California State University, Sacramento  
Humanities and Religious Studies  
**HRS 119-3: Classical Mythology** – G.E. Area C2  
**Fall 2015**

Professor Thoma  
Thurs 6-8:50pm in Mendocino 1003  
+ Best contact * thomaj@csus.edu

Office: Mendocino 2030  
Office Hours: Tues 11:45am-12:45pm and 4:15-5:15pm  
Thurs 11:45am-12:45pm and 4:15-5:15pm  
Phone: 916-278-5895  
^ I rarely answer my office phone.

**Course Description:**  
HRS 119. Classical Mythology. 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.

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 if 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 and historical significance of Classical Mythology.

**Required Text and Additional Reading:**  

This is the full version of the *Odyssey* excerpted in your required text, however, there are other translations (Fagles; Fitzgerald) widely available online and used.

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).

There will be additional reading assignments posted online. Information regarding access will be forthcoming.

**N.B! Be wary of some e "resource" on this subject due to its popularity with hobbyists, tv writers, movie-makers, etc... who enjoy creating websites, entertaining stories, developing opinions, drawing conclusions, etc... without necessarily applying good scholarship or referencing primary source material!**

**Course Learning Outcomes:**  
Successful students in HRS 119-Classical Mythology will, through reading primary and secondary source material, viewing visual art including sculpture and architecture, engaging in class discussion and applying gained knowledge toward understanding and analysis:  
- acquire and demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge of Classical Mythology within its historical context including its principal narratives, important poets and playwrights as well as the characters who populate the poems, stories and art.  
- develop an appreciation for the integration of Classical Mythology into the cultural vocabulary and understand how expressions of Classical Mythology may reflect the currents or changes in Greek and Roman culture.  
- investigate and analyze the function of Classical Mythology as an expression of the universal human experience (that is, what it means to be human in relation to the gods, nature, and time.)  
- advance their skills of critical analysis in reading and writing on the subject of Classical Mythology.  
- recognize the influence and elements of Classical Mythology as it is expressed in art and literature in the present as well as the past (such as inspiration for different cultural trends, political ideas or social values and ideals.)  
- expand their understanding of themes and ideas in Classical Mythology which have expression in other world cultures (examples of this will include themes of death, creation and the relationship between individual needs and values and those of the community.)
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—three or more absences in this class will result in grade reductions (and more importantly, loss of educational experience!)

Respectful participation in class discussions is encouraged and may affect your overall grade favorably.* Disrespectful conduct, including, but not limited to, cell phone activity, playing on computers, 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 me. If you feel you need to record class sessions, please speak to me first.

**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, and I encourage you to share your ideas in this supportive atmosphere of collaborative learning! It’s fun!**

Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in grade penalties or other serious consequences as per university policies. ([www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm](http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm)) This will be detrimental to your goals-do n’t d o i t!!!

Course grades are determined by the following:

18% - Attendance and Participation†---------------------------------------------------------------------55 points
25% - Quizzes*** (4-lowest grade dropped-25 points each)-------------------------------------------75 points
17% - Mid-term exam** essay and multiple choice-----------------------------------------------50 points
15 % - Paper0 (5-6 pages) ---------------------------------------------45 points
25% - Final exam** essay and multiple choice-----------------------------------------------75 points
100%--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------300 points

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** 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.

† The attendance and participation grade is determined by the following point distribution: accumulated by good attendance (10 pts), class discussion (10 pts), reading responses (25 pts) and some exciting miscellaneous “TBA” opportunities (10 pts).☺

** New Testing and Makeup Policies for fall 2015! Please take note! All tests and writing assignments must be taken at the scheduled times. Students may not leave and return to the classroom during quizzes, writing or the final. (Take care of any necessary tasks before or after the class session. If you absolutely need to leave during a quiz, writing assignment or final exam, you must turn your paper in before you leave the room and it will be graded based on work completed to that point.) Due to excessive requests for makeups the following policies will be strictly adhered to: Requests will be considered and granted on a case by case basis only when extenuating circumstances or medical issues are documented. All quiz/midterm makeups granted will be taken in the CSUS Testing Center. Students are responsible for making arrangements and paying fees. No final exams will be given before finals week. No exceptions.

+ For the (4) quizzes you will need Scantron form 882-E; for the Midterm and Final you will need Scantron 886-E.

◊ Specific Information on the paper assignment will be forthcoming in adequate time for completion before due date. (You will have opportunities for feedback and editing in order to improve your writing assignment prior to due date.)
## HRS 119-3  Reading and Assessment Calendar  FALL 15

