

Quid discere vultis? Crafting a “student-guided” Latin literature course

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ABSTRACT

This paper poses a fundamental question: how deeply are our Latin students engaging with Latin literature? How many connections are they making between the literature and their lives? Last summer, I asked myself these questions and crafted a course to increase student choice, breadth of reading, and deeper connections with the material. This paper provides some inspiration for new, simple ways to help students discover for themselves authors such as Ovid, Cicero, Catullus, and Horace. The paper shares project topics relating to Ovid's works which allow for student choice, creativity, and personal connection. It also highlights successes and difficulties in my attempt to increase student choice and broaden their understanding of these authors. It suggests that incorporating English readings can be an effective strategy to provide context for the Latin and greater breadth of an author's writing. It reminds us to let go of methods we cling to that may not work for today's students. The paper emphasizes the importance of constant formal and informal feedback from students. Lastly, the paper explores the joy of reading a new, student-selected Latin passage for the first time together with students and learning alongside them.

KEYWORDS

Latin literature, pedagogy, student-centered classroom, student choice, curriculum design, student feedback, performance based assessments

How deeply are our students engaging with Latin literature? How many connections are they making between the literature and their lives? Last year, I experimented with my Latin 4 Honors Latin Literature course by offering students greater input and decisions in what they studied. I wanted to increase student choice and breadth of reading as well as offer students opportunities to make deeper connections with the material. By treating students as composers, explorers, and teachers, I was able to increase student ownership and “buy-in” while also expanding student knowledge and personal connection to Latin literature.

I teach at a JK-12 coed Episcopal day school in Alexandria, Virginia, in which the average class size is 10 students. While the course described in this paper is for a small class, I believe the approach to instruction and assignments can be applied readily to larger classrooms. I have been teaching Latin literature for sixteen years and have felt disheartened that students would come away from my “survey” course really only knowing a few myths from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, select *Amores*, and some of Catullus’ *Carmina*. They had such a limited perspective of Latin literature, in part because for years I had modelled my literature course on the old Catullus/Ovid AP syllabus. Contrast that with their lower level experience using *Latin for the New Millennium*, in which I exposed students to a “diversity of authors, time periods, and subject matters” including post-Roman authors from the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and early modern era, as Dawn LaFon states in the Forward of *Latin for the New Millennium Level 2* (Minkova and Tunberg xi). In the lower levels, I want my students to see the post-Roman legacy of Latin literature throughout the European world. In Latin 4 Honors, students’ first course reading unadapted Latin literature, I aim to expose my students to the traditional canon of Golden Age Latin authors, namely Ovid, Cicero, Catullus, and Horace, since my students will read Caesar and Vergil in AP Latin the following year. I would like my students to have read some works from each of these authors before they enter college but also to have read authors from a wider range of time-periods and subject matter, thus giving them breadth and depth.

I have continued to wrestle with the notion of breadth vs. depth in a Latin literature course itself. Is it better for students to read a wide range of texts, while only experiencing a little bit of each, or for students to immerse themselves in reading and studying one text in great detail? Could students have both breadth and depth? I believe that these are common questions in curricular design. In an attempt to offer greater breadth of study while not losing much depth, I started the year with three basic goals:

1. Students will read English excerpts from each author.
2. Students will read a wider selection from each author in both English and Latin.
3. Students will have some choice in deciding what texts to read from each author.

Because I wanted my students to have a greater perspective of each author than in previous years, I decided to let go of the desire, and perceived need, to read only Latin texts in Latin class. Reading translations of Latin text can prove valuable too in a Latin classroom, especially if it helps students contextualize and understand the Latin they read. We often read aloud and discussed English translations in class. For longer readings and individual projects, students read translations at home. This new approach to my survey course allowed students to understand an author's style and works more quickly than if they were to learn them only by reading small excerpts of Latin texts.

I was confronted with a question, "How do I allow students to choose what they read when they do not know all the options?" I decided the easiest way to invite student choice was to provide a brief overview of an author's works and then let the students become investigators. Once they had informed themselves more about each author's works, they could decide what they wanted to study and pursue in projects, in-class readings, and presentations. For instance, students selected their own Ovid creative writing projects, their own explorations of Cicero's writings, and their own Catullus poems to teach their classmates. Letting my students steer might make for a bumpy road, but I posited that they would learn better when they were in control.

I divided the school year roughly into quarters. We started with Ovid, read Cicero in the late fall and winter, Catullus in the winter and early spring, and Horace at the end of the year. For each of the first three authors, I applied a different method for increasing student choice. Students became composers like Ovid, explorers of Cicero, and teachers of Catullus. This paper will address how I approached teaching Ovid with greater success than in previous years by letting students select and compose their own performance-based assessment in the form of a creative writing assignment. Then it will explore what I learned about teaching Cicero and letting go of my pre-conceived notions of what students want and find beneficial. Students became explorers of Cicero's prolific writings and selected what they wanted to read. Next, the paper will explore how I offered students choice in reading and teaching Catullus. Each student selected an invective poem to teach the class. Lastly, the paper will show that curricular design can be a challenging process; in other words, I did not design an optimal method for student choice when reading Horace. During my "*Quid discere vultis?*" presentation at the American Classical League Institute in 2018, teachers contributed their suggestions for a student-guided Horace unit. It is my hope that the reader can apply lessons from my instruction in Ovid, Cicero, and

Catullus, as well as suggestions from other teachers, to craft an engaging, student-guided Horace unit.

