

CLAS 280gp Classical Myth in Literature and Art
Fall 2017—MWF—11:00-11:50am
Location: THH 301

Instructor: Lucas Herchenroeder
Office: THH 256N
Office Hours: TTh 11am-12noon, and by appointment
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Course Description and Objectives

The course introduces students to the rich tradition of Greek and Roman mythology that has informed literary and artistic production from antiquity to the present day. Students will acquire a basic understanding of the development of key mythological narratives and images in their original context; explore their relationship to political and social developments in the ancient world; and become familiar with a selection of reuses and adaptations in non-classical contexts. Students will be asked to consider the link between mythology and creativity and to reflect on possible reasons for the continuing adaptability of classical mythological themes. The course fulfills the requirements for GE-A (Arts) and GE-H (Traditions and Historical Foundations).

The objectives of the course are as follows:

- To become acquainted with major sources for Greek and Roman myth from close study of literary and visual materials; and to identify and understand their particular problems of interpretation;
- To understand the political and social conditions governing the production and dissemination of myth in Greece and Rome;
- To understand major aspects of the reception of classical myth in the intellectual and creative traditions of later cultures western and non-western;
- To identify links between myth and human creativity, and to understand the history of concepts of creativity in the classical tradition;
- To cultivate critical abilities in the study of art and literature, to develop techniques of analysis and argument, and to apply these in clear written and oral communication;

Assignments and Grading

Involvement. Attendance at lecture and section is required. Please arrive on time with assignments completed. The lectures will be as interactive as possible in the large format, with discussion and debate encouraged, and regular opportunities for contribution through prepared response activities. In section, you will be asked to make an active contribution regularly. Prepare by working out questions and areas of reflection in advance. Take notes as you read: record unfamiliar names, terms, and concepts; identify points of connection with the lectures or other section meetings; and note problems of comprehension and interpretation. Bring all of this to class; it will help to make your time in discussion more productive, and will be of use when it comes time to prepare for the essays and exams. **At 10% of the final grade in the course, 'Involvement' forms a major category of assessment.** It will be no problem to earn all of this by attending all course meetings with the readings prepared, arriving on time, and being ready to take part. If you are to be absent, please get in touch as soon as possible. Absence may be excused only in the event of illness or other

extreme emergency as per university policy (proper documentation required). **Four or more unexcused absences from lecture or section will result in a grade of zero ('0') for Involvement.**

Readings and Sources. The course follows the reading schedule outlined below. This will consist chiefly of readings in sources Greek and Roman myth in translation, which constitute our primary source material, in addition to works of modern literature and drama, visual material in painting and sculpture (both ancient and modern), and select works of film. A typical weekly reading assignment will cover between 75 and 125 pages depending on the text. In addition, optional supplementary materials occasionally will be made available on Blackboard or via USC Libraries. These are strictly optional, and are intended only to complement and expand upon the primary course material.

Written assignments. You will be responsible for three written assignments over the course of the semester, as outlined in brief below. Further details to follow later in the semester.

Essay 1: Close reading and critical analysis of particular myth or mythic figure (3-4 pages)

Essay 2: Focused critical analysis of myth or mythic figure in later source(s), ancient or modern (4-6 pages)

Essay 3: Developed thematic essay featuring critical analysis of question(s) considered across a range of sources (5-7 pages). With prior approval of the instructor, students are permitted to propose a creative project as a substitute for Essay 3 (e.g., visual or musical composition, media presentation, installation, etc.). This option will combine creative interpretation of course material with an artist's statement. Prior approval from the instructor required; proposals must be received by **21 November**.

All written work is to be submitted both in hard-copy (in section, at the beginning of class) and digitally via Turnitin. Please be sure to do both by the due date. Late submissions will be penalized one-half of a letter grade per day, exceptions being granted only in the case of illness or extreme emergency as per university policy (proper documentation required).

Exams. There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. Each is cumulative, though the final exam will concentrate on material from the second half of the semester. The exam format combines short-response questions (identification of major terms figures, and concepts), thematic essays, and analysis of key passages from the texts. Please note that the midterm exam will consist of two components, one completed in lecture and the other at home. A sample exam demonstrating the kinds of questions to be expected on the exams will be made available roughly two weeks before the first exam. **An exam may only be made up only in the event of illness or extreme emergency as per university policy (proper documentation is required).**

Grading for the course will be assessed as follows. **Note:** All assignments and exams must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Involvement:	10%
Essay 1	8%
Essay 2	12%
Essay 3 or Creative Project:	20%
Exams:	50%

Submission of Written Work

All written work is due in section at the beginning of class on the due date, **both in hard copy and in digital form (uploaded to Turnitin on the course Blackboard page)**. *Essays submitted via email will not be accepted.* Any late work will be assessed a penalty of one-half of a letter grade per day, and may be submitted free of penalty only for specific qualifying reasons, such as illness or other extreme emergency (proper documentation is provided).

