

California State University, Sacramento
Humanities and Religious Studies
HRS 119: Classical Mythology – G.E. Area C4
Spring 2007

Instructor: Judy Thoma
Section 4 M/W/F 10:00–10:50
Mendocino 4000

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and by appt.

Course Description:

This course is designed as an introductory exploration of Greek and Roman myths and their influences on Western culture. The phenomenon of the hero and heroine in the context of Classical myth will also be examined. We will consider the accepted roles and treatment of the working class and women in Classical society, and how mythology served to support or challenge social norms. Students will complete extensive and careful readings from a variety of primary source materials, including major epics and plays, such as Homer's *Iliad and Odyssey*, works of Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Virgil and as time allows, Ovid. An introduction to the general nature and function of myth is included to provide students with a foundation from which to build a thorough understanding of the cultural-historical significance of Classical Mythology.

Required Text:

Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*, 4th ed.

*Optional: Pierre Grimal, *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Penguin Books, 1991*

The Grimal text is recommended as an excellent reference for use during this course and for those who may have a continuing interest in Classical Mythology. It is also available in the CSUS library for "in library use only" (BL 715.G713 1986)

Course Objectives:

Successful students will:

- acquire a sophisticated knowledge of Classical mythology, its principal narratives and "players."
- develop an appreciation for its integration into the "cultural vocabulary."
- comprehend the function of Classical Mythology as an expression of the universal human experience.
- advance their skills of critical analysis in reading and writing.
- recognize the influence and elements of Classical Mythology as it is expressed in art and literature in the present as well as the past.
- expand their understanding of themes and ideas in Classical Mythology which have expression in other world cultures.

Requirements and Grading:

Careful and thoughtful reading and writing are fundamental aspects of this course, therefore, it is essential to complete all reading assignments and be attentive to lecture materials and presentations. (Take notes!) Attendance is required as per departmental attendance policy—grade reductions (and loss of educational experience!) will result from excessive absences.

Respectful participation in class discussions is encouraged and may affect your overall grade favorably.* Disrespectful conduct, including, but not limited to, cell phones ringing, chatting, coming in late, leaving early, disruptive behavior, etc..., will affect your participation grade unfavorably. If you have special needs or extreme circumstances requiring you to miss class, come late, etc..., please discuss with the instructor.

**IMPORTANT ! If you are a student who experiences anxiety simply at the thought of speaking up in class, please see me or email me for helpful strategies and tips for reducing stress and improving your learning experience. I consider all students equally important to the classroom dynamic.*

Course grades are determined by the following:	(Possible Points)
20% -Attendance and Participation-----	60 points
25% - Quizzes (4) **† multiple choice and short answer (25 points each) -----	75 points
30% - In-class writing assignments (2)**♦ (50 points each)-----	90 points
25% - Final**- short essay and multiple choice-----	75 points
100%-----	<u>300 points</u>

- A -----300-276 points
- A- -----275-267 points
- B+ -----266-255 points
- B -----254-243 points
- B- -----242-237 points
- C+ -----236-225 points
- C -----224-213 points
- C- -----212-204 points
- D+ -----203-192 points
- D -----191-180 points
- D- -----179-171 points

It is your responsibility as a committed student to keep track of your point total and manage your study habits accordingly. This will eliminate grade "surprises" at the end of the semester!

** All quizzes and writing assignments must be taken at the scheduled times. Students may not leave and return to the classroom during quizzes, writings or the final. Take care of any necessary tasks before or after the class session.

† the lowest grade of (4) quizzes will be dropped. For the **(4) quizzes Scantron form 882-E.**

♦ The **in-class writing assignments** will be graded on a simple rubric (1- minimal effort, 2-thoughtful attempt and some basic ideas, or 3-very good development in discussion of assigned topics and good use of information gained through the lectures and readings.) Good writing skills will be important in presenting your ideas well, but emphasis will be on *thinking* rather than mechanics of writing. These assignments are not tests, but exercises in analysis of information and creative application of your knowledge. No additional preparation beyond completing assigned readings and attentive presence in class should be necessary to do well on the writings. More detailed instructions and guidelines will be given at the time of assignments.

Plain notebook paper is fine for the (2) writing assignments; a bluebook is okay, but not required.

! Make-up for missed writing assignments: a 4-5 page paper on a topic assigned by instructor. The paper will be checked for plagiarism and must follow standard guidelines re: font and form.

*The writing assignment point conversion for the purposes of calculating your final grade will be as follows:
 Writing assignments totaling 6 points = 90 grade points; 5= 75 grade points; 4 = 60 grade points;
 3 = 45 grade points; 2= 30 grade points; 1 = 15 grade points;*

Adjustments may be made to this syllabus at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be given reasonable notice prior to any such changes.

Course Calendar

All reading assignments are to be completed **before** the class week for which they are listed.