STUDENTS AS COMPOSERS: OVID AND STUDENT-SELECTED PROJECTS

Before my class read any Ovid, I provided students with an overview of Ovid's major works and we talked about each. The [overview](#) included *Heroides*, *Amores*, *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*, *Ars Amatoria*, *Metamorphoses*, *Fasti*, *Tristia*, *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, *Remedia Amoris*, and *Ibis*. Each description was brief (no more than three lines), including just a few lines about the date of publication, number of books, the content, meter, and other notable features. In addition, beneath each text I provided a link to an English translation from sources such as Kline's "Poetry In Translation" ([Ovid Sample](#)) and "Perseus Project" ([Catullus Sample](#)). After reviewing each of the major works with the class, I explained that we would read excerpts from many of them in Latin or English and then students would complete, individually or in pairs, a [Performance Based Assessment](#) at the end of the Ovid unit (Hilliard Edutopia Dec. 7th 2015). I gave students choices for creative projects based on each of Ovid's works. Students could decide which work to study in greater detail based on which project they were interested in completing.

During our Ovid unit, students selected some of the texts that they read in Latin. From Ovid's *Heroides*, they chose Penelope's letter to Odysseus because they had read Homer's *Odyssey* in English class as freshmen. They also chose Dido's letter to Aeneas because they recognized these characters and some students knew that they play a central role in the AP Latin curriculum. We read Dido's letter in English since my goals were for students to understand Ovid's style of writing in the *Heroides* and to learn about the major players of *The Aeneid*. We then read an excerpt of Penelope's letter in Latin from the National Latin Exam's [2011 5/6 Exam poetry passage](#) (page 13) as well as more of the letter in English. There are some inherent risks in letting students choose the texts to read:

- You might not know their selections well,
- You will have more work to do preparing the lines, and
- You might have trouble finding salient, relevant material.

However, each of these risks comes with advantages:

- You are invited to learn something new,
- You can model learning alongside your students, and
- You have a reason to look at lines closely to determine what passages might resonate with your students.

I was fortunate that my students selected a passage that already had some vocabulary notes and comprehension questions. I think it is likely that many students would select Penelope's and Dido's letters for reasons similar to those of my students. If they do not, you have an opportunity to explore other couples in the ancient world. Regardless of their selections, each passage can be used to illustrate Ovid's inventive style, representing the underrepresented female perspective. A larger question then surfaces, "Is Ovid really representing women or is it presumptuous of him, a male, to be their voice?" This question will not be lost on your students; it was not lost on mine. We had some great discussions of how students felt about Ovid's *Heroides*.

In addition, we read in Latin *Amores* 1.1 as well as 1.9, at the request of some students. We also read *Amores* 1.2 in English. [Amores 1.1](#) presents Ovid's clever discussion of genre and meter. Students enjoyed learning how Cupid stole one foot from Ovid, thus forcing him to write in elegiac couplet on the topic of love rather than the epic he expected. In *Amores* 1.2, Ovid submits to Amor, and in 1.9, he compares lovers and soldiers. Students had heard of *Amores* 1.9, and they were excited to read it in Latin, so we did. Teachers should capitalize on student excitement and interest. If students ask to read something, it is likely that they will invest themselves in it more than if a teacher dictates what they are to read.

In a break from previous years, I introduced a wider variety of Ovid's texts and used English translations to explore them. Students read excerpts of *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*, *Ars Amatoria*, *Fasti*, and *Remedia Amoris*. For the *Metamorphoses*, I gave students a list of the common myths that I have read with students and asked them which they wanted to read. They chose Daphne and Apollo, Icarus and Daedalus, and Pygmalion. It was serendipitous that students chose Icarus and Daedalus because I had already selected an excerpt in Latin from the beginning of [Book 2](#) of *Ars Amatoria*, which tells their story (Kline Poetry In Translation). Ovid published *Ars Amatoria* in AD 2 and *Metamorphoses* in AD 8. Even when he was writing about love, one can see Ovid itching to describe mythological stories.

While we were still reading Latin and English selections from Ovid, students received a handout with objectives and project descriptions (see Appendix 1). I gave students roughly a week and a half to peruse Ovid's works and decide on their project. I underestimated how much of Ovid's works students would read to prepare for their project. The process of choosing a project had multiple benefits. It required students to read extensively one of Ovid's works to learn its style, content, and themes. Some students chose to read large portions of several works. Students also had to think about how the text relates to their lives or to society today. They needed to find a project they were passionate about and to which they could commit their time and energy. Some students started with one idea and then changed their projects when they realized their interest lay in a different work or connection. Students worked on their projects for two weeks at home during the first weeks of our Cicero unit. The rubric assessed student performance in four areas: 1) connections, 2) writing inspired by couplets or specific lines of Ovid, 3) original and creative work, and 4) understanding of Ovid's work (see Appendix 2).

Students have granted permission for their works to be shown in this paper. I thank my students for allowing me to share their work as well as for providing feedback on the course. I show some of their works not to boast of any student's ability, but rather to provide examples of the range of creative projects and give evidence of the depth of student thought and connections, the level of which did surprise me. One student, Caroline, chose to write a *Heroides* piece from [Melania to Donald Trump](#), an excerpt of which follows.

