

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES

This is an in-person class. Remote instruction will cease when we are allowed to return to campus. At that point, there will be no further Zoom recordings.

If you enroll in this course after the start of the semester, you have to complete all course assignments from the **beginning** of the semester. This includes commenting on readings and lecture on Perusall.

No electronic devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) can be used when we return to in-person sessions in the classroom.

About this course...

Welcome to REL 325 in Spring 2022! I want to make you aware of expectations for student performance in this class as well as providing information on buying the course textbooks. This course is an “advanced introduction” to religion in ancient Greek and Roman societies. It requires no previous knowledge about ancient Greece and Rome and you also are not expected to have already taken a religion course. However, it is an upper-division course and will be taught at that level. There will be a steeper learning curve than in a lower-division GE course. I will grade your work the same as I would in any 300-level course and the GE designation does not reduce the level of competence that students need to attain in this course.

You do not have to be a junior to take this course but it is aimed at students who want a more demanding academic experience in a GE course. You may find this course especially attractive if:

- You already have an interest in ancient Greece and Rome and would like to develop the skills to pursue it further on your own;
- You took a course on a culture very different from your own and found the encounter with other ways of being human fascinating;
- You are considering a minor or major in Religion or Classics.

It is important that you use in the course only those textbooks exactly as designated in the syllabus. This is especially necessary for Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Plato’s *Timaeus* and Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*. Not all translations and editions are equal. I have selected for this course those translations which are noted for their accuracy and accessibility. They also have useful introductions and notes to guide your reading. If you do not have the translations/ editions, required for this course, you will not be able to follow the discussion of these texts in class or successfully complete assignments about them.

I also strongly discourage the use of e-book versions of textbooks in this course. No electronic devices are allowed in our in-person sessions when we are back on campus. So, you will not have e-books in the classroom. Furthermore, many e-books have a different pagination from the physical originals which again makes it difficult for students to follow the discussion.

Spring 2022**Location:** GFS 112**Time:** MW 2-3.20**Instructor:** Sheila Briggs**Office:** ACB 232**Office Hours:** M 12.50-1.50 (drop-in); W 12.50-1.50 (by appointment only). Students can meet with the instructor on Zoom outside of the stated office hours. In Spring 2022 all office hours will take place on Zoom until further notice.**Contact Info:** Email: sbriggs@usc.edu ; phone number (office): 213-740-0267**Course Description**

Varieties of religious experience in the ancient Mediterranean as they developed with the expansion of Greek and (later) Roman culture and power.

The course begins by surveying the basic features of Greek religion, tracing its development and comparing it with Roman religion. Next we turn to philosophy which in the Greco-Roman world was where one reflected upon religious beliefs and the moral life that should accompany them. We then look at the mystery religions which afforded the inhabitants of the ancient Mediterranean an intense personal religious experience. Finally, we read the one surviving Latin novel whose author, Apuleius, gives us a tour of the religious world at the height of the Roman Empire in the 2nd cent. CE. The focus of the course is **not** on the two Western monotheisms that survived antiquity—Judaism and Christianity— but they will be discussed in relation to the religious trends of the ancient Mediterranean and their interaction with other Greco-Roman religions.

Learning Objectives

This course examines how religious experience in the Greco-Roman world changed over time, eventually laying the historical and cultural foundations of later Western societies. It equips students to:

- Define the terms used to study religion in ancient Greek and Roman societies;
- Identify the major characteristics of Greek and Roman religions;
- Investigate how religion in the ancient Mediterranean permeated every form of human expression, including literature, philosophy, and the arts;
- Analyze the political, social and economic contexts from which these cultural expressions of religion emerged;
- Interpret ancient texts actively and analytically, to think critically about the distance and differences between us and them, and to make ancient religious texts and cultural worlds intelligible in our own contemporary context;

- Consider the diversity of human experience by looking at how the inhabitants of a remote past used a wide range of religious practices and ideas to create frameworks of meaning for their lives;
- Distinguish between our cultural assumptions about religion and the expressions of religious experience by others, and to analyze the multiple perspectives on religion in the ancient Mediterranean past.

This course emphasizes the careful reading of ancient texts and students should be comfortable reading Greco-Roman texts by the end of the course. We will also read contemporary scholarly work about Greek and Roman religions and discuss the varying interpretations of religious experience in the ancient Mediterranean that they provide. In this light we will discuss what makes an interpretation plausible or implausible; how the (lack of) evidence from the ancient past constrains interpretation and how contemporary questions can both enrich and distort our understanding of the past. By the end of the course students should be self-reflective on how they interpret texts, what counts for them as evidence and how their own inevitably limited historical and cultural standpoint affects their understanding of what cultures, very different from their own, produce.

All assignments in this course are of essay or paper format and therefore require students to exercise the discursive and argumentative skills that they are being asked to use to interpret the course materials.

Course Notes

All students are expected to use Blackboard. It will provide class information, course content and students will submit electronic versions of the course assignments through the Turnitin tab on Blackboard.

No electronic devices are allowed in the in-person class sessions

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Books (available through USC bookstore)

Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion*. 2nd Edition. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Hesiod (trans. and intro M. L. West). *Theogony*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.

Plato, (ed. and trans. Peter Kalkavage). *Timaeus*. Second edition. Indianapolis: Focus/ Hackett Publishing Company, 2016.

Meyer, Marvin W. *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook : Sacred Texts of the Mystery Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean World*. Philadelphia: University Of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.

Apuleius (trans. and intro, P. G. Walsh). *The Golden Ass*. Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1994.

