Virgil’s Aeneid became the most popular epic written in the Latin language shortly after the author’s death and has retained that status for the past 2000 years. Through lectures and group discussion, we will use the Aeneid to explore Roman ideas about duty and service.

Themes will include: what it means to be a hero of duty, the ideal of self-control, models of leadership, the definition of a classic, and the role of art and literature as a response to political changes.

We will also try to understand how a poem that includes multiple depictions of personal loss and sacrifice in war could resonate in our own society. Virgil describes several forms of duty – to oneself, to family, to tribe, to country, to an ideal, to the gods. What happens when two or more forms of duty come into conflict with each other? How should we choose which duty to follow?

The seminar will be moderated by Kelly Duquette (PhD Candidate, English) and Sarah Thomas (Undergraduate, Neuroscience) and will meet at The Fox Center and via Zoom from 6:30pm-8pm for four consecutive Thursday evenings sessions during the spring 2022 semester: April 7, 14, 21, & 28. We especially encourage veterans to participate in this seminar, but everyone from the Atlanta community is welcome and invited to join us for this free seminar. For further information and to reserve seating on a “first-come basis,” email the Fox Center at foxcenter@emory.edu, or call 404.727.6424.

Please note that we adhere to Emory University’s COVID-19 Event and Gathering Policy: Any gathering must adhere to current Emory health and safety protocols. Indoor dining is not permitted for events or gatherings. Masks are still required in all indoor public and common spaces on campus and are strongly encouraged outdoors when in groups. The university may revert to a more restrictive operating status should future conditions warrant.

We are grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for its support of this program and the NEH’s Dialogues on the Experience of War program. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in these seminars do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or Dialogues or the NEH’s Experience of War program.