*A woman, from Slovenia, sends this to you, Donald.
This has been the last straw.
You promise to ban immigrants and protect American jobs,
Do you not remember, dear husband, that I myself am an immigrant?
I came from Slovenia as a teenager, seeking the freedom
that America promises.
I came to follow my dream, to be a model,
Yet whose dream am I tied down to now?
I came here for opportunities for a better life,
I am a person too, Donald, do I not deserve the same opportunities?
And now I am tied down to you, forced to follow your dreams.
This whim to become president has gone too far, it has gone too far.
With you in office, I am more trapped than ever.*

*I am living the “American dream”, alright, forced to silence,
Forced to keep my opinions quiet. Enough.
Now I write this to you, Donald, to stand up for myself
and people like me.
Not only am I an immigrant, but I am a woman.
Yet you insult that part of me too.
But you don’t just insult me Donald, oh no.
You insult every woman in the world,
With your childish and arrogant words,
Do you really think that you are better than us?
Wiser? Braver? Superior?
I believe otherwise.
...
I leave you with this dear husband:
Be more respectful and less arrogant,
Be a good president, a good husband, a good father.
This I urge you, Mr. President,
For I am watching you, your son is watching you,
The world is watching you.*

At the end of the letter, you can see Cicero’s influence emerging with a *tricolon crescens*, since we were already reading Cicero while students were working on the project. Caroline’s piece revealed that she was thinking a lot about the President and First Lady as they are dominating the news.

Other students had different focuses based on their own lives. A musical student, Patrick, was inspired by the many literary and musical allusions in [Amores 1.15](#). He chose to write his own [Amores](#) poem in a Google Doc with musical allusions explained in Comments. In the last slide of the hyperlink, the red highlighted musicians indicate to whom he alluded in each decade. His allusions to musicians are not much different from Ovid’s allusions since Homer, Callimachus, et al. were musicians of their times, sharing poems orally. Two students, Jane and Tory, wrote in the manner of Ovid’s *Tristia*. Jane wrote a description of feeling banished from her homeland at birth since she had been adopted from [China](#). As Ovid addresses his little book at the beginning of the *Tristia*, she addresses her birth certificate, the only piece of paper that remains for her from her homeland. Tory described a particular

Sri Lankan man's feelings of separation from his [homeland](#). Yet another student, Alicia, was planning to love other authors until Ovid came and conquered her, much like Cupid conquered Ovid in *Amores* 1.1. Alicia even attempted to write her piece in elegiac couplet, although this is hard to do in [English](#).

Although the projects themselves were noteworthy, there were three unanticipated results revealing the importance of student-guided exploration. First, during winter break, three students emailed me an article sharing that the Rome city council revoked Ovid's banishment on the 2000th anniversary of his [death](#). Then during a trip to Italy, students surprised me by bringing "Ovid's ashes" to spread them on Italian soil. They had printed each of his works that we read in the fall, burned them, brought the ashes to Italy, and decided to spread them on Mt. Vesuvius. Lastly, in February students wrote a paper on Daphne in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to submit to the Classical Association of Virginia Classical Essay Contest. Yet another unanticipated consequence of broadening the survey of Ovid was how one student synthesized a few of his works. Four months after reading these works from Ovid, Tory wrote a paper in the style of the *Heroides* set in the modern day. Daphne finally has a chance to let Ovid know what she thinks of his depiction of her in the *Metamorphoses*. Daphne describes how Ovid pretends to know what women want in his *Ars Amatoria* but that he really does not understand women. In her paper, Tory often referenced the *Ars Amatoria* and *Metamorphoses* from a 1st person *Heroides* [perspective](#). Her paper opened my eyes to the power of teaching a wider selection of one author's works.

STUDENTS AS EXPLORERS: CICERO AND LEARNING TO LET GO

Although I was pleased with the Ovid unit and although the students really enjoyed it and learned a lot in the process, I could not let go of my preconceived notions of what brings Cicero to life for students. When I was in high school, I loved reading Cicero's *In Catilinam I* in its entirety and memorizing the opening lines. Reciting Cicero's lines brought Cicero to life for me, and therefore I have always thought it would be the same for my students. This has indeed been true for previous years' students. However, once students had experienced the breadth of Ovid's writing, they were not interested in reading one entire work of Cicero.

I began my Cicero unit much like the Ovid unit. This time we looked at The Latin Library to see all of Cicero's works. I asked students a few basic questions: In what three genres did he write? What does *in*, *de*, and *pro* mean in front of his

speeches? Do you recognize any of the names in the titles of his speeches? Can you guess which of these speeches are his most famous? Why do you guess these? Then I had students research the speeches, focusing on his most famous ones first. Students became explorers! Each student read about Cicero's speeches and made a case for the one we would read as a class. We voted on the work after they spoke on behalf of the works they had selected. My plan was to have students read excerpts of one speech, philosophical work, and letter. However, I could not let go of the speech I loved.

I chose *In Catilinam I* for my students and we read excerpts of the speech using "Latin For The New Millennium Latin 3 Student Text" (pages 160-205). Students listened to an audio recording of the speech and memorized the opening lines. Students could choose what passage they wanted to read aloud expressively to demonstrate their appreciation and understanding of his speech. While I offered them some choice, it was not enough (see Appendix 3). My students had just finished a unit in which they exercised choice and ownership. As I learned at the end of the Cicero unit, students did not want to learn Cicero my way. It can be hard to jettison old habits, especially if they have worked in past years. My students were curious. They wanted to know more about Cicero's other speeches and to read excerpts of them. Unfortunately, we had spent much of the quarter reading *In Catilinam I* and therefore had little time left to explore other texts. We only had time for an excerpt of a philosophical work, not a letter. I reasoned that this was acceptable because they had already read letters to Terentia and many passages about Atticus from Cornelius Nepos' *De Viris Illustribus* in level 3. In reality, one could teach an entire unit or year on just Cicero's letters, which shed so much light on the real politics of the late Republic.

