

HCL 302 Classical Mythology and Religion

Tues & Thurs: 5:30 p.m – 6:50 p.m

Instructor: Prof. Beatrice Fabbri

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday: 4:30-5:30 p.m and after class by appointment.

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“The love of wisdom begins in wonder”(Socrates)

Course description:

This course is designed to provide the students with a basic introduction to classical mythology. In this course, the students will read and study the main issues related to Gods/Goddesses, Heroes, Sagas in the Greek world. References to Etruscan, Roman, Middle-East Mythologies will be included as points of references. Enriched with the knowledge gleaned from the readings, students will be able to recognize and appreciate the many allusions and echoes from these myths in modern literature, painting, sculpture, music, dance and cinema. Some basic references to the historical background of Greek will enrich the comprehension and assimilation of the meaning of mythology in Western culture. The etymology itself of mythology recalls the exposition of "legendary lore, a telling of mythic legends; a legend, story, (from *mythos* "myth" + **-logy** "study). from Greek *mythos* "speech, thought, story, myth, anything delivered by word of mouth," of unknown origin. Greek Myths are stories about divine beings, generally arranged in a coherent system; they are revered as true and sacred. The etymology of religion in the ancient world, refers to the latin root *religio* to be understood as an individual virtue of worship, never as doctrine, practice, or actual source of knowledge. All these issues were dealt with monotheism (Judeo-christian vision) opposed to polytheism (eastern, Graeco-Roman visions).

A thorough understanding of Greek and Roman mythology will enhance our appreciation and deepen our grasp of the world around us. The influence of Greek mythology on western art, music and literature can hardly be exaggerated.

Many of the greatest works of painting and sculpture have taken myths as their subject especially during Humanism and Renaissance. Examples include the *Birth of Venus* by Italian Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli (after 1482), a marble sculpture of Apollo and Daphne (1622-1625) by Italian baroque sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The impact on literature has been incalculably great. The English Elizabethans translated Greek and Latin texts with enthusiasm, so that stories of mythology became easily available to poets. Chaucer and John Milton were those among those influenced; nearly all the major English poets from Shakespeare, Keats, Byron, Shelley to T.S.Eliot and J. Joyce turned for inspiration to Greek Mythology. Also American authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne believed that myths should provide pleasure and held that the study of the classical myths was essential to the understanding of literary inspiration. The discourse on gender will play an important role during the course because it's inside classical mythology we find the authentic definition of female and male stereotypes still alive in contemporary society.

Course objectives:

1. To read and interpret myths and some of the ways they function in societies and cultures.
2. To read and interpret mythic metaphors symbols and analogies.
3. To compare and contrast significant characters, events, symbols, and actions (called motifs) in one story with similar events in another story;

4. To improve analytical, conceptual, connective writing skills;
5. To discover what these stories have to do with our lives today.

Course requirements:

1. Two research or critical papers, 5-7 pages, will be based either on texts, authors, genres, forms, themes or the period of the texts we will read and discuss in class (Chicago format style). See * below
2. Periodical written reviews based on texts read and discussed in class
3. Mandatory reading of at least one of three Greek tragedies of Sophocles and **oral presentation** in class to be done by the end of the course (more than one will increase your final grade). **Schedule of oral presentations will be arranged in the second part of the semester (each oral presentation will last no more than 10 minutes)**
4. Mandatory reading of Campbell's book, *The Hero with thousand faces* and ready to participate to the debate in class with comments, reflections.

Of course, you will be expected to do the readings on time, attend classes, and participate with vigor and intellectual curiosity to class discussion.

I am willing to offer help and supplementary suggestions to students majoring in Classics, Literature, Humanities, Social Science, Art Studio to develop specific issues related to their field of study in their written papers. The interdisciplinary approach to the discipline will surely enrich and enlarge knowledge and awareness of the classical heritage in your own studies.

* Point 1: Students are asked to choose their topic or to discuss it with the Instructor in advance to due date in order to arrange and discuss the framework of it to enlarge the perspective with further readings suggested by the Instructor.

The due dates of these papers are marked on the calendar syllabus with a →.

Grades will be based on the written work and oral presentations, with positive or negative considerations for attendance and participation in the class discussion. In the correction of papers, I will give also particular emphasis to underline whether you reveal your personal involvement and contribution to analysis and criticism of the texts.

NOTE: I will be not able to give a passing grade to any student who does not complete both of the writing assignments regardless of the percentage value of that assignment.