Academic Integrity

Violation of the university's policies on academic conduct will be treated with grave concern. All suspected cases will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards, with those found responsible subject to serious sanctions, including failure in the course and suspension from the university. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with guidelines for Academic Integrity at USC. See Section 11 of the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus, Behavior Violating University Standards*: <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. See also the statement on Academic Conduct appearing below.

Policy on earning grade of 'Incomplete'

A grade of 'Incomplete' may be assigned only in cases where illness or other personal emergency prevents one **either from taking the final exam or completing the final essay**. *All other work must be completed.*

Policy on digital devices

The use of electronic devices in lecture is not permitted except by special permission; this includes laptop computers, tablets, and mobile phones. Use of such devices in section is at the discretion of your TA. I understand that the use of such devices has become an ordinary part of our lives both at the university and beyond, but I would like you to consider the benefits of learning in an environment unencumbered by them. Their use can be distracting, both to other students and to the instructor, and can degrade the quality of discussion. Moreover, the ability to focus your attention for a sustained period without interruption is a useful skill, and now has become increasingly rare. Doubtless it will give you a competitive edge. If special circumstances make it necessary for you to use a laptop in lecture or section, please get in touch.

Changes to Syllabus

The right to alter this syllabus or schedule of assignments is reserved by the instructor. Any and all changes made will be announced both in lecture and by email.

Required Texts

The following required texts are available for purchase from the USC Bookstore or may be obtained from external suppliers. I have chosen specific translations of the texts for their readability and other merits. It is required that you use these.

Anon. 2001. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Trans. B. Foster. ISBN-10: 0393975169.

Dove, Rita. 2000. *The Darker Face of the Earth*. 3rd Edition. ISBN-10: 1885266944 (also avail. via USC Libraries; see below).

Euripides. 2007. *Alcestis. Medea. Hippolytus*. Trans. D. Svarlien. ISBN-10: 0872208222.

Hesiod. 1993. *Works and Days and Theogony*. Trans S. Lombardo. ISBN-10: 0872201791.

Homer. 2000. *The Essential Homer*. Trans S. Lombardo. ISBN-10: 0872205401.

Ovid. 1983. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. R. Humphries. ISBN-10: 0253200016.

Rayor, Diane. 2004. *The Homeric Hymns: A Translation, with Introduction and Notes*. ISBN-10: 0520282116.

Sophocles. 2003. *Theban Plays*. Trans. P. Meineck and P. Woodruff. ISBN-10: 0872205851.

Additional course materials to be made available via Blackboard or from USC Libraries (online at <https://libraries.usc.edu>, or from Course Reserves at Leavey Library).

Course Schedule

Note: This schedule of assignments is subject to revision as the instructor sees fit.

Week 1 **BEGINNINGS**

21 Aug Introduction and course overview

23-25 Aug Beginnings; oral poetry and early Greece; time, space, and narrative; the epic form; the Olympians; gods, monsters, Pandora; myth and gender

Texts: Hesiod, *Theogony*, *Works and Days* (sections “Why Life is Hard” and “The Five Ages”)

****No discussion sections to meet Week 1****

Week 2 **MYTH AND RITUAL**

28 Aug-1 Sept Myth, ritual, and experience; initiation; adolescence and adulthood; foundation, cult, and culture; the cultural hero; domestication and social order

Texts: *Homeric Hymns to Demeter, Apollo, and Aphrodite* (= Hymns 2, 3, and 5)

Week 3 **HOMER’S TROY**

4 Sept **Labor Day, no class**

6-8 Sept The ancient hero; hero cult; the figure of Achilles; epic form and performance context; the *ephebe*; epic depictions of war; narrative and narrative delay

Text: Homer, *Iliad*, Books 1-6, 8-9

Note: Assigned readings of the *Iliad* are partial; you may find it useful to situate them by reading an outline or plot summary of the poem alongside. Good summaries may be found in resources at USC Libraries or online; please get in touch if you have trouble locating one.

Week 4 **HOMER’S TROY**

11-15 Sept Patroclus and Achilles (and Hector); form and aesthetics of violence in epic; ring composition and narrative closure