We looked at Cicero's philosophical works, and my students spent most of a class period investigating them using Wikipedia, translations, commentaries, and really whatever they could find online. At the end of the period, they voted silently on what they wanted to read. I was surprised that my students chose *De Officiis*, about which I knew very little at the time. When I asked them why they selected the piece, I realized it was an obvious choice. Wikipedia describes *De Officiis* as, "a treatise divided into three books, in which Cicero expounds his conception of the best way to live, behave, and observe moral obligations." My students wanted to know the best way to live and behave. We learned together that Cicero had addressed this work to his son, Marcus, and that he instructs Marcus in the beginning of the work to learn

both Latin and Greek and to study philosophy as well as oratory. We only read a little of *De Officiis*, 1.1-2 and 2.5-6 in Latin and plenty more in English.

What are some benefits to student choice? It broadens one's horizons as a teacher. The teacher and students are learning together. The students are engaged because they chose the text. The teacher becomes an explorer of new works in the process of finding something accessible and relevant to them. In my opinion, these benefits outweigh the challenges: having to stay a step ahead of your students, needing to read a lot of the text in Latin and English to determine what will be accessible and meaningful to them, and possibly not finding any excerpts that qualify. My students appreciated my effort and flexibility in guiding them through their text. In surveys after the unit, students unanimously expressed a desire to read more of Cicero's philosophical works. Conversely, most also expressed the desire to read less of *In Catilinam I* and not to recite any of the oration aloud (see Appendix 3). I was surprised, but I had learned a lesson. Let go!

STUDENTS AS TEACHERS: CATULLUS AND STUDENTS TEACHING INVECTIVES

Catullus' *Carmina* are relatively short and tend to have clear messages. Therefore, they offer a great opportunity for students to read a poem, synthesize it, and teach it to their classmates. I decided to give students choice and thus greater freedom and ownership by allowing them to select the poem they would teach the class. Of Catullus' 116 *Carmina*, many are sexually explicit and so we did not read them as a class. This narrowed the playing field for student choice. In a similar manner to introducing Cicero, I provided an overview of Catullus' poems and had the students discover the basic categories into which they fall. [Wikipedia](#) has a chart summarizing for each poem its type, theme, and addressees. Very quickly my students could see that his poems focused on Lesbia, friends, miscellaneous topics, or invectives. First, we read in Latin *Carmen 1* as well as poems about Lesbia (2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 51, 70, 72, and 85) and Catullus' brother (101) using Kitchell and Smith's *Catullus: A Legamus Transitional Reader*. Next, we read Catullus *Carmen 13* to see how Catullus writes somewhat affectionately to a friend before observing how he attacks many others. Students then had the opportunity to explore and read invectives, using the list found on Wikipedia. It would be naïve to think that students would not explore the more sexually explicit invectives on their own. Rather than assign

particular invectives, I suggested they read as many in English as possible while holding in their minds the dear poems of Catullus that they had already read in Latin.

Students knew that they would have the opportunity to teach the class one invective of their choice from a select list of appropriate ones. However, they did not know what that list would be. Therefore, they read myriad invectives and ranked the ones they deemed “clean enough” and were most interested in teaching. Note that while my students were able to select an invective to teach the class, for larger classes of twenty or thirty students, a teacher might want to include Lesbia poems as options. I then projected a Google Doc in class with a list of the appropriate poems by poem number, and students raced to sign up for their poem. Students had incentive to read the invectives and take notes on them so they could increase the likelihood of selecting a poem they wanted. *Carpe carmen!* Students seized their poems quickly. I gave my students one week to read and prepare to teach their poem in whatever manner they wanted. Here is the prompt:

You are responsible for teaching the class one Catullus invective during the last two weeks of the quarter. Your presentation should last approximately 22 minutes including time for questions. You may present it in any way that you see fit, but must be sure to translate the lines (or most of them) for your classmates and convey the main point of the invective. The more you engage your audience and help them learn the material, the better.

Some chose to teach via SMART Notebook, others via PowerPoint, and still others via Kahoot. They had ownership. They were empowered. I should note that students elected, prior to their preparation, to have their instructional lessons not be graded. Despite this, students prepared well to teach their peers because the fear of embarrassment during a presentation is a strong motivator. One student commented later in a Google Form that she wished the class had been quizzed on all the poems thus forcing her to learn the other poems as well as she had her own (see Appendix 4). I certainly will incorporate this in the future.