If there is evidence that you have been involved in plagiarism, you will receive an "F" grade for the course. Any ideas that are not your own require acknowledgement. Even if you paraphrasing someone else's views you must always indicate the source with a footnote or internal reference keyed to a bibliography. If you ever have any doubts, cite the source in a footnote.

Grade distribution:

Oral presentation, home assignments, extra-curricular activities (Movie Nights) : 20%

Midterm exam: 25%

Midterm Essay- Final Essay: 25%

Final Exam: 30%

Scale:

900- 1000:A
800-899: B
700-799: C
600-699:D
599 and below: F

Home assignments:

Readings marked on syllabus time will constitute the main home assignments, but the instructor will constantly feedback students' progresses on the discipline through the assignment of periodical quizzes and/or maps to be done at home. This will help to memorize and to deepen the main issues and/or concepts dealt in class. Also, short researches on specific topics introduced in class will be given once a month to develop a critical perspective.

Paper topics/ writing:

Along the semester, each of you will surely develop specific interests upon Classical mythology and will choose a topic for his/her paper. For those of you who needs futher mentoring, suggestions and/or clarifications, meet me after class or arrange an appointment so we could discuss and focus and I could be able to give you additional bibliography if needed. Plagiarism is not a crime *per se* but is a "wrongful appropriation" of another author's ideas. With the accessibility of new technology sources, easily students can plagiarize by copying and pasting information from other sources. As instructor, I can easily detect when this process goes on. At the beginning of the semester, I will provide you with some written brief tips about retrieving and using primary and secondary sources for your papers and to avoid "immoral" even if, in some ways, "unconscious" practice that only prevents you from the authentic creativity of submitting your ideas on the white sheets.

Format Paper: Chicago Format style

Attendance:

Two unexcused absences are allowed during the semester but more than two unexcused absences will lower your grade (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies) as follows: 3 unexcused absences, lowers one letter grade; 4 unexcused absences, lowers two letter grades; 5 unexcused absences , lowers 3 letter grades. More than **five unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.**

In order not to disrupt the class, punctuality is required. Students are expected to be in class at the beginning of the class hour; any delay exceeding ten minutes will be considered an absence.

Dates of mid-term and final exams **can not** be changed for individual travel plans or personal needs. Students should take note of the dates and hours of the midterm and final exams and plan their trips after the last exam. It is important to inform friends and relatives about these exam dates so that no tickets are purchased for you that will interfere with these exam dates. Missing the midterm or the final exam will mean failure of the course.

During the academic year photocopies and other material will be limited and eventually be distributed in class by the instructors. Students who were not in class are responsible for getting the material from their classmates and making their own photocopies. The instructor will send, when

necessary or useful, material to students-email and they will provide themselves to print their own copy.

Since I have structured course around lecture and discussion, your attendance and your participation are vital!! You cannot “make up” the discoveries and the intellectual give-and-take created by a classroom full of individual personalities. You also deprive the class of the unique perspective that only you can bring. If you have questions about the readings, please raise these concerns in class. If you feel hesitant to participate in class, please come to visit me during office hours and talk with me about it.

A bit of friendly advice: my experience has shown that students who come to class regularly and well-prepared tend to do better on exams and papers. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but it definitely makes the grade go lower. Ignore this simple fact at your peril.

REQUIRED TEXTS/FEES :

Morford-Lenardon, Classical Mythology, Oxford, University Press, 2006; * mandatory**

Hesiod, Theogony & Works and Days, (West, M.L , transl.), London, Oxford World's Classics (Paperback) **hardly suggested

Ovid, Metamorphoses (Raeburnm D., transl., Feeney, D., ed.), London, Penguin Classics. *hardly suggested**

Sophocles, The Three Theban Plays (Fagles, R. transl., Konx, R. ed.), London, Penguin Classics (Paperback) *mandatory**

Campbell, J., The hero with thousand faces, Pantheon Books (Bollingen Series-paperback), 1983. *mandatory**

FEES: 60-70 around € for mandatory texts. You could buy texts on line, even second-hand copies at the on-line bookshop: [www. amazon.it](http://www.amazon.it) . Or you could book texts at the following bookshops:

**Feltrinelli International, via Cavour, Florence
Paperback Exchange, via delle Oche, Florence**

WEB SITES:

A detailed list of web sites devoted to Greek Mythology (primary and secondary sources) will be given during the course. I just mention this website: www.theoi.com

Here you could find other primary sources such as Hesiod, Homer, Sophocles, Ovid, full e-text. But it's up to you to print passages from texts listed on syllabus calendar or quoted in class(take as biblio reference, Morford Lenardon's quotations listed in each chapter).