Text: Homer, *Iliad*, Books 11, 14-16, 18-22, 24

Week 5 18-22 Sept	<p><u>NEAR EASTERN ANTECEDENTS</u></p> <p>Greece and ancient Mesopotamia, networks and exchange; myth as cultural 'koine'; the hero and the city; nature and eroticism; numbers and scale in the epic imagination; historical and psychological interpretations of myth: particulars and universals</p> <p>Text: Anon., <i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i></p> <p>Optional: Al-Rawi and George, "Back to the Cedar Forest" (avail. via Blackboard)</p>
Week 6 25-29 Sept	<p><u>HOMECOMING</u></p> <p>The epic cycle; war and <i>nostos</i>; stories of homecoming and settlement; the figure of Odysseus; <i>xenia</i> ("guest-friendship") and community; space and narrative, marriage and cannibalism in 'the world of adventures'; <i>katabasis</i>; the <i>Iliad</i> in the <i>Odyssey</i></p> <p>Text: Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>, Books 1, 4-6 (feel free to skim Book 5), 8-12 Note: The timeline and plot of the poem can be confusing since it begins in the middle of the action and looks back on Odysseus' prior adventures in Books 9-12; a useful synopsis of the poem's structure may be found at the following: https://msu.edu/~spykman1/wra210/mod5/TimelineandPlot.html</p> <p>**27 September: Essay 1 due in section**</p>
Week 7 2-4 Oct	<p><u>HOMECOMING</u></p> <p>Recognition and homecoming; Penelope <i>polytropos</i>; closed and open readings of the <i>Odyssey</i></p> <p>Text: Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>, Books 19-24</p> <p>Optional: Excerpts from J. Shay, <i>Achilles in Vietnam</i> (avail. via Blackboard)</p>
6 Oct	<p>Homer on screen; allusion, reception, and adaptation; the aesthetics of war</p> <p>Text: Terence Malick (dir.), <i>Thin Red Line</i> (film, DVD on reserve at Leavey Library)</p>
Week 8 9 Oct	<p>Midterm exam: two parts, one completed in lecture, the other at home</p>
11-13	<p><u>THE TRAGIC STAGE</u></p> <p>Civic function of Attic drama; aristocracies and democracies; ritual aspects of tragedy; tragic voices; tragedy and epic; violence and women's voices in myth</p> <p>Text: Euripides, <i>Medea</i></p> <p>Optional: Mendelsohn, "How Greek Drama Saved the City"; Goldhill "The audience of Greek Tragedy" (both avail. via Blackboard)</p>
Week 9 16-20 Oct	<p><u>THE TRAGIC STAGE</u></p> <p>The Theban Cycle; household and city; lamenting the dead: gender, sexuality, and identity; tragedy and melodrama, self and society</p> <p>Text: Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i></p> <p>Optional: Foley, "Tragedy and Democratic Ideology: The case of Sophocles' <i>Antigone</i>"</p>
Week 10	<p><u>THE TRAGIC STAGE</u></p>

- 23-25 Oct The Theban Cycle (cont.); reason and the gods; Oedipuses ancient and modern; Freud and the unconscious
Text: Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*
Optional: Csapo, "Psychology," Ch. 3 from *Theories of Mythology* (avail via Blackboard)
- THE MODERN OEDIPUS**
- 27 Oct Oedipus in African American and African diaspora literature; Classicism and culture; history and trauma in the classical tradition
Text: Rita Dove, *The Darker Face of the Earth* (avail. via USC Libraries: Alexander Street Press *Black Drama*, 2nd ed.); search via title at <https://libraries.usc.edu> (USC username and password required)
Optional: Ola Rotimi, *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (same as above)
- Week 11**
THE MODERN OEDIPUS
- 30 Oct. Oedipus in African American and African diaspora literature (cont.)
Text: Rita Dove, *The Darker Face of the Earth* (avail. via USC Libraries: Alexander Street Press *Black Drama*, 2nd ed.); search via title at <https://libraries.usc.edu> (USC username and password required)
- 1-3 Nov The cinematic Oedipus; visual language and the content of the form; problem-solving, self-knowledge, and narrative
Text: Denis Villeneuve (dir.), *Incendies* (film, DVD on reserve at Leavey Library)
- Week 12**
OVID, ROME, AND OTHER READERS OF MYTH
- 6-10 Nov Ovid's mythography; iconography of the divine; Ovid's Hesiod; the violence of the gods; epic satire; poetics and politics of transformation in Ovid; reading readers of myth; lovers, walls, and order of the world
Text: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 1 (entire), Book 2 ('Phaethon,' 'Jove in Arcady,' and 'Europa'), Book 3 (entire), and Book 4 (through 'The End of Cadmus')
- **8 November: Essay 2 due in section****
- Week 13**
OVID, ROME, AND OTHER READERS OF MYTH
- 13-17 Nov Ovid and the artists; Ovidian heroes; text and textile; Ovidian myth in early modern painting and sculpture
Text: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 4 ('The Story of Perseus'), Book 5 ('Fighting of Perseus'), Book 6 (entire), Book 8 ('Daedalus and Icarus [begin p. 186]' 'The Calydonian Boar,' and 'Baucis and Philemon'), Book 10 (entire), and Book 11 ('Death of Orpheus')
- Week 14**
OVID, ROME, AND OTHER READERS OF MYTH
- 20 Nov Ovidian story-telling and modern film; form, matter and Ovidian artist
Text: Darren Aronofsky (dir.), *Black Swan* (film, DVD avail. via USC Libraries)
- **21 November: Deadline for proposals for creative option for Essay 3****
- 22-24 Nov **Thanksgiving recess, no class**

Week 15 OVID, ROME, AND OTHER READERS OF MYTH

27 Nov-1 Dec Ovidian myth in early modern painting and sculpture (cont.); art and transformation; form, matter, art, and desire; Ovid's Homer; the limits of epic
Text: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Books 12, 13, 14 (through 'Deification of Aeneas'), and 15 ('Epilogue')

4 Dec **Essay 3/final project due, 5pm, THH 256**

6 Dec **Final exam, 11am-1pm, THH 301**

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.