

Classics 210: Greek and Roman Myth

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Office hours: M 10-11; W 2-4; Th 1-2

Purpose: This course will introduce you to a few of the vast number of stories included under the broad category of Greek and Roman Myth. Along the way, we will ponder deep questions, such as: What is a myth? What do myths do? How should we read them? How are they related to religion and ritual practice? How do they reflect the cultures that produced them, and how do they operate in our modern world? We will also focus to an unusual degree on the ways in which Greek and Roman myth defined, explored, and constructed notions of self: how they defined Greekness and Romanness. To these ends, we will look at psychoanalytic and structural readings of myth in addition to the myths themselves.

Bear in mind that the world of Greek and Roman myth is large and intractable. The syllabus that follows is an attempt to force that world into some sort of schematic structure. As the class goes along, I may find it necessary to change the syllabus.

Grading: Your grade will be based on 3 very short papers and two exams, each weighted equally. Exams will cover lecture material as well as readings on the syllabus. Failure to complete any of the papers or exams will result in a grade of NC/F in the course.

Papers: You will be placed into one of three paper-writing groups, and paper due dates will be staggered by group throughout the term. This creates a tight grading schedule for me. As a result, I will not grant extensions for papers in this course; late papers will be graded down 1/3 letter grade for each day late (i.e. an A becomes an A- after one day, a B+ after two days). The only exception to this rule will be a legitimate, *documented* medical or family emergency.

Readings and Class time: True discussion is nearly impossible in a class of this size. Class will be a mixture of lecture and “participatory lecture” based on the reading for that day. I expect that you will come to class having read *and thought about* that day’s assignment. If you fail to do this, you will not be able to fully participate in the class, lectures will make little sense, and you will find yourself generally unhappy. A number of readings are on **E-Res**. These readings are integral to the course and *not* optional. (Please note that not every reading on e-res is on the syllabus; some are there as additional sources.) The reading assignments are sometimes long, so plan ahead and give yourself time to enjoy reading them. This is a Myth class; if you aren’t having some fun while doing the readings, please come and talk to me.

Attendance: For the duration of this semester and for the purposes of this class, we are a community of scholars. Please plan to attend every class session. If you miss class, it is your responsibility (not mine) to find out what you missed. A bit of friendly advice: long experience has shown that students who come to class regularly and well-prepared tend to do better on exams and papers. Ignore this fact at your peril. I also reserve the right to grade you down for poor attendance.

Attendance, part II: I have become increasingly disenchanted with the notion that Spring Break should last longer than one week. You have 8 days off (Saturday-Sunday). Your travel plans are not a sufficient excuse for missing class the day before or after break, particularly in a Tuesday-Thursday class.

Academic Honesty: In the unlikely event that I find that a student is has engaged in academic dishonesty (cheating, helping other students to cheat, plagiarism) he/she will fail the course. I will also report the

student to the Honor Board, as required by the Honor Code. An excellent discussion of plagiarism exists in the honor code: [http://oncampus.oberlin.edu/bin/common/course.pl?course_id= 16667 1](http://oncampus.oberlin.edu/bin/common/course.pl?course_id=16667_1) .

Texts:

Required:

Hesiod: *Theogony* (trans. Lombardo)
The Homeric Hymns (trans. Athanassakis)
 Ovid: *Metamorphoses* (trans. Melville)
 Apollonius: *Jason and the Golden Fleece* (trans. Hunter)
 Livy, *The Early History of Rome* (trans. de Selincourt)
 P. Grimal, *The Penguin Dictionary of Classical Mythology*
 Various readings on E-Res

Recommended:

Greene and Lattimore (eds), *Euripides I*
 Greene and Lattimore (eds), *Sophocles II*

Schedule of Readings

Feb. 3	Syllabus and texts; Expectations; Introduction to Mythology; The True Story of Balto, the Bravest Dog Ever; Pretty pictures	
Part 1: The Gods, and some stories about them		
5	Zeus and Apollo: Manly men <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dictionary of Classical Mythology (DCM)</i>: Entries for Zeus, Hera, Apollo, Hephaestus • <i>The Homeric Hymns: To Apollon</i> (pp.15-30); • Ovid pp. 14-18 (Apollo and Daphne), Ovid, 18-23 (Io), 49-50 (Europa) 	
10	The entrance of new gods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DCM</i>: Dionysus, Hermes, Poseidon • <i>The Homeric Hymns: to Hermes</i> (pp.31-47, 61); <i>To Dionysus</i> (pp. 56-8) 	
12	A Valentine's day story or two <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DCM</i>: Artemis, Aphrodite, Athena • <i>The Homeric Hymns: to Aphrodite</i> (pp. 47-55) • Ovid, Myrrha, Venus and Adonis, Atalanta (pp. 234-248) • E-Res: "Atalanta" from the <i>Catalogue of Women</i>, trans. Ormand 	
17	Artemis, or sometimes the bear eats you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euripides: <i>Hippolytus</i> • Ovid: Callisto (pp.36-40), Diana and Actaeon (pp. 55-58) 	Group 1 Paper due