A list of websites with Greek and Roman primary sources will be given at the beginning of the semester.

Bibliography:

Critical essays (on reserve at CSU library):

Boardman, J. *Greek Art*, N.Y, New York University press, 1981. (* this is survey of Greek art of great interest for art history/architecture major students)

Bulfinch, T., *The age of fable or beauties of Mythology*, N.Y, Mentor, 1962.

Glover, T.R., *The Ancient world: a Beginning*, London, Penguin Books, 1961 (espec. chapt.I,II,III,IV).

Grant, M., *Myths of the Greek and Romans*, N.Y, Mentor, 1969.

Graves, R., *Greek Myths*, London, Penguin Books, 1992.

Grimal, P., *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, London, Penguin Books, 1990.

Hadas, M., *Greek Drama*, Bantam Classics, 2006.

Hall, J., *Dictionary of subjects and symbols in Art*, London, Fletcher & Son Ltd, 1986 (good reference for exploring relations between myths and art.)

Hamilton, E., *Timeless tales of Gods and Heroes*, N.Y, Mentor, 1969.

Kirk, G.S., *The nature of Greek Gods*, London, Penguin Books, 1990.

Lefkowitz, M., *Greek Gods, human lives, what we can learn from human lives*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 2003.

Morford, M., Lenardon, R., *Classical Mythology* N.Y, Oxford University Press, 2007.

Richter, G., *Greek Art*, N.Y, New York University, 1959.

Primary Sources:

MacKendrick (ed.), *Classics in translation*, vol. I, Wisconsin University Press, 1980.

Hesiod, *Theogony, Works and Days* (West, M.L. transl.) London, (Oxford World's Classics), 2000.

Greene, D., Lattimore, R.(ed.), *Greek tragedies*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1990.

Oates, J.-O'Neill, jr.(ed.), *The complete Greek Drama*, N.Y, Random House, 1938 (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides)

Homer, *Iliad*, (Rieu, E., ed.Homer, *Odyssey* (Knox, B., ed., Fagles, R., Transl.), London, Penguin Classics, 1990

** Supplementary bibliography will be given at the beginning and during the course on specific topics dealt in class.

Class Calendar- Scheduled readings:

Week 1: 11/03/2015; 11/05/2015

Definition of Myth; Greek History and the Gods; Myths in our lives? Hesiod poet or philosopher. The sacred marriage between the sky and the earth: religious and historical views.

Readings: Morford-Lenardon, **chapt. 3.**

Zeus' rise to power: Zeus defeats his father Cronus, the giants; The creation of mortals; The five ages; the myth of Prometheus and Pandora

Readings: Morford-Lenardon, **chapt.4;**

Week 2: 11/10/2015; 11/12/2015

The Twelve Olympians: Male/Female archetypes. The Zeus and Hera and their children (particular emphasis to Hephaestus and Ares); other children of Zeus: the Muses and the Fates

Readings: Morford Lenardon, **chapt.5;** Homeric Hymns (to Ares, to the Muses and Apollo); Homeric Hymn to Hera;

Athena

Readings: Morford-Lenardon, chapt.8; Ovid, Metamorphoses, book 6, lines 5-145);

Week 3: 11/17/2015; 11/19/2015

The nature of Greek Gods: anthropomorphism; Zeus and monotheism; Poseidon. Gods and symbols.

Readings: Morford Lenardon, **chapt. 6 and chapt.7**; Hesiod, Works & days (lines 3-7). Plato, the myth of Er : representation of heaven and hell.

Aphrodite and Eros: her nature and appearance; Pygmalion; Aphrodite and Adonis. “The search for alchemic truth”

Readings: Morford Lenardon: **Chapt.9**; Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite; Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book 10

Week 4: 11/24/2015; 11/26/2015

Artemis: the myth of independent woman, female wilderness, sorority.

Readings: Morford Lenardon, **chapt. 10**; Ovid, Book 3, 138-255: Actaeon the ardent hunter;

11/26/2015: NO CLASS - CSU CLOSED- THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 5: 12/01/2015; 12/03/2015

Apollo: the birth of oracle; Apollo and the Pythia of Delphi; the Cumaean Sybil; Apollo and Daphne. Apollo’s musical and medical context

Readings: Morford, chapt. 11; Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book 1, 452-567; the musical context, Book 11, 146-193; the medical context with Asclepius, Book 2, 600- 634)

Hermes and his nature: the divine messenger. His confrontation and reconciliation with Apollo. Hermes’ affair with Aphrodite: the birth of Hermaphroditus

Readings: Morford Lenardon: **chapt.12**; Homeric Hymn to Hermes; Ovid, Metamorphosis, book 4, 285-388.

