



**INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY**  
**MWF 2-2:52**  
**COLEMAN HALL 54**

**PROFESSOR:** STEPHANIE LARSON  
OFFICE: 71 COLEMAN HALL (GROUND FLOOR)  
OFFICE HOURS: W 11-12, 3-4, F 1-2, AND BY APPOINTMENT  
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"As a general thing we find that the ancient myths do not give us a simple and consistent story; consequently it should occasion no surprise if we find, when we put the ancient accounts together, that in some details they are not in agreement with those given by every poet and historian." [Diodorus Siculus, 80-20 BC, 4.44.5]

"We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece." [Shelley, 1792-1822]



**MISSION:**

This course will introduce you to Greek and Roman myths embodied in selected texts from Archaic and Classical Greece and (if time) Augustan Rome. We will survey myths with a variety of themes: i.e., the establishment of divine and social order, the individual characteristics of the Olympian gods and heroes. Through analysis of the texts, class lectures, and discussions, we will challenge our notions about myth, particularly that there was ever a canonical version of a given tale. In this quest we shall pay particular attention to the society in which these myths were produced and the role the myths played within that society in ritual and religious festivals. We will discover that myths were constantly created and adapted to reflect the concerns of different times, places, and perspectives as well as the conventions of different literary genres.

Early in the course we shall consider several modern interpretive approaches to myth which help explain the function and development of myth in society (e.g. Structuralism, Psychoanalysis, Myth and Ritual).

**STRUCTURE:**

Three lectures per week based on daily reading assignments, accompanied by images and in-class discussions. Quizzes and one essay exam.



### **TEXTS:**

#### **REQUIRED**

- *Classical Mythology*, 5th edition, by Barry B. Powell.
  - \* Publisher: Prentice Hall; ISBN: 0131962949
- Hesiod: *Theogony, Works and Days, Shield*, translated by Athanassakis.
  - \* Publisher: Johns Hopkins; ISBN: 0801829992
- The *Iliad* of Homer, trans. Fagles.
  - \* Publisher: Penguin; ISBN: 0140275363
- The *Odyssey* of Homer, trans. Fagles.
  - \* Publisher: Penguin; ISBN: 0140268863
- The *Homeric Hymns*, translated by Athanassakis.
  - \* Publisher: Johns Hopkins; ISBN: 0801817927
- Aeschylus 1: *Oresteia*, translated by Fagles.
  - \* Publisher: Penguin; ISBN: 0140443339
- Ten Plays by Euripides, translated by Moses Hadas.
  - \* Publisher: Bantam; ISBN: 0553213636
- The *Metamorphoses* by Ovid, trans., Melville.
  - \* Publisher: Oxford; ISBN: 019283472X

These books should all be listed and in stock at the bookstore in the Langone Center. They are grouped in packets for ease of purchase.

- I will occasionally hand out supplementary material in class.

#### **OPTIONAL**

Some students have found Morford and Lenardon's book *Classical Mythology* helpful. I have a copy of this text in my office (Coleman 72) if you are interested in looking at it.

A simple mythological dictionary might be useful but is not required for this class.



## **WEB RESOURCES AND REQUIREMENTS**

- \* **E-RESERVES:** additional required course readings are available electronically via ERes (EReserves) at the library and via the web.

Much of the electronic material will be of use to you when reviewing and studying for exams, but I have included some extra material in case you are interested in expanding your knowledge about classical mythology.

- \*\* **Password:** the password for our Ereserves is "Oedipus."

### **POWELL'S WEBSITE**

Our main text for this course, Powell's *Classical Myth*, is associated with its own web site. I may refer to the site from time to time in class, especially when I find material of interest or use to you, so you might want to check it out:

<http://www.prenhall.com/powell>

Powell's site is bookmarked on the Blackboard site for this class.

### **BLACKBOARD PARTICIPATION**

- \*\* **General Information:** We will be using BlackBoard, an electronic course management system for this course. There you will find useful information of a general nature, like a copy of this syllabus and our schedule of readings. I will also post all grades for quizzes and exams on BlackBoard.

- \*\* **Announcements:** I will also be posting Announcements through BlackBoard. These Announcements will be disseminated in the form of a mass email to everyone in the class from me. Please do make it a habit of checking your email.