STUDENT OWNERSHIP:**HORACE AND HOW TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH CHOICE**

I am left with the question, “How do I provide my students with choice when reading Horace?” Perhaps it is because I think he is challenging to read in Latin and to understand even in English. Perhaps it is because I am not familiar with all of his works. Perhaps it is because I wanted to ensure that the students read certain *Odes* at the end of the school year. Regardless of which was the main reason, I could not come up with a great model for student choice with Horace. We read excerpts of *Sermones* 1.1 and ten *Odes* (1.1, 1.5, 1.9, 1.11, 1.13, 1.23, 1.37, 2.3, 3.9, and 3.30). Students read *Carmen Saeculare*, *Ars Poetica*, and the rest of *Sermones* 1.1 in English. They appreciated the opportunity to read some Horace in English, but I wish that I had read more in English with them. Then I offered students a choice between five *Odes* for which one we would read to conclude the year: 1.22, 1.25, 2.14, 3.13, or 4.7. We read brief descriptions of each and students voted. They decided to read about spring giving way to thoughts of death, which was not the tone with which I would have chosen to end the school year. Students will surprise you.

At the 2018 ACL Institute, I put the question to those attending my “*Quid discere vultis?*” presentation, “How would you offer students choice in what Horace to read?” They offered some great suggestions. I wish I had thought of some of these ideas before teaching Horace this year, but it is not too late. There is always another year in which to allow students to choose, in new creative ways, what Horace they read and what they will do with these readings. Here were some of the attendees’ replies.

- “You can do too much Horace (like too much Cicero). Perhaps limit your reading to *Odes* giving them 15-20 *Odes* in summary and asking them to choose 8-10 to read.”
- “Choose a poem from Horace and one from Catullus and compare them. Create a conversation between Horace and Catullus in which Horace gives advice to Catullus.”
- “Write a refusal poem. Learn to say no. Or think about the *Sermones*. Perhaps act them out; perhaps think in groups for this final author.”

- “Have the students design some project options for the following year.”
- “Read some *Epodes*. Many are invectives. Allow students to compare and contrast them to Catullus’ invectives.”
- “Read more of Horace’s satires in English. Have students write their own satires.”
- “Have students draft responses directly to Horace. They could be debate format, editorial, rap battles, rant videos, etc.”

CONCLUSIONS

At the end of the year, I found myself reflecting on what went well and what did not. When did I stick to my plan and when did I veer off it? What could my students tell me about what worked well and what needed adjusting?

I had a few big “takeaways” from this year’s survey of Latin literature class.

- Learn with my students what they choose.
- Read more texts in English with students.
- Let go more often of my preconceived notions and personal predilections. In reading what students want, nothing will be perfect, but students will be more engaged.
- Let students demonstrate their understanding and connections to their lives and the modern day.
- Keep an open feedback dialogue with students. Constantly seek both formal and informal feedback.

Since I was experimenting with this new Latin literature course, I solicited from students considerable feedback, both formal and informal. The informal feedback consisted of open discussions about what they liked, disliked, desired, recommended, and learned. In addition, assessments were both formative and summative. Honest conversations, self-assessments, and low stakes comprehension and

language questions allowed me to see what was working for them. Some formative assessments included individual check-ins with students when they were working in class, the use of whiteboards to answer comprehension questions, exit questions, and students using thumbs up, down, or sideways to show me what they thought of their own understanding. These formative assessments were interspersed with more traditional summative quizzes and tests. It should come as no surprise that my students favored the formative assessments and projects to the traditional tests. They also are more likely to remember the projects, positively in the case of the Ovid project and negatively in that of the Cicero oration, than they are to remember any quiz or test (see Appendices 3 and 4).

The desire to increase student choice in Latin classes is resonating with other teachers for similar reasons. Recently, Latin teacher Dani Bostick published, "[An Experiment in Student Choice in the Latin II/III Classroom: Can A Little Textual Autonomy Create Lifelong Latin Readers?](#)" Her classroom took student choice a step further even in that her students could choose what authors to read and then independently study them. She concludes her article with this statement: "Choice in the Latin classroom gives students a chance to find what fascinates them." I discovered the same thing to be true in my course. Learning has more meaning for students when they have some ownership over what they learn.

I have been pondering a bigger question, "What will my students retain a decade from now and even carry with them the rest of their lives?" I am sure a student will not come back to me raving about the ablative absolute a decade from now. Do not get me wrong, grammar matters. Grammatical knowledge is essential for students to read and comprehend challenging texts. However, does grammar deeply matter to students? I predict that students in this class will tell me about their Ovid projects, Cicero orations and selections, and Catullus lessons a decade from now — about how they became composers, explorers, and teachers. They will reminisce on what they liked about them and what they did not like. They will recall the work that they owned and navigated themselves. They will tell me about the connections they made, some of which were deeply personal. They will remember the English translations we read to help contextualize the Latin texts. And they certainly will remember learning alongside me and sometimes selecting what we would be learning.

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APPENDIX 1: OVID PROJECT: OBJECTIVES AND PROJECT OPTIONS

Objectives:

- Students will try to attain an understanding of who Ovid is through the range of his writing
- Students draw connections between themes Ovid expressed in ancient literature and contemporary examples in media or personal lives
- Students connect their own creative output to a couplet or two of Ovid (i.e. 2-4 lines) and explain how those lines inspired or paralleled their creative output.
- Students develop creative writing.

Project:

I will introduce each of Ovid's works to you. Individually, or with a partner, you should read selections of each of the works in English and find the one that catches your interest for your Performance Based Assessment. You should come to an understanding of who Ovid is based on the range of his writing and complete the PBA below to demonstrate your knowledge of the work and your ability to connect it to the modern world. You will present your project to the class and connect it to 2-4 Latin lines from the work upon which your creative output was inspired or with which it was parallel.

Heroides (19BC) "[The Heroines](#)" – 15 poems; elegiac couplet; addressed from lovers in mythology to their loves; invented a new model in that women wrote to men; six additional letters are paired.

