-Book%20Collection/Homer/Odyssey%20%5Btrans.%20Fagles%5D/Homer%20-%20Odyssey%20%5Btrans.%20Fagles%5D%20%28Penguin%2C%201996%29.pdf
Aeschylus. Trans. Robert Fagles.	1979	*The Oresteia*		New York: Penguin Classics.
Harrison, Jane Ellen	1991	Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (Mythos Books)		Cambridge University Press.
Seferis, George. Translated, edited, and introduced by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard.	1995	*Collected Poems, 1924–1955*		Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.
Cavafy, C. P. Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Revised edition, edited by George Savidis.	1992	*Collected Poems*		Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Vernant, J.-P., Vidal-Naquet, P.	1988	*Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*		New York: Zone Books.
Beaton, Roderick	1999	*An Introduction to Modern Greek Literature*		Oxford University Press, 1999.

Sikelianos, Angelos. Trans. Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard.	1995	*Selected Poems*		Princeton University Press, 1979.
Elytis, Odysseas. Translated by Kimon Friar.	2000	*The Sovereign Sun*		Athens: Icarus / Princeton University Press, 1974.
Additional Literature				
Pausanias, W. H. S. Jones, G. Nagy (eds.)	1918	*Description of Greece*		http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hlnc.prim-src:A_Pausanias_Reader_in_Progress.2018
Bundrick, S.	2005	*Music and Image in Classical Athens*		Cambridge University Press.
Budelmann, Felix (ed.)	1972	*The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric*		Cambridge University Press.
Destrée, P., Murray, P. (eds.)	2015	*A Companion to Ancient Aesthetics*		Wiley-Blackwell.
Halliwell, S.	2022	*The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems.*		Princeton University Press.
Havelock, E.	1963	*Preface to Plato*		Harvard University Press.
Herington, J.	1985	*Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition*		University of California Press.
Murray P., Wilson, P.	2004	*Music and the Muses: The Culture of Mousikē in the Classical Athenian City*		Oxford University Press.

Description updated
18th of November 2026