- \*\* **Image Files for Review:** I will save copies of the images I use in class on the BlackBoard site, so you can look there to review the images which went along with lecture as you review your notes.

- \*\* **NOTA BENE:** since both Eres and BlackBoard are accessible via the web, there can be no excuses about not being able to find the syllabus, a reading assignment, etc.



## **EVALUATION**

### **PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE: 15% OF FINAL GRADE**

Although we have a relatively large class, I still expect all of you to participate by asking questions and by freely offering in-class commentary. There is no need to be shy and embarrassed about getting the most out of a college course, even if the topic has nothing to do with your major. Also, I will get to know you better as we discuss our ideas together, and the more you vocalize your thoughts and questions about the subject, the more we all will learn!

Truthfully, full attendance is pretty much vital for getting a decent grade in this course. Lectures will be lengthy and sometimes complicated, and the texts that we will be reading may often seem strange and difficult. There are no *Cliff's Notes* that can truly help you digest some of these myths or texts. We will have discussed or at least mentioned in class the majority (if not all) of the material that I will put on the quizzes and exam, so it is in your best interest to be there all the time. Furthermore, at the beginning of some class periods, when I remember, I will pass around an attendance sheet which you will sign. The signatures will be noted in the grade book. But even if I forget to pass out an attendance sheet, I pretty much know who is there and who is not. If you cannot avoid missing a lecture, make sure to get the notes from someone else in the class.

If you expect to miss a class period because of a religious holiday, I would like you to inform me of the date(s) in writing by the 6th class day.

#### **Participation Grades are based on the following scale:**

##### **A**

*The student arrives to class on time, has done her/his homework, participates actively, and takes initiative. S/he is respectful of the other students and engages in critical thinking with her/his colleagues by asking pertinent, challenging, and constructive questions. This student is not afraid to speak in front of the group or to answer questions even when s/he is not entirely confident of the answer/s.*

##### **B**

*The student arrives to class on time and has done her/his homework. S/he is present, takes notes, and seems engaged, but lacks initiative, speaking only when called upon.*

##### **C**

*The student arrives to class more or less on time but appear reluctant to be there. S/he may or may not have done the homework – it is difficult to tell because s/he does not really participate. The student sometimes speaks to other during class on issues not related to the course material.*

##### **D**

*The student arrives late without explanation and is barely present in the class. S/he has forgotten the text, her/his notebook, etc. S/he shows very little interest in which is happening in class and seems to consider class discussion a “recess” of sorts. This student can be disruptive to the learning environment in the classroom.*

##### **F**

*The student is absent beyond three times.*



### **CLASS ETIQUETTE:**

Assignments and lectures will often stimulate class discussions. For this reason, all participants in the course (myself included) are expected to honor the following guidelines for our discussion:

- 1) Whenever possible, speak from your own experience, saying, for example, “I think...” or “In my experience, I have found...” rather than generalizing your experience to everyone.
- 2) All class discussions are confidential.
- 3) Avoid the use of “zaps”: overt or covert put-downs, either of other class members, religious groups, other types of communities, etc.. This includes negative body language, such as eye-rolling or groaning while another person is speaking.

In short, all perspectives are welcome, so long as they are respectful of others. Regarding personal religious beliefs, atheists, agnostics, and people of faith are equally welcome in this course. I expect that our differences will enrich our discussion.



### **CLASS PREPARATION**

I strongly advise you to come to class prepared! Read the assignments before class, and skim over them the morning of class. You will get very little out of class if you haven't done the reading, and with only a few exceptions my lectures will assume you are familiar with names, characters, and plots in the readings.

### **ADVICE:**

The assigned readings in this course will vary as to the level of difficulty. Learning to read dense or difficult writing is one of the most valuable skills you can develop in college. Often you will find yourself working out the meaning of a particular term, sentence, or paragraph before moving on. Making notes in the margins or on a separate paper will help with this. You may need to read a section or even an entire piece several times before comprehending its meaning. This is normal and to be desired: most professional academics read in this

manner. This is also, however, a time-management issue: you should expect to spend at least a couple of hours, perhaps more, preparing for each class meeting. Studying for exams and quizzes will demand additional time.