Project: Write a love (or lack of it) letter from a female to a male. Try to represent the unrepresented voice. You may use characters from popular culture or literature of the last couple hundred years. Make sure the view of the characters has been predominantly male-centered and be sure to represent their situation through the female voice.

Amores (16BC) "[The Loves](#)" – 3 books; elegiac couplet; model of love elegy for Tibullus and Propertius.

Project: Write a poem about the triumphs of love in the manner of one of Ovid's *Amores*. Set this in a modern time frame but be sure to use Ovidian thoughts about love as expressed in one of his *Amores*.

Medicamina Faciei Femineae "[Women's Facial Cosmetics](#)" – 100 lines survive; a didactic poem on facial beauty treatments for women; perhaps a parody on serious didactic poetry (didactic = teaching/instructional).

Project: Write an article explaining how a person can best treat his/her face. Be sure to make it didactic and Ovidian in nature. Since only a little of this text is extant from Ovid, you will need to read other works of Ovid to help you develop your style. Your 2-4 lines of Latin may come from this text or one of the others.

Ars Amatoria (AD 2) "[The Art of Love](#)" – 3 books; elegiac couplet; instructional elegies for men and women on how to navigate relationships; Book 1 offers how men can find a woman; Book 2 on how men can keep one; Book 3 came later and offered advice to women on how they could find and keep men. Other links for Books 2 and 3.

Project: Write a short selection of an instructional essay on how a man can find and/or keep a woman. You may instead choose to write about how a woman can find and keep a man. Make sure the explanation is set in the modern day but drawn from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.

Metamorphoses (AD 8) "[Transformations](#)" – 15 books; over 250 myths; dactylic hexameter; Ovid's most famous work.

Project: Create two modern myths that involve transformation and segue between them in Ovidian style. The two transformation myths could be local and personal or more global and etiological.

Fasti (c. AD 8) "[Festivals](#)" – 6 books survive (likely of a full 12); elegiac couplet; each book covers one month of the year and explores the festivals and holidays of the year in chronological order; explains mythology and history that leads to holidays. Other links for Books 2-5.

Project: Describe the major traditions and holidays at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School in the manner of the *Fasti*. Explain in chronological order the origins of these traditions, be they historical or mythological.

Tristia (after AD 8) "[Sad Things/Sorrows](#)" – 5 books; elegiac couplet; written from exile

Project: Describe a banishment/separation in the modern day and write about it in the tone and manner that Ovid would. Other links for Books 2-4.

Epistulae Ex Ponto (after AD 8) “Letters from Pontus”– 4 books; elegiac couplet; Ovid describes the difficulties of his exile and pleads for leniency; they are addressed to individuals by name.

Remedia Amoris – advice and strategies on how to avoid being hurt by love; companion poem to *Ars Amatoria*.

Ibis – a curse poem against Augustus for his exile.

Lost Works:

Consolatio ad Liviam “Consolation to Livia”

Halieutica “On Fishing”

Nux “Walnut Tree”

Somnium “Dream”

APPENDIX 2: RUBRIC FOR OVID PROJECTS

Ovid Project Grade _____

Name _____

(25 points each)	A (23.75)	B (21.25)	C (18.75)	D (16.25)
Connections	Most sentences make connections between Ovid and a contemporary example.	Some sentences make connections between Ovid and a contemporary example.	A few sentences make connections between Ovid and a contemporary example.	Almost no sentences make connections between Ovid and a contemporary example.
Writing inspired by couplets or specific lines of Ovid	Most of the sentences are clearly inspired by specific couplets of Ovid.	Some of the sentences are clearly inspired by specific couplets of Ovid.	There are a few sentences clearly inspired by specific couplets of Ovid.	There are no sentences clearly inspired by specific couplets of Ovid.
O r i g i n a l and creative work	The writing is original and creative.	The writing is original but not very creative.	The writing is creative but not very original.	The writing is neither creative nor original.
Understanding of Ovid's work	The work demonstrates a thorough understanding of Ovid's work, on which it is based.	The work demonstrates a general understanding of Ovid's work, on which it is based.	The work demonstrates a basic understanding of Ovid's work, on which it is based.	The work demonstrates no understanding of Ovid's work, on which it is based.

A full 25 points can be earned in any category if the evidence is stellar.

APPENDIX 3: OVID AND CICERO SURVEY

N.B. There were seven students in the class, but one student never completed the survey.

What did you like most about the Ovid project?

A. I liked that we got some freedom of choice on our projects. It allowed for me to have control, which I don't like to lose. I also could bounce between a few topics, so I probably ended up learning more than I would have if we were handed something and told to do it.

B. The versatility and wide range of options

C. I liked actually reading Ovid to figure out what topic to pick.

D. Being able to choose our own project and being able to really do what we wanted with it

E. I enjoyed being able to find my way through the works of Ovid and decide how to write my own work of similar style

F. Creative prospects

Describe the challenge of choosing your own project.

A. Personally I kept bouncing between ideas and it was hard to choose the best idea. I tried starting one of them and it wasn't working out as well so honestly I just switched to another idea for a project even though it may have taken more time. You had to really make sure that the project was reasonable. It was also slightly difficult to just write in a style like Ovid, which I understood the point of, but he is such a great writer maybe phrasing that differently would have been good.

