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Dear Fresher

Can I start by saying that we look forward to being able to welcome you to Queen's in October to begin your Classics Mods IIA course?

For 'Mods', your first examinations which take place in the fifth term, you will study the *Aeneid* in the second term, followed by two Special Subjects and 'Texts and Contexts' in the next two. Language work carries on alongside these topics for the whole period; to begin with, the main language teaching will be the intensive Latin teaching, but there will also be some College teaching after that.

In the first term, you will study Homer's *Iliad* with the Course I people. It may seem strange to study an author on whom you will not be examined, but there are a number of advantages to this. First, the amount of work required of you will not be great, so that in this important first term you can concentrate on really getting on top of Latin: linguistic competence lies at the heart of success in all forms of Mods. Secondly, whilst study of Virgil without a knowledge of Homer is possible, he makes so much use of Homer that one misses a great deal if one is not aware of how he does this; Homer is also, of course, of great importance for classical literature generally. Thirdly, this system will mean that you will do all your courses alongside everyone else, rather than being constantly separated off.

Before you come up, we would like you to have done the following. **You should have read the whole of the *Iliad* in translation:** a good translation is M. Hammond (Penguin). If you want to read the *Odyssey* (also a good idea for Virgil and indeed classical literature generally), there is W. Shewring (Oxford, World's Classics). To put Homer into perspective it would be a good idea to read some of the near-eastern epics, such as *Gilgamesh*, which are conveniently available in *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford World's Classics, tr. S. Dalley).

We would also like you **to write an essay** 'Discuss the outbreak of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles in *Iliad* 1: what issues are involved and are we invited to take sides? Give evidence from the text for your answer.' You should write this before you come up: you only need the text to do so. The advice of undergraduates already at the College is that you will find that there is *no* time in the week before term starts to do this work, so make sure you have finished before you arrive. The essay need not be very long. Please bring the work with you and hand it in to the Porters at the Lodge when you arrive. Address the work to Dr C Metcalf.

We will give you advice on which books and editions are prescribed for the exam when you come up, but for Homer the Oxford Classical Texts series is used for examinations (as it is wherever possible). You should also *always* read texts in the original with a good commentary. For the *Aeneid*, a useful edition of the whole poem is R. D. Williams (Macmillan, 1972), 2 vols. You also need a good grammar, the *Latin Grammar* by James Morwood is a good basic grammar: if you want something more advanced and detailed, go for B.L. Gildersleeve & G. Lodge, *Latin Grammar* (Macmillan). You would also find *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th edn., edited by S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, 2012) a useful (if not exactly inexpensive!) work of general reference; there is a smaller version in *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization* (1998) by the same editors.

There follow some suggestions for books to read before next October. You need not read all of them nor indeed every page of those you do look at: the ability to 'gut' a book will be a useful skill to acquire. For Roman culture and history in general:

M. Goodman, *The Roman World 44 BC – AD 180* (Routledge)
 M. Beard & *Rome in the Late Republic*, (Duckworth)
 M. Crawford

For an introduction to philosophy you might look at one of:

A.E. Taylor: *Plato* (Methuen)
 J.C.B. Gosling: *Plato* (Routledge)
 W.K.C. Guthrie: *The Sophists and Socrates* (Cambridge)
 A.C. Danto *What Philosophy is* (Penguin)
 J.A. Passmore *Philosophical Reasoning* (Duckworth)

It is also important that you read something on the theory and practice of literary criticism. To know something about the different types of criticism will greatly increase your ability to enjoy the books you read. The following will help you as introductions to this subject:

T. Eagleton: *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Blackwell)
 J. Culler: *Literary Theory: a very short introduction* (Oxford)

In the meantime, if you have any questions about the syllabus or would like to talk to any of the Classical Tutors at Queen's, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me and I will try to give you any help I can.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Charles Crowther and
 Dr Christopher Metcalf