**QUIZZES: 55%**

There will be THREE 40-minute quizzes over the course of the semester, given promptly at the beginning of class. The dates for the quizzes are marked with asterisks below on the schedule (\*\*\*). These quizzes will involve fill-in-the-blanks, short answers, and occasionally perhaps the short essay, all of which will be easy to complete *if you have kept up with the readings and lectures*. There will also occasionally be maps/images. SPELLING COUNTS!

THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UPS FOR ANY REASON.



**EXAM: 30%**

Final, two hour, essay, comprehensive: 30%

I will distribute a subject-based study guide for the exam. It will be a comprehensive examination. THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UPS FOR ANY REASON. NONE.

Anything we have read for class and anything we have discussed in class is fair game for the exam. Do your reading for every class period and then you won't have to struggle to catch up. You will stand a great chance of getting very confused about the material if you let it all go until a day or two before the exam. A note of warning: spelling and grammar will count on the exams.



**GRADING SCALE AND GRADE PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN**

I do not grade on a curve. I use the following grading scale:

A 93-100	A- 90-92	
B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82
C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72

D 60-69  
F less than 60.

If you take the class Pass/Fail, you must take all the quizzes and exams, and your average must be 60% or above to pass.

The class breakdown for percentage of grades goes as follows:

Participation: 15%  
Quizzes: 55%  
Final: 30%



### **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Study together in groups and consult a variety of works on ancient Greek and Roman cultures and myths. However, the work you do should always be your own: cheating and plagiarism will result in failing this course and a referral of the matter to the proper Dean's Office. Bucknell has strong anti-plagiarism policies that you should familiarize yourself with. If you are unsure about the exact definition of cheating or plagiarism, consult [http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/dean\\_arts\\_sci/acadresp.html](http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/dean_arts_sci/acadresp.html).



### **DISABILITIES**

I encourage all students with disabilities to contact me so we can make arrangements to meet your needs. See me after class, during office hours, or by appointment.



### **COMMUNICATION**

Outside of class and office hours, please communicate with me via phone, e-mail (I like email), or during my office hours. Outside my office hours, if my door is open, I am free to meet with you. If my door is closed, I am busy preparing for class or doing other important work. If my office hours are inconvenient for you,

I will be glad to schedule another time when we can meet. *Please do not call me at home under any circumstances.*



## **CALENDAR**

This schedule is an *ideal* program. I encourage and value class participation, and I like to discuss things in detail. So, it is possible that we may fall behind with the lectures. Please *adjust* your readings to coordinate with the lectures, unless I ask you otherwise.

### **WEEK ONE**

**W August 22: Practicalities and Introduction: What is a myth and how do you study it?**

READING: start reading *ahead* this weekend for the first weeks of class; some upcoming assignments are long.

Read the syllabus all the way through. Explore the BlackBoard site for the class and find the Ereserves.

**F August 24: Modern Interpretations of Myth**

READING: Powell chapter 1 (pages 1-17, on the nature and study of myth); chapter 24 (pages 674-703, on theories of myth interpretation).

### **WEEK TWO**

**M August 27: Modern Interpretations Continued; Very Short Introduction to Greek History and Literature**

READING: Powell chapter 2 (pages 18-51, the cultural context of myth; Greek society); Powell chapter 3 (pages 52-77, near eastern myth and influence; sources).

*Myths of Creation and Divine Kingship*

**W August 29: Origins of the World/Zeus and His Rise to Power.**

READING: Hesiod's *Theogony* (I recommend you read the whole thing in one sitting, but if not read at least to line 506);

Review Powell chapter 3 (pages 55-57, on Greek oral poetry; pp. 64-68, on Homer, Hesiod, and the *Homeric Hymns*); also read Powell chapter 4 (pages 78-111, Myths of Creation; the Rise of Zeus).

**F August 31: Our Hero Prometheus & Our Punishments**

READING: Hesiod's *Theogony* 507-end (if you've read the whole poem, review this section); Hesiod *Works and Days* 1-105 (about Prometheus and Pandora, electronic copy available on Eres);

Powell chapter 5 (pages 112-140, Myths of Creation, Prometheus, Pandora);

Pay attention to the excerpts from Aeschylus' tragedy, *Prometheus Bound*, printed in Powell, pages 116-117, and the stories of floods (pages 129-135).