B. Figuring out which Ovid Project to do and which I could execute best with my ideas

C. It was difficult to know what the expectation for the assignment was because we didn't have an example to work from.

D. Deciding what to specifically focus on

E. The biggest challenge of the project was having no precedent to base my own work on. I feel like I went in a bit blind and had no sort of baseline to check.

F. I did eeny meeny miny moe between two.

Describe the benefit of choosing your own project.

- A. I got to pick something that was interesting for me personally to learn about because I don't like the things that most of the other people do.
- B. It made it very personalized and reflected your best, personal work as it was based off of your ideas, not a set theme
- C. I liked getting to read a variety of Ovid before the project.
- D. Allowing yourself to be more creative and become more engaged in the project and texts themselves
- E. One of the benefits of picking my own project was that I was able to write about what I wanted to, and not have an entirely set prompt.
- F. Doing the *Amores* allowed me to pretty easily translate my section to a "modern day version."

Approximately how much time did you spend on the project?

- A. Honestly, I have no idea, but a decent portion
- B. 3-4
- C. I spent about 5 hours on it.
- D. 4 or 5 hours
- E. about 4 to 5 hours.
- F. 6 hours

What did you learn about yourself when completing the project?

- A. I like to have control over the things that I do, and when I have control over them I do better as a student especially because typically I will be more engaged.
- B. That everything we learn can somehow be connected to me on a personal level, and the things that we learn can relate to even now.
- C. I learned about Ovid's writing style.
- D. That once I get into a creative writing roll, I can seemingly keep going and going.
- E. Nothing
- F. I learned that once I get going, the work gets easy.

What specific connections did you make between Ovid's work and the modern day? Please elaborate.

- A. His works and attitudes towards love, sadness, and traditions are still extremely relevant and correct towards today's world and time. Particularly, I played with his

feelings of sadness, loss, and abandonment in the *Tristia* and there were so many different places that I could go with it that as I stated earlier, at first I could not decide. B. Similar themes like separation, love, change, etc. are never going to really disappear. Even if the circumstances are different these themes are timeless throughout life and we can always relate to them somehow.

C. I wrote mine on the *Amores*.

D. A lot of the same themes about love and war are still used today in projects such as major books or movies. Even 2000 years later, we still are discussing the same things that philosophers back then were talking about.

E. I was able to make the connections between many of Ovid's examples of love and compare them to modern day examples, such as those shown in popular media and more.

F. Celebrities are celebrities are celebrities. The famous poets and such in Ovid's time don't seem that different in fame to those famous musicians that we celebrate today.

How well do you think you understand the tone and content of Ovid's major works (*Ars Amatoria*, *Amores*, *Heroides*, *Metamorphoses*, *Tristia*)? Scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the most.

A. 8; B. 8; C. 10; D. 8; E. 9; F. 8

How well do you understand the tone and content of the work of Ovid on which you chose to complete your project?

A. 8; B. 10; C. 10; D. 9; E. 8; F. 9

If you could change one thing about the project what would it be and why?

A. I think that I would possibly not tell them what they had to do with the project but tell them just about the relating it to modern day and then write like Ovid.

B. More class time, specific examples of previous projects

C. I didn't like that I didn't know what to expect from the assignment and that which works we could choose were limited.

D. Instead of choosing a specific line or section of lines, possibly take a book or two and continue the story and elaborate on the topic.

E. One thing I would change about the project is that of having us read some of the other previous student's works to see what the works of other students had been like.

F. I don't have anything in particular.

What did you enjoy most about reading Cicero's *In Catilinam*?

A. I enjoyed his passion against Catiline really shining through in his writings and eventually being able to pick up on a lot of his styles and figures of speech that he used often such as hendiadys. I also particularly liked his paragraph long metaphor about the infection in the host compared to the conspiracy in the city of Rome.

B. Seeing how Cicero was able to create tones and crescendos etc. with only words on paper

C. I like actually reading the text and thinking about the text in a historical way. Cicero has immense talent even if I don't particularly like him.

D. The accusatory tone behind almost all of what Cicero was saying and how he knew what was going on before anyone else, or even Catiline on some matters

E. I enjoyed the intense manner of speaking and reading about how Cicero talked about the conspiracy against him.

F. I liked how detailed Cicero was in his roast, how he played mind games with the senators, saying that everyone already knows Catiline did what he did, yet they don't know that everyone actually doesn't know.

Did you find listening to Cicero's *In Catilinam* to be beneficial?

A. No; B. Yes; C. Yes; D. No; E. Yes; F. No

Describe what went into your choice of the additional text from Cicero we would read.

A. I wanted to read something other than a "roast session" and I wanted to read something really different than anything we had ever read before. Philosophy sounded particularly interesting, and I ended up enjoying it.

B. I like the analogy of how Catiline was like a pestilence in the body of Rome and related it to sickness in your own body.

C. Adding on from above, the recording sounded very Italian and didn't really give the sense of what I would imagine Cicero sounding like. I picked the passage which I liked the most.

D. Something that went along the same tone and the passage we had to memorize. Something that I remembered well from class.

E. My choice of the additional text that we would read from Cicero was mainly that it seemed like an interesting read because I wished to compare it to my own beliefs.

F. I like listening to philosophy.

Did you enjoy reading small excerpts of *De Officiis*?

A. Yes; B. Yes; C. Yes; D. No; E. Yes; F. Yes

If you could choose one other text of Cicero to read still, what would it be and why?