Book available through Ares course reserves and Perusall

Valerie M Warrior, *Roman Religion*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

There will be two mid-term examinations and a final examination. Each of these exams will consist of two questions which will require answers of 4-6 pages in standard typescript per

question. They are take-home exams and the answers are to be written in essay format. For the readings from Plato's *Timaeus* and Apuleius' *Golden Ass* students will provide written responses to pre-circulated questions that will be discussed in the class sessions. These will be assessed in the course participation grade and are preparation for the second mid-term and final examinations.

Students will complete one research paper of 10 -12 pages. This expects students to do research substantially beyond the required reading of the course on a course-related topic which they choose.

Course attendance and participation make up 10% of the grade. Course participation will also be assessed by student's engagement in class discussions and their completion of the Perusall assignments on course readings and lectures. Students are allowed **six** excused absences for any reason but these six also **include illness, personal emergency or USC sporting events**. After that students will lose a course point (1% of the course grade) for each absence from class.

Grading Breakdown

- Two mid-term examinations (20% each of grade)
- One final examination (20% of grade)
- One research paper (30% of grade)
- Course participation (10% of grade)

Grading Scale (Example)

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments are dual submission. As well as handing in a physical printed copy of your assignment on the due date you also need to submit to the instructor an electronic version on Blackboard. This should be either a Word document or a PDF file. This should be submitted no later than 24 hours after the assignment deadline but does not have to be on Blackboard before the paper version is due in class.

Additional Policies

No electronic devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) can be used in the classroom. They are a distraction not only for the user but for those around them.

Don't cut class. You are expected to attend every session. If you miss class, then you are left to your own resources to make up the lost work. In such cases, you can try borrowing a fellow student's notes or doing extra reading on the session's topic, but you will have missed the class discussion

Course Schedule

January 10: Introduction to the Course.

January 12: Practices, spaces and times in Greek Religion. Reading: Mikalson, pp. 2-29.

January 17: Martin Luther King Jr. holiday

Section 1: Experiencing the divine in Greek and Roman contexts

January 19: The gods of Greece and Rome. Reading: Mikalson, pp. 32-51; Warrior, pp.1-14.

January 24: Origin myth of the Greek gods—Hesiod's *Theogony*. Reading: *Theogony*, intro., pp. vii-xxv. 3-9.

January 26: Hesiod's *Theogony*. Reading: *Theogony*, pp.10-33.

January 31: Myth and worship. Reading: Mikalson, pp.54-65; Warrior, pp. 16-26.

February 2: Major Greek cults and religious practices. Reading: Mikalson, pp. 68-121.

February 7: Roman cults and religious practices. Reading: Warrior, pp. 68-78, 106-118.

February 9: Religion, family and local community. Reading: Mikalson, pp.124-147; Warrior, pp. 28-40.

Mid-Term Examination 1 (February 9 distributed, due February 16)

February 14: Religion and the state. Reading: Mikalson, pp. 150-168; Warrior, pp. 42-54. 56-66.

February 16: The fate of the individual on Greek religion. Reading: Mikalson, pp.170-184.

February 21: President's Day Holiday

February 23: Greek religion in the later Hellenistic period. Reading: Mikalson, pp. 186-203.

Greek religion and Greek culture. Reading: Mikalson, pp. 206-226.

Section 2: Philosophy and religion in the ancient world

February 28: Plato on nature and the divine. *Timaeus*, pp. xi-xvii, 1-12

March 2: Plato on nature and the divine. *Timaeus*, pp. 12-39.

March 7: Why the universe is the way it is. *Timaeus*, pp. 40-64.

March 9: Why the universe is the way it is. *Timaeus*, pp. 65-94.

March 14-15 Spring recess

Section 3: The ancient mystery religions

March 21: Introduction to the ancient mysteries. Reading: Meyer, pp. 1-14. Mysteries of a divine mother and daughter. Reading: Meyer, pp. 17-59.

March 23: The Mysteries of Dionysus. Reading: Meyer, pp. 63-109.

Mid-Term Examination 2 (distributed March 23, due March 30)

March 28: The Anatolian Great Mother Reading: Meyer, pp. 113-130; Warrior, pp. 80-92.

March 30: The Syrian Goddess. Reading: Meyer, pp. 130-154.

April 4: Isis and Osiris. Reading: Meyer, pp. 157-196.

April 6: Mithras. Reading: Meyer, pp. 199-221.

April 11: The mysteries within Judaism and Christianity. Reading: Meyer, pp. 225-254.

Section 3: Ancient fiction and ancient religion

April 13: Apuleius on magic. Reading: *The Golden Ass*, pp. 1-57; Warrior, pp. 94-104.

April 18-20: Apuleius on myth. Reading: *The Golden Ass*, pp. 58-160.

April 25: Apuleius' tour through the Greco-Roman religious landscape. Reading: *The Golden Ass*, pp. 160-217.

April 27: Apuleius on religious conversion. Reading: *The Golden Ass*, pp. 218-240.

Research Paper due April 27

Final Examination due May 9

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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards"

<https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b>. 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, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office* <http://equity.usc.edu> and/or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://dps.usc.edu>. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp> provides 24/7 confidential support.

Support Systems

The **Writing Center** consultants will help you develop ideas and arguments and revise rough drafts for the research paper you produce in the course. There are also workshops covering every aspect of writing where you can improve your skills in specific areas. The Writing Center can be found on the second floor of Taper Hall (Room 216) and appointments and sign-ups for workshops can be made over the phone (213-740-3691). You can also try just walking in, but then you are not guaranteed an appointment, and the center at times will be very busy. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://ali.usc.edu>.

The *Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS)* <http://dsp.usc.edu> provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Please be sure the letter of verification is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776 (email: osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

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.