12/03/2015 : MOVIE VIEWING TONIGHT AT CSU: AULA MAGNA, 7 – 9 PM

***Agora* (2009 directed by A. Amenabar): The famous female philosopher and mathematician, Hypatia of Alexandria: Myth and Science in Ancient civilization.**

Brief synopsis and main issues will be introduced before the movie (photocopied material provided by the instructor

Week 6: 12/08/2015; 12/10/2015

12/08/2015 NO CLASS- CSU CLOSED –NATIONAL HOLIDAY: Immaculate Conception.

12/10/2015 Dionysus:the god of ecstasy whose cult promised individual salvation. Echo and Narcissus.

Readings: Morford Lenardon, chapt.13; Homeric hymn to Dionysus; Passages from Euripides, Bacchae (opening, 1-63; Tiresias welcomes the new god, 170-313); Ovid, Metamorphoses, book 3, 342-510)

Demeter: The myth of fertility and the archetype of motherhood. Demeter and Persephone. Eleusinian mysteries Part 1: the birth of religious initiation. Rituals, sacrifices, prayer, cleansing by water: death and rebirth in the town of Eleusi. Part I
Readings: Morford-Lenardon : chapt. 14;

Week 7: 12/15/2015; 12/17/2015

Demeter: Part II (see readings above)

The realm of Hades, Orpheus and Orphism between Greek and Roman mythology.
Readings: Morford Lenardon, chapt.15 and chapt 16; Homer, Odyssey, Book 11; 7-8; Ovid, Metamorphosis, book 10, 1 Vergil, Aeneid, book 6.

12/17/2015: Mid-Term Exams ; →Mid-Term paper due at this time

12/18/2015-01/03/2016: WINTER BREAK

Week 8: 01/05/2016; 01/07/2016

01/05: NO CLASS DUE TO MOVIE NIGHT EVENTS ON DEC. 3 & JAN. 28

01/07 Greek Heroes: Perseus and the Medusa;
Readings: Morford-Lenardon, chapt.21;

Heracles and the twelve labours
Readings: Morford Lenardon, chapt.22;

Week 9: 01/12/2016; 01/14/2016

Greek Heroes: Theseus and the six labours, the Minotaur ; the Jason's quest, Jason leader of the Argonauts; Jason and Medea.
Readings: Morford Lenardon **chapt, 23**; Ovid, Metamorphoses, book 8, 174-181. Morford Lenardon, chapt. 24; Ovid, Metamorphoses, book 7, 100-158).

Theban Saga, Sophocles dramas (Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone).
Readings: Morford-Lenardon, chapt.15;

Week 10: 01/19/2015; 01/21/2015

The Trojan Saga: Iliad : an overview on characters, events and historical/archeological issues.
Readings: Morford-Lenardon, chapt. 19; Homer, Iliad (The wrath of Achilles: opening lines, Book 1, 1-7; 43-52) **Part I**

Week 11: 01/26/2016; 01/28/2016

The Trojan Saga Part II (see readings, above)

The Returns: Odysseus and the birth of the modern wanderer. Part I
Readings: Morford Lenardon: chapt.20; Homer, Odissey, book 1, 1-21; meeting the Cyclopes, book 9, 530-535; Odysseus and Tyresias' prophecy (book 11)

01/28/2016: MOVIE VIEWING TONIGHT AT CSU: DETAILS TBA 7:00-9:00 P.M

Brief synopsis and main issues will be introduced before the movie (photocopied material provided by the instructor)

Week 12: 02/02/2016 & 02/04/2016

The Returns: Odysseus and the birth of the modern wanderer Part II (readings. See above)

ORAL PRESENTATION: ON THEBAN PLAYS by Sophocles (10-15 minutes max. each)

13 Week: 02/09/2016 – 02/11/2016

FINAL EXAMS - EXACT DAY AND TIME TO BE ANNOUNCED

→ Final paper to be due at this date

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES (mandatory!) :

The purpose of additional activities in this class such as **Movie Nights** is not only to enlarge and to summarize the framework of theoretical reflections upon the role of Classical Mythology in Western History but to envision how recurrent and popular is the reference to its archetypes in each form of culture.

Movie Nights: 12/03/2015; 01/28/2016: 7-9 p.m at CSU – Aula Magna.