A. Probably another philosophical text such as the one about nature and gods

B. Another philosophy one, it is interesting to hear both sides of oratory and philosophy

C. Probably *De fato* because it seemed interesting

D. Book II of *In Catilinam* because I would like to see how Cicero's tone would change between the two speeches

E. *De fato*

F. *De Natura Deorum*

What is your overall opinion of delivering Cicero's opening lines of *In Catilinam*?

A. I do not like doing that at all to the highest extent.

B. I do not love it, but it helps with stage fright and really makes you understand the lines, it also reminds you that Latin can be spoken like other languages.

C. I don't like public speaking assignments, so this assignment was not my favorite.

D. They are very entertaining to re-enact. It was a lot of fun being able to become Cicero himself and almost imagine what it would have been like from his perspective about the events that had transpired and being able to tell all your friends about them and mock Catiline.

E. Difficult, stressful

F. I don't like recitations, so I wasn't very much fond of this.

What did you learn about Cicero's oration through the process?

A. I learned about his juxtaposition of words and the uses of many tricolon crescens and anaphora.

B. He was very tedious with word choices and the rhetoric he added throughout.

- C. I learned about the styles of oratory which I researched independently trying to figure out how to best deliver the oration.
- D. That it really must have been a terrifying time not only for Cicero while he was being hunted down, but also for Catiline who was being patronized and the rest of the senators who had to watch and let the tension build over what Catiline had attempted to do.
- E. I learned how Cicero gave speeches and spoke to audiences, which seem to be incredibly different from how we tend to give speeches today.
- F. How good his memory must be to memorize the entire thing

What did you learn about yourself through the process?

- A. I learned that I hate speaking in front of people and I still never want to do it again.
- B. A reminder that thinking too much is not good and I should trust in what I know.
- C. I learned that I don't like public speaking for a grade.
- D. That I am able to memorize a substantial amount of lines, nevertheless Latin! Also, that with practice, I become more confident and as a result am able to succeed.
- E. I learned I'm still not good at public speaking, even in front of one person.
- F. That I'm not good at public speaking

How much time did you spend preparing for the oration?

- A. Weeks
- B. 1.5 - 2 weeks
- C. 7 hours
- D. 4 hours
- E. About a week and a half. However, that prep time wasn't the most efficient.
- F. 7 hours

If you could change one thing about the Cicero unit, what would you change and why?

- A. The oration
- B. Less *In Catilinam* and instead more of a variety of Cicero's works
- C. First, going on the question above, the due date was pretty unclear for a long time. I would have started earlier had I know an exact due date earlier. I would get rid of the oratory piece even though I know you like it. It's stressful and I don't think it

helps increase my understanding of the text. Also, I would try to read more Cicero so that students have a greater understanding of the 50 shades of Cicero. Cicero wrote so many works and I would have liked to read more of them this unit.

D. I wish we had started with the lines being said by that person on YouTube to get a better understanding of the tone and message before we actually started or began translating the lines.

E. Change the length of the passage we translated. I got kinda bored about halfway through *In Catilinam* so maybe mix up the readings. Alternate between two of them.

F. I wouldn't do the recitation personally.

APPENDIX 4: END OF YEAR 4 HONORS REFLECTION

N.B. 5 of the 7 students in the class completed the reflection.

What worked this year? (What should Mr. Hochberg continue to do in future?)

- A. Ovid projects
- B. Give us choice in quarterly projects.
- C. I liked the Ovid and Cicero units a lot — just in general all of it. The Ovid, Horace, and Catullus books are helpful. Nightly homework was good, helpful, and manageable. I liked presenting a Catullus poem and that helped me understand my poem better. (Maybe in the future have a quick quiz of the presentations — I didn't remember other people's poems as much.) I like our class dynamic a lot. By having a non-hand raising environment students get to talk more which is good.
- D. Ovid project
- E. Large tests, the method of going over the poems in class after we prepared them for homework

What didn't work so well? (Or what should Mr. Hochberg change for next year?)

- A. Some of the odes and poems were very similar which made it seem repetitive
- B. (left blank)
- C. Horace had too little variety because many of the odes sound the same. Catullus got whiny and annoying towards the end. I felt like we spent a lot of time on Catullus and Horace without getting many different subject matters. I didn't like translating poems in class.
- D. Make the teaching the class for a grade.
- E. Small quizzes

What are you most proud of in Latin this year?

- A. My Ovid project
- B. Getting a B on the final
- C. Being able to translate actual text
- D. Ovid project and I could memorize the recitation
- E. My understanding of the poems we read

How have you improved as a student and Latin student this year?

- A. I can more easily translate and mark up texts.
- B. Understanding how I prioritize subjects and assignments effectively
- C. This year we got to read “real Latin” which proves that we actually know stuff.
- D. Become better at translating
- E. Learning a lot of literary devices and how they further develop the Latin and understanding the deeper meanings of poems

What do you think you still need to improve upon and/or review?

- A. Sight passages without super familiar vocab and recognizing clauses within
- B. Sight translating
- C. I don’t know any actual grammar. I can memorize grammatical forms in passages from class and can translate ok but I don’t actually know any of it.
- D. Still work on translating
- E. Some grammatical constructions like supine

What will you remember most from this year in Latin 4 Honors?

- A. Ovid projects and famous lines from poems
- B. Going through lines on a regular basis
- C. The frequent Horace quizzes
- D. The people, fun class
- E. The Ovid project