### **WEEK THREE** *The Olympians*

**M September 3:** LABOR DAY (do we have class?) CATCH UP DAY

**W September 5:** Zeus, Prometheus, and Pandora continued; Introduction to the Olympians

**F September 7:** Introduction to the *Homeric Hymns*

**A Different Side of Zeus/His Wife Hera**

READING: *Homeric Hymn* 23 (Zeus), *Homeric Hymn* 12 (Hera);

Powell, chapter 6 (pages 141-158); useful for review of all the Olympians will be the overview of the Olympian gods and goddesses on Eres.

### **WEEK FOUR**

**M September 10:** Zeus' Amours and Ancient Greek Myths about Young Women

READING: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, pages 18-23 (Io), 36-40 (Callisto and the Crow), 49-51 (Europa). If these page numbers don't match up with your edition of Ovid, check the index for the stories about these young women.

**W September 12:** Athena/Poseidon

READING: Apollodorus 3 (excerpt available on ERes, titled "Chapter Eight: The Kings of Athens"); *Homeric Hymns* 11 & 28 (Athena); *Homeric Hymn* 22 (Poseidon).

Powell chapter 8 (pages 222-226, Athena); Powell chapter 7 (pages 159-162, Poseidon); Powell chapter 15 (pages 408-412, on Cecrops, Erichthonius, the daughters of Cecrops, and their descendants);

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, pages 46-49 (the envy of Aglauros), 121-125 (Arachne)

**F September 14:** Athena Continued; Apollo and Delphi

READING: *Homeric Hymns* 3 (it will be useful for you to consult a map of ancient Greece when you read this *Hymn*), 21, & 25; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, pages 14-18 (Daphne), 40-43 (Coronis); Powell chapter 7 (pages 162-180, Apollo).

### **WEEK FIVE**

**M September 17:** Apollo Continued

**\*\*\*\*W September 19:** QUIZ 1

**F September 21:** Artemis and Brauron

READING: *Homeric Hymns to Artemis* (check table of contents in Athanassakis); review Ovid's stories about Callisto, Io, Europa, and Daphne (especially about Callisto); Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, pages 55-58 (Actaeon), 125-130 (Niobe); Powell chapter 8 (pages 216-2221, Artemis); other readings TBA.

## **WEEK SIX**

### **M September 24: Artemis Continued; Hermes**

READING: *Homeric Hymns* 4 & 18; review Ovid's *Metamorphoses* pages 46-49 (Aglauros, Mercury/Hermes), 21-22 (Io); read Ovid's *Metamorphoses* pages 83-85 (Hermaphroditus); Powell chapter 7 (pages 185-198, Hermes).

### **W September 26: Hermes Continued**

### **F September 28: Aphrodite/Hephaistos/Ares**

READING: *Odyssey*. 8.266-384; *Homeric Hymns* 5 & 6 (Aphrodite); Euripides' *Hippolytus*, first scene (electronic copy on ERes); Sappho's Hymns to Aphrodite (electronic copy on ERes); *Homeric Hymn* 20 (Hephaistos); *Homeric Hymn* 8 (Ares);

Powell chapter 7 (pages 180-181, Hephaistos), 182-185 (Ares), chapter 8 (pages 204-215 and "Perspective 8.1"), chapter 9 (pages 254-261, Aphrodite, Cybele, Adonis).

Male Initiation theme (to consider for comparison): Ovid's *Metamorphoses* pages 61-66 (Narcissus), 229-30 (Ganymede), and 228-232 (Cyparissus & Hyacinthus).

## **WEEK SEVEN**

### **M October 1: Video: Greek Drama: from Ritual to Theater**

If time, I will introduce Dionysos after the end of the video

### **W October 3: Dionysos**

READING: *Homeric Hymn* 7 (Athanassakis p. 56-58); *Homeric Hymn* 26 (Athanassakis p. 65);

Powell chapter 10 (pages 263-296); pay particular attention to the excerpts from Euripides' *Bacchae* on pages 272-283, or, better yet, read the entire play in your copy of *Ten Plays of Euripides*.

### **F October 5: Demeter and Persephone**

READING: *Homeric Hymn* 1 (Athanassakis pp. 1-15); *Homeric Hymn* 13 (Athanassakis p. 60).

Powell, chapter 8 (p. 204, brief introduction to Demeter); chapter 9 (pages 247-254, Inanna, Isis), pages 228-246 (most of this section just repeats the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*); chapter 7 (page 162, brief introduction to Hades); Ovid's *Metamorphoses* pages 109-116.