Part 2: Creating the world, creating gender		
19	Zeus, Athena, and the Olympian order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hesiod, <i>Theogony</i> • E-Res: Caldwell, "The Psychology of the Succession Myth" 	
24	Humanity, sacrifice, and women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-Read Hesiod, <i>Theogony</i>, episode of Pandora • <i>Works and Days</i>, lines 1-235 • Ovid, pp. 1-14 (Creation, Flood, Deucalion and Pyrrha) • E-Res: Barthes, "Plastic" from <i>Mythologies</i> 	Group 2 Paper due
26	Women and Marriage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Homeric Hymns: To Demeter</i> (pp. 1-15) • Ovid, The Rape of Proserpine, Arethusa, Triptolemos (pp. 109-120) 	
Part 3: Heroes and civilization		
March 3	Structuralism, Heroes, and Civilization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DCM:</i> Heracles, Perseus • Ovid, pp. 199-209 (Hercules) • E-Res: Levi-Strauss: "The Structural Study of Myth" (?) 	Group 3 paper due
5	Heroes and civilization, continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DCM:</i> Theseus, Ariadne • E-Res: Plutarch's <i>Life of Theseus</i>, Bacchylides 17 • In class: In class: Mini slide lecture on centaurs and amazons 	
10	The hero and the threat of the feminine: Perseus and Medusa (and a return to psychoanalysis) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ovid, pp. 93-106 (Perseus) • E-Res: Excerpts from <i>The Medusa Reader</i> (ed. Garber and Vickers) Hesiod, "Medusa and Perseus," Palaephaetus, "The Daughters of Phorcys"; Freud, "Medusa's Head" 	Group 1 paper due
12	When Heroes Marry, or, Tragedy Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophocles, <i>Women of Trachis</i>, • E-Res: Bocaccio, from <i>The Lives of Famous Women: Iole, Deianeira</i> 	
17	When Heroes Marry, part II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euripides, <i>Medea</i> • <i>DCM:</i> Medea, Jason 	Group 2 paper due
19	Mid-term exam	
March 21-29	Spring Break	
31	An exemplary (?) wandering hero: Jason <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apollonius of Rhodes, <i>Jason and the Golden Fleece</i>, Bks 1-2 	

April 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jason and the Golden Fleece</i>, Bk. 3 • E-Res: Pindar, <i>Pythian 4</i> 	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jason and the Golden Fleece</i>, Bk 4 • Ovid, <i>Medea and Jason</i> (pp.144-156) 	Group 3 paper due
April 8, 8:00 pm	Special Showing of <i>Jason and the Argonauts</i> (Starring Todd Armstrong and Nancy Kovacs; 1963) at 8:00 in place TBA	
9	<p>Discussion of film, <i>Jason and the Argonauts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Res: Karl Marx, “On Greek Art in its Time” 	
Part 4: Myths of National identity: The peculiar beginning of Athens		
14	<p>How to have children without having sex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DCM</i>, Cecrops, Erichthonios, Aglaurus, Erechtheus • Ovid, pp. 46-49 (Aglauros) • E-Res: Pausanias on Erichthonios • Burkert: “The Legend of Kekrops' Daughters” 	Group 1 paper due
16	<p>The Problems with Autochthony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Res: Augustine, “The Name of Athens” • Loraux, “The Athenian Name: Imaginary Structures of Lineage in Athens” • Barthes, <i>Mythologies</i>: “The Great Family of Man” 	
21	Meet in Allen Art Museum for Lecture on Rubens’ <i>The Finding of Erichthonius</i>	Group 2 paper due
Part 5: Some Roman myths, and American Myths about Rome		
23	<p>The wanderings of Aeneas and the founding of Rome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livy, pp. 33-63 	
28	<p>From monarchy to republic, or why women must die to create the political system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livy, 63-101 (Founding of the Republic) 	Group 3 paper due
30	<p>Some other myths that seem Roman:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ovid, 121-124 (Arachne), 190-193 (Philemon and Baucis), 344-348 (Pomona and Vertumnus), 366-370 (Hippolytus, Cypis) 	
May 4	Spartacus! Winner of Seven Academy Awards! (a special showing at place to be announced)	
May 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Res: Barthes' "The Romans in Film" from <i>Mythologies</i> • Discussion of Spartacus! 	
7	Wrap up: achieve closure; the truth revealed	
Wednesday, May 13, 2:00 PM	Final Exam	