Iliad: Tutorial Plan

Week 1: The opening of the Iliad.
Consider Book 1 as an introduction to the poem: pay close attention to the proem (μῆνὶς; the plan of Zeus); the presentation of Achilles and Agamemnon; what is at issue in their argument, the narrative art with which the argument is narrated; the characterisation and function of the gods.

Bibliography
Commentaries:

See also
M. Bowra, Homer (London, 1972), 97–9

[It might also be worth skimming the following, omitting what is said about the Odyssey:

Week 2: Iliad 9.
What is the place of the book in the poem as a whole? What (if anything) is wrong with Agamemnon’s overtures? What is the nature of the appeal made by each of the three speakers, and how do their speeches characterise them? What of Achilles: how does his language characterise him, and has he changed ground since Book 1? What is the function of Phoenix’ story about Meleager?

Bibliography
Commentaries:

See also:
J. Griffin, ‘Homeric Words and Speakers’, JHS 106 (1986), 52–7

Week 3. What is the tragedy of Hector? (With particular reference to books 6 and 22.)

Commentary:
B. Graziosi and J. Haubold (edd.), Homer, Iliad Book VI (Cambridge, 2010).
Bibliography


Week 4: The end of *Iliad*, books 23–24.
What is left unresolved after 22? How important are the funeral games? What is the role of the Gods in these books, and does it differ from earlier in the poem? What themes are recapitulated in these books? Is the end of the poem really a resolution?

Bibliography

Commentaries:

See also:

Week 5: What do the Gods contribute to the *Iliad*?

Bibliography

J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford, 1980), 144–204 (of which a longer version of ch. 6 appears as:
‘The divine audience and the religion of the Iliad’, *CQ* 28/1 (1978), 1–22.)

See also:
Week 6: What are the values attributed by Homer to the society that he depicts? How helpful are the notions of a ‘heroic code’ and a ‘shame culture’?

Bibliography
D. Cairns, Aidos: The psychology and ethics of honour and shame in ancient Greek Literature (Oxford, 1993), introduction (esp. 27–47) and 48–146.

Week 7: How are females presented in the Iliad?

Bibliography
(i) On women
B. Graziosi and J. Haubold (edd.), Homer, Iliad Book VI (Cambridge, 2010), esp. 40–7 (47–56 are a bit reception-ish, but read them if you’re keen).

Have a look in particular at the Shield of Achilles, Bk. 18, accompanied by Mark Edwards’ Cambridge commentary ad loc.

(ii) As a coda, consider also: Is there any disjunction between Greek and non-Greek in the Iliad?


Week 8: What is the Homeric Question? What difference does it make to our reading and criticism of the poem?

Bibliography:

See also:
E. R. Dodds, in Fifty Years (and twelve) of Classical Scholarship (Oxford, 1968), 1–17