Week 1 –Jan 29-Feb 2

Introduction to the nature and function of myth. Approaches to the study of myth;
Background to Classical Mythology
Read: Harris and Platzner (hereafter referred to as H&P), Chs. 1 and 2.

Week 2 –Feb 5-9

Read: H&P, Ch. 3-In the Beginning: Hesiod's Creation Story
Read: H&P, Ch. 5- The Great Goddess and Goddesses: Divine Women in Greek mythology

Week 3 –Feb 12-16

Read: H&P, Ch. 6- The Olympian Pantheon: Bar the windows and hide the women and children-not your Disney variety Greek gods.



Friday –Feb 16--Quiz # 1→ (Chs. 1-3, 5, 6)

Week 4 –Feb 19-23

Read: H&P, Ch. 7- In Touch With the Gods: Apollo's Oracle at Delphi
Read: H&P, Ch. 8- Dionysus: Rooted in Earth and Ecstasy (oh, and so much more.)

Week 5 –Feb 26-March 2

Read: H&P, Ch. 4- Alienation of the Human and Divine: Prometheus, Fire and Pandora
Read: H&P, Ch. 9- Land of No Return: The Gloomy Kingdom of Hades (tour tip: while visiting this kingdom, avoid eating the fruit.)



Wednesday – March 28-- In-class writing assignment # 1

Week 6 –March 5-9

Read: H&P, Ch. 10 and 11- Heroes and Heroines of Myth; www.sacred-texts.com/cla:
Adlington's trans. of Apuleius' tale of the marriage of Cupid and Psyche (found under the Classics heading, "Roman."); Or, how a jealous mother-in-law can ruin a relationship.

Optional in-class video– Hercules

Week 7 –March 12-16

Read: H&P, Ch. 12 (pps. 357-448) Heroes at War; the *Iliad* Introduction to the Homeric Epics beginning with the *Iliad*: Great big crybabies and other interesting heroes.



Wednesday– March 14 -Quiz # 2→ (Chs. 4, 7-11, Cupid and Psyche)

Week 8 –March 19-23

Read: H&P, Ch.13- A Different Kind of Hero: The Quest of Odysseus...(pps. 450-525) Introduction to the *Odyssey*: see Odysseus make his own dinner: ("...hmm, now let's see, did I lose my favorite cook in that man-eating whirlpool? or did he get turned into a pig on that witch's island? ...or was he eaten by a one-eyed giant? or was he...ackk!-where's the olive oil and wine for my roasted pig?)

Week 9 – March 26-30 –SPRING BREAK- HAVE FUN and BE SAFE!

Week 10–April 2-6

Read: H&P, Ch. 14- Introduction to Greek Drama, The Theater of Dionysus;
The House of Atreus: the *Oresteia*, Ch. 15- (pps. 543-553 and 561-591): bring your crying towel.

Week 11 – April 9-13

Continue to read: H&P, Ch. 15- (pps. 553-560 and 592-628)
Sophocles- *Oedipus Rex*. Read: H&P, Ch. 16- (pps.630-697) The House of Laius: Sophocles'
Oedipus Cycle.: A family tree with very few branches.



Friday –April 13- In-class writing assignment #2

Week 12 – April 16-20

Read: H&P, Ch. 16- (pps. 642-648 and 698-734) Sophocles- *Antigone*.
Read: H&P, Ch. 17- (pps. 737-748 and 761-799) A Different Perspective on Tragedy:
Euripides' *Medea*. : Ancient "girl power" or every "dog" has his day--and then there's
payback.

Week 13 – April 23-27

Read: H&P, Ch. 17- (pps. 748-760 and 800-853) Euripides- *the Bacchae*: a party in the hills with your
favorite god of reckless abandon and the ultimate depressing morning after!



Wednesday –April 25 - Quiz # 3→ (Chs 12-16)

Week 14 – April 30-May 4

Read: H&P, Ch. 18- The Roman Vision: Greek Myths and Roman Realities;
Virgil-*The Aeneid*. Read: H&P, Ch. 19- Virgil's Roman Epic: *the Aeneid* : "Spin" by Augustus.

Week 15 –May 7- 11


Read: H&P, Ch. 20- *Metamorphoses*
As time allows, discussion of mythical elements in Petronius' "Dinner with Trimalchio" from the
Satyricon, chapt. 5, and *the Golden Ass* by Apuleius (both readings accessed in sacred-texts.com under the
Classics heading).Summary and catch-up- Read: H&P, Ch. 21- The Persistence of Myth.



Friday – May 11 - Quiz # 4→ (Chs. 7, 18, 20)

Week 16– May 14-18

Summary and catch-up. Read H&P, Ch. 21, The Persistence of Myth.

Week 17–  Monday - May 21- 10:15 – 12:15 : Final Exam – you will need scantron 886-E