

2014

The structural components of the course are meant to reflect the course goals; student performance is assessed as follows:

Challenges

5 challenges, each of which covers 3 chapters and is worth a minimum of 15 points
Students who earned above an 85% could accrue additional points: scores of 86-91% earned 1 extra point (16 points total) while marks of 92% and up earned 2 extra points (17 points total).
In order to pass the course, students had to complete, successfully, each challenge.

Composition

Upon completing the material, students were required to write a brief composition in Latin which was worth 15 points toward their final grade in the course. This project was itself broken down into smaller, graded components (see below).

To prepare for each class, then, students had to read the chapter which they and their group were currently studying. In addition, students were asked to keep a reading journal in which they would document what struck them as new in the chapter, what questions arose as they read on their own, and what was going through their minds as they read (the meta-cognitive). Although these journals were collected repeatedly throughout the term and were returned with feedback and suggestions, they were not assigned a grade.

As noted above, each challenge in Fall 2014 covered three chapters of material. The format for each challenge was consistent ([one example](#)):

page 1	vocabulary + short-answer grammar questions
pages 2-4	a short Latin passage from each chapter followed by related questions (students had to translate each passage and answer the questions)
page 5	three English-to-Latin sentences to compose a 1-point bonus that asked students to identify something they learned about the ancient world and explain why it interested them

I discuss the composition project at length below.

Barring several absences or the inability to pass all of the course challenges, the course is structured for students to succeed and it became abundantly clear (though not surprising) that preparation is the key to student progress and learning. Those students whose reading journals were filled with observations and questions generally were those whose work in class and on challenges demonstrated the deepest learning; those who merely listed new vocabulary words demonstrated grasp of the material but not sophisticated understanding.

For the next iteration of the course, then, I wanted to reconfigure the reading journal into a requirement, and one that is tied very closely to students' opportunity to take challenges. I also hoped to tie their pre-class preparation to the opportunity to learn the grammar for the chapter – e.g. once a student has shown that they've done the preliminary, independent work, they can access

an instructional video that works through the grammar of the chapter(s). It was my hope that this approach would not only encourage students to be more prepared for class, but would also open up class time to deeper reading and understanding. Similarly, the instructional podcasts would be linked to cultural content introduced in each chapter (and thus 'embedded' in a way), and should offer yet another way in which culture could become a more central part of the course.