

California State University, Sacramento
Classical Mythology
Fall 2008

Humanities and Religious Studies 119-01
Mendocino 1003
Tuesdays 6:00-8:50 p.m.

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Office: Mendocino 2028; 278-7703
Hrs: TR 11:00-11:45; T 4:00-5:45; and by appt.

Study of Greek and Roman myths and hero tales and their place in the arts and literature of Western civilization. Also provides an introduction to the general nature and function of myth. Fulfills Area C4 of the CSUS General Education requirements.

Students will read extensively from the primary sources, including Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, selected plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Readings and lectures will be supplemented with consideration of art and architecture relating to the myths.

Texts

Required

Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*, Fifth edition

Optional texts on Library Reserve

Hesiod, *Works and Days and Theogony* (trans. Lombardo)
Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* (trans. Thomson)
The Homeric Hymns (trans. Boer)
Homer, *The Iliad* (trans. Fitzgerald)
Homer, *Odyssey* (trans. Lombardo)
Aeschylus, *The Oresteia* (trans. Fagles)
Virgil, *The Aeneid of Virgil* (trans. Mandelbaum)
Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (trans. Humphries)

Our Library also offers ("Library Use Only") the excellent reference work by Pierre Grimal, *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (BL 715 .G713 1986)

Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete the course will:

- significantly enhance familiarity with the subject matter of classical mythology, which remains a vital part of our shared cultural vocabulary
- enhance knowledge of the Greek and Roman historical contexts of classical mythology
- increase understanding of the universal concerns and perspectives of the human condition as they find expression in myths
- develop analytical reading and critical thinking skills through study of a great variety of literature
- improve writing skills through completion of assigned essays
- identify and analyze the impact of myth on the art and architecture of ancient Greece and Rome

Requirements and Grading

In order to derive the most from complex (but enjoyable) subject matter like classical mythology, it is essential that students actively engage with readings and lecture presentations. All readings are to be completed by the class session for which they are scheduled; vocal participation in class is encouraged. In addition, formal requirements consist of the following:

- Three quizzes (40%: the lowest score will count 10%, the two highest scores 15% each)
- Two essays (approximately 4 pages each) (30%)
- Final exam (30%)

The quizzes and the final are part “objective” (e.g. multiple choice) and part “short answer” (topical questions designed to be answered in a paragraph or two). Sound preparation will require careful attention to both lecture material and readings, with special focus on primary texts and bold-faced terms.

The essays will be assessed based on this rubric:

	Seriously Flawed (D)	Adequate (C)	Proficient (B)	Advanced (A)
Research	Used minimal primary and secondary resources.	Used mainly secondary resources.	Used both primary and secondary resources quite extensively.	Demonstrated unusual facility in using primary and secondary sources.
Analysis	Illustrates a lack of an adequate level of analysis, such that arguments receive little support from information.	Illustrates adequate level of analysis, making occasional effective points supporting arguments with information.	Illustrates a good level of analysis, making many effective points supporting arguments with information.	Illustrates highly sophisticated level of analysis in approach to supporting arguments and integrating information.
Organization	Displays random or confusing organization.	Demonstrates adequate organization.	Demonstrates a clear and coherent organization.	Demonstrates sophisticated organization. Makes effective connections between ideas.
Writing quality	Shows deficient control of syntax, word choice, and conventions of Standard English. Errors impede understanding.	Displays adequate control of syntax, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of Standard English.	Displays consistent control of syntax, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of Standard English.	Displays superior, consistent control of syntax, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of Standard English.

Grades and their correlative minimum percentages/scores:

	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
Course	92%	88%	84%	78%	74%	70%	64%	60%	56%	50%	46%
Quizzes	41.5	40	39	35.3	33.5	31.5	29	27	25.5	22.5	21
Essays	92	88	84	78	74	70	64	60	56	50	46
Rubric scores	23	22	21	19.5	18.5	17.5	16	15	14	12.5	11.5
Final exam	92	88	84	78	74	70	64	60	56	50	46

The Homeric Epics

- Tues 10/14 Homer's *Iliad*. Ch. 12
- Tues 10/21 Homer's *Odyssey*. Ch. 13
First essay assigned
- Tue 10/28 **Quiz (Chs. 12, 13)**
 Introduction to Greek drama. Ch. 14

Mythology in Tragic Drama

- Tues 11/04 The House of Atreus and the *Oresteia*. Ch. 15
First essay due
- (Note: Tues 11/11 is Veterans Day; campus is closed)
- Tues 11/18 Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*. Ch. 16
- Tues 11/25 Euripides' *Medea* and *Bacchae*. Ch. 17
Second essay assigned

Roman Mythology. The Legacy of Classical Mythology

- Tues 12/2 The Roman world. Ch. 18
 Virgil's *Aeneid*. Ch. 19
- Tues 12/9 Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Ch. 20
 Mythology in literature and the arts. Ch. 21
Second essay due

Final Exam: Tuesday 12/16, 5:15-7:15 p.m.