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Hillsdale College Launches New Online Course 'The Iliad'

The course explores Homer's ancient epic poem about rage, fate, and glory.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College has launched a new online course, "The Iliad," taught by Professor of English Stephen Smith. The course, which is being released Aug. 17-18, explores Homer's ancient epic poem about rage, fate, and glory.

"Homer's immortal epic 'The Iliad' lays bare in vivid verse elemental features of human life: love, rage, triumph, and death," said Jeremiah Regan, executive director of online learning. "We witness enraged Achilles sit idle as the Trojans send countless Achaeans to Hades, before, reversed by bitter remorse, he forfeits his peaceful future to extract revenge by slaughtering Hector. In our course, Professor Smith helps us understand how Homer, through his portrait of the superlative man, turns a mirror toward our own attempts to master the passions."

"The Iliad" is the first of Homer's two great epic poems about the Trojan War and its aftermath. Every student at Hillsdale College studies Homer in Great Books as part of Hillsdale's liberal arts core curriculum. Hillsdale's online course on "The Odyssey," the sequel to the Iliad, was released last month.

"The Iliad is the story, with breathtaking simplicity, of two things: the rage of Achilles and the will of Zeus," Smith said. "In this course, we'll experience the to and fro of battle, the death of a friend, the pursuit of revenge, grief, mourning, and finally the beauty of peace. The whole poem is working to direct our attention back to the human cause of madness, to the human cause of blindness, to the human cause of this tragedy at Troy."

The course includes 12 45-minute video lectures, as well as quizzes, study guides, and readings. The first lecture is being released to the public on Monday, Aug. 17, with the remaining lectures to follow on Tuesday, Aug. 18.

- The Rage of Achilles: Book 1
- Helen and Paris: Books 2-3
- Hector, Defender of Troy: Books 4-6
- The Embassy to Achilles: Books 7-9
- Hector's Rampage: Books 10-13
- The Death of Patroclus: Books 14-16
- The Grief of Achilles: Books 17-18
- Achilles' Armor: Book 19
- The River: Books 20-21
- The Death of Hector: Book 22
- Patroclus' Funeral: Book 23
- Priam: Book 24

To watch the trailer and register for the course, click here. For photos from the course, click here. For photos of Hillsdale College, click here. For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click here.

About Hillsdale College Online Courses
Hillsdale College's free, not-for-credit online courses feature lectures from the College's faculty members across various disciplines, including politics, history, economics, religion, and literature. More than 2.1 million students have enrolled in an online course with Hillsdale College. For more information on Hillsdale College's online courses, visit online.hillsdale.edu.

About Hillsdale College
Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, Imprimis, with a circulation of more than 7.5 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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