## **WEEK EIGHT**

### **M October 8: Demeter and Persephone Continued**

READING: Powell chapter 11 (pages 297-328, myths of death and descent to the Underworld).

### **W October 10: Introduction to and Interpretations of the Greek Hero**

SHORT READINGS: "The Pattern of the Hero" and "The Myth of the Birth of the Hero"; "Typical Elements of an Aristeia" (electronic copies available on ERes); excerpts from Herodotus' *Histories* Book 1 (to be handed out in class);

### **F October 12: Herakles**

Powell chapter 14 (pages 369-407; can read part of this lengthy chapter for next session as well, or better idea: read it all before fall break and then have no reading assignment for the day after the break)

## **WEEK NINE**

**MT October 15 & 16** Fall Break

### **W October 17: Herakles Cont'd**

### **F October 19: The Tradition of the Trojan War and its Heroes**

LONGER READINGS: The *Iliad*, books 17.445-end (Patroklos has just been killed, and the Greeks and Trojans are fighting over his body), 18.1-150 (Achilles finds out), 19-20 (gore), 21.1-434 (more gore), and 22 (death of Hektor).

**Note: I did not require you to buy the *Iliad* for this class, but I assume that you can easily find a hard copy in the library or an electronic copy online. Try: <http://classics.mit.edu/Homer/iliad.html>**

## **WEEK TEN**

### **\*\*\*M October 22: QUIZ 2**

Covers Material from Quiz 1 up to now, covered in class and in the readings

**W October 24:** Powell chapter 19 (pages 530-565, the Trojan War, part I). If you are especially interested in myths of heroes, read Powell's short chapter 12 (pages 329-345).

### **F October 26: Traditions of the Trojan War, Part II; Homecomings**

READING: Powell chapter 20 (pages 566-581, Trojan War, part II).

## **WEEK ELEVEN**

### **M October 29 -- W October 31: Aeschylus' *Oresteia*; its Athenian Context**

READING: Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*; Powell chapter 20 (pages 581-591, Aeschylus' plays).

Aeschylus' *Eumenides*; read the whole play, but pay particular attention to the last half.

We might actually watch a production of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* in class this week if there is interest (or time, unlikely).

## **WEEKS ELEVEN - TWELVE - THIRTEEN**

### **F November 2 -- M November 5: The *Odyssey***

#### **Odysseus; Introduction to the *Odyssey* and Telemachus' Quest and Initiation**

READING: the *Odyssey*, books 1-4; overview of the general pattern of the three sections of the *Odyssey* (electronic copies available on ERes); also see the "Journey/Quest Pattern," on ERes. You might also want to look at the selections from Van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* on ERes, if you haven't done so already.

### **W November 7 -- F November 9: Odysseus, continued: Odysseus and his Travels**

READING: The *Odyssey*, books 5-8.

### **M November 12 -- W November 14: More of Odysseus' Journeys**

READING: The *Odyssey*, book 9 (Cyclops); re-familiarize yourself with "Typical Elements of an Aristeia" (available on ERes); the *Odyssey*, books 11-13 (Odysseus in hell); also skim over the final books of the *Odyssey* (18-24) for plot (this will help you better follow the lecture).

Powell chapter 21 (pages 593-612).

### **F November 16: Reintegration: Odysseus' Homecoming, Penelope, and the Suitors' Demise**

READING: The *Odyssey*, books 16, 19, 21-24 (homecoming);

Powell chapter 21 (pages 612-621).

### **\*\*\*\* M November 19: QUIZ 3 (40 minutes) and Class Evaluations**

Quiz covers Material from Quiz 2 up to now, covered in class and in the readings

### **November 21-23: THANKSGIVING BREAK!**

After break, come to class: no exceptions

## **WEEK FIFTEEN**

### **M November 26 -- F November 30: RESUSCITATION OF THE ODYSSEY**

Viewing and Discussion: the Cohen brothers' film, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*  
Class discussion of the elements which pertain directly to the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*,  
or possibly other myths or myth patterns we have studied so far in this course.  
This fun movie and relaxed class time will allow you more time to review  
material for the final exam.

**M December 3:** LAST DAY OF CLASS: Discussion of Final Exam and Student  
Evaluations

**Attendance Required**

**FINAL EXAM LOCATION AND DATE TBA**