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

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 3</td>
<td>- Introduction to the nature and function of myth. Approaches to the study of myth; background to Classical Mythology. Read: Harris and Platzer (hereafter referred to as H&amp;P), Ch. 2; optional reading Ch.1.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>- An ancient poet complains about the old “ball and chain” and much more!!! Read: H&amp;P, Ch. 3- In the Beginning: Hesiod’s Creation Story</td>
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| 3     | Sept 17  | - “You always go right there! …blaming me for all the plagues and infestations of the world!”  Pandora 
Read: H&P, Ch. 4- Alienation of the Human and Divine: Prometheus, Fire and Pandora |
| 4     | Sept 24  | - Zeus gets busy! ...(and Hera is not okay with it!) 
Read: H&P, Ch. 5- Divine Women in Greek Mythology 
H&P, Ch. 6- The Olympic Pantheon 
Quiz #1→ (Chs. 2, 3, 4, 5) |
| 5     | Oct 1    | - Let’s meet someone even Kanye is jealous of: the real god of light and beauty. 
Read: H&P, Ch. 7- In Touch With the Gods: Apollo’s Oracle at Delphi 
And who can forget the classic, “Party like a Rockstar! Party like a Rockstar!”?... you know the rest. Here is where it all started... 
H&P, Ch. 8- Dionysus: Rooted in Earth and Ecstasy |
| 6     | Oct 8    | - ...and here is where it all ends 😂
Read: H&P, Ch. 9- Land of No Return: The Gloomy Kingdom of Hades 
Quiz #2→ (Chs. 6, 7, 8, 9) |
| 7     | Oct 15   | - “Wow, it’s true, Medusa IS fugly!”  Perseus 
Manly gods or godly men?...some semi-divine heroes of classical myth! 
Read: H&P, Ch. 10 - Heroes of Myth 
... and a few, okay, only one or two, heroic women. For an explanation of the shortage, re-read Hesiod! 
H&P, Ch. 11- Heroines of Myth 
Optional but recommended: [www.sacred-texts.com/cla](http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla): Adlington’s trans. of Apuleius’ tale of the marriage of Cupid and Psyche (found under the Classics heading, "Roman.") |
| 8     | Oct 22   | - Introduction to the Homeric Epics beginning with the Iliad. 
Read: H&P, Ch. 12 Heroes at War; the Iliad 
► Midterm |
| 9     | Oct 29   | - A hero for all times! Introduction to the Odyssey. 
Here is something to think about: if you were a modern Odysseus on a quest across America, where would the Land of the Lotus-Eaters be? 
Read: H&P, Ch.13- A Different Kind of Hero: The Quest of Odysseus 
Now is the time to read the full version of the Odyssey if you have time! I recommend it! |
Week 10 – Nov 5
- Introduction to Greek Drama: “What happens at the Dionysia stays at the Dionysia!” Dionysus
Read: H&P, Ch. 14 (only through page 517) - The Theater of Dionysus
Quiz #3 (Chs. 10, 11, 12, 13)

Week 11 – Nov 12
- Cannibalism, incest, patricide, adultery, deception...No! Not Real Housewives of Orange County! Greek Plays!!!
  ...the original dysfunctional families.
Read: H&P, Ch. 15- The House of Atreus: the Oresteia by Aeschylus
H&P, Ch. 16- The Tragic House of Laius: Sophocles’ Oedipus Cycle
  One day at the cell phone company Oedipus shops for a new plan: “Okay, now I want that friends and family discount; so this
  is my mother and wife, and my sisters are my daughters and there are my two sons who are also my brothers, and oh, that dead guy
  is my father and my kids’ grandfather and step-father or...hmmm...let’s start over...the dead guy is...wait, uh, can I just get unlimited minutes???”

Hand out topic for Paper this week! Paper due Dec 17th at the beginning of class period.

Week 12 – Nov 19
  Oh sad Euripides! How could you know Jerry Springer would steal material from your Medea??
  That IS a tragedy! (And Jason, you might want to think twice before you ditch your baby mama for a trophy wife.)
Read: H&P, Ch. 17-A Different Perspective on Tragedy... Euripides- Medea.
H&P, Ch. 14 (pp 517-581) - the Bacchae (Yeah, this is going to be messy.)

Week 13 – Nov 26
Thanksgiving Holiday! Enjoy! Special Assignment:
Eat with your family, or fellow cult members: a turkey (try to find the biggest turkey you can-like a 30 pounder!) and mashed potatoes, cranberries and yams—with your hands in your backyard. Ritualistically pour gravy on each others' heads. Watch: Your neighbors' faces (they will be hiding in their houses and peeking from behind curtains) as your family members tear the turkey apart with their hands and throw the pieces violently at each other to enjoy. Dance: Follow feast with banging on metal trash can lids with BBQ tools (or playing old Slayer, ICP or any Scandinavian death metal band cds) and dancing* in a crazy circle around pine trees. Drink: If you are over 21 and are not planning on operating heavy machinery (including but not limited to cars, motorcycles, boats or airplanes, or light machinery including but not limited to surgical tools, children's story books, spoons or neckties), enjoy a small vat or barrel of wine.
* If you have them, wear old animal skins instead of clothes. And for more specific dance instructions watch that old Seinfeld episode where Elaine ‘dances’ at the office party...trust me-this will all make sense to you by this time in the semester and more specifically after you have read the Bacchae. Mwaaa-hahahahahaha!
No, of course this isn’t a required real assignment, and yes, believe it or not, I have been asked that question.

After your exhaustion from this ritual experience, you will need to begin reading something more orderly, planned and well, Augustan:
Read: H&P, Ch. 19- Virgil's Roman Epic: - the Aeneid

Week 14 – Dec 3
- The Romans are coming! It was only a matter of time, and, well...very, very large armies.
Read: H&P, Ch. 18- The Roman Vision: Greek Myths and Roman Realities

Week 15 – Dec 10
- ...more Roman poetry and semester wrap-up...
Read: H&P, Ch. 20- The Retelling of Greek Myths: Ovid’s Metamorphoses
  Ovid—voted most likely to do stand-up by the Black Sea in the 1st C bce!

Quiz #4 (Chs. 14, 15, 16, 17)

Recommendations for further interesting reading from Roman writers: Petronius's "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).

Week 16 -- FINAL EXAM — 12/17 5:15-7:15 pm
  ▶ Hand in final copy of Paper at the beginning of class!

HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY BREAK! 😊😊😊