CC 303 (32465): Introduction to Classical Mythology

TTh 12:30-2:00, UTC 4.112

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Required text-available at the University Co-op.

Mark Morford & Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, 8th ed. (Oxford University Press 2007)

Myths are stories that encode a culture's values, hopes, and fears. They describe the shape of the universe according to that culture and the processes by which it has assumed this shape. They express the perceived relationship between humans and the gods, between men and women, between different groups of humans. They explain the reasons for the conventions within a society. They examine the consequences of challenging these conventions. They deal with the most profound of human experiences: birth, love, loyalty, redemption, hate, suffering, sacrifice, death. They were shaped by, but also helped to shape the societies in which they were produced and have continued to be retold and have a profound effect on all western culture to this day.

In this course we shall examine the significance of the myth (to the extent that it can be identified) and how different authors have shaped plot lines and characters to produce unique versions of a story. Material culture (archaeological sites, vase painting, etc.) will be used to complement the literary material. We shall also consider a variety of theories put forward by contemporary scholars on the basic structure and meaning of myth.

Insofar as one of the aims of this course is to give you the knowledge to be able to understand the deployment of ancient Greek myth in our own culture, a substantial part of your grade will depend on **remembering** the names and the stories we will study in this course (and there are a lot of them). It is important to know these because they are often referred to by writers and artists as a shorthand for a code of ideas. To this extent the course is largely a foundational course. But to pass the course you will also have to **understand** at least some of the ways the stories have been interpreted, and to do well you will have to be able to **apply** this understanding to myths we have not studied in class.

Objectives

Students in this course will:

- Become familiar with the sources for Greek myth
- Learn the basic categories and details of written Greek myths
- Learn the ancient artistic and monumental representations of Greek myths
- Understand the cultural context of Greek myths
- Know basic mythic chronology and geography
- Become familiar with modern theories on the significance of myth
- Be able to suggest viable interpretations of myths not covered in the course material

Class procedure

We will proceed methodically through Morford and Lenardon (henceforth M&L). Occasionally I may also assign a secondary reading which will be posted on Blackboard. If I do so I will inform the class by e-mail. You should have **read and taken notes** on the assigned chapters before class. The study question sheets in the Assignments section of Blackboard will help you identify the information that you should know after studying each chapter. You should write out your answers to these questions and bring them to class. You should leave empty space between your answers to one question and the following question so you can take relevant notes from other students' answers in class. As soon as possible after the class you should integrate the notes. This will be an enormous aid to any future review you do.

During class periods I will amplify and clarify the M&L material and answer any questions. You should also **take notes** on this material. Much of it will not be in M&L but could be on the tests and final. I will not be able to cover everything in M&L, but again anything in the chapter could be on the tests and final. This is why you should study the material yourself before class and ask if I do not deal with anything that is puzzling you. If anything remains unclear you should come to either my or Andrew's office hours. We will begin by asking to see your notes and will not work with you one-on-one unless we see a good faith effort on your part to do the assigned work. **Highlighting and underlining passages in your textbook does not count as note-taking**. Some of the advice Andrew or I offer may involve note-taking strategies.

There is a link to the M&L webpage on the External Links page of Blackboard that contains chapter summaries and practice quizzes which can be very helpful. (N.B. these quizzes are multiple choice which will not be the format of the class tests but should give you some indication of how well you are absorbing the material.)

Attending class and taking good notes on both the readings and class discussion which you can use for review is key to doing well in this class.

Grading

Grades will be assigned on the basis of three tests each covering roughly a third of the course. The tests will be weighted progressively 15%, 20% and 25%. There will also be a cumulative final of 40%. Examples of the types of questions

that will be asked on the tests and final are posted on the Course Documents section of Blackboard.

Final grades will be reported with plusses and minuses. I will give grades based on one decimal point, i.e., 59.4 or lower is an F; minus grades: 59.5-62.4, 69.5-72.4, 79.5-82.4, 89.5-92.4; straight grades: 62.5-66.4, 72.5-76.4, 82.5-86.4, 92.5-96.4; plus grades: 66.5-69.4, 76.5-79.4, 86.5-89.4, 96.5-100.

The dates for the tests and final are on the schedule. I reserve the right to consider whether any absence (other than those supported by a doctor's note) or tardiness on a test day merits the opportunity for a make-up. In general proceed on the assumption that **I** will not give a make-up other than in the most extreme of circumstances. This does not include, for example, having a flat tire on the way to class. Set out early enough to preclude such misfortune affecting your attendance. Anybody that has already booked a flight home which will cause them to miss the final will have to rebook their ticket.

20% of the marks on the final will be reserved for a retelling of a myth we have not covered in class and its analysis by one of the methodologies we have discussed. The webpages I have posted on the External Links page on Blackboard should help you in identifying a myth which interests you. It does not have to be a Greco-Roman myth.

Schedule

Jan. 19	Intro to course, syllabus, class procedure, expectations
Jan. 21	M&L 1&2: Interpretation, definition, history of myth
Jan. 26	M&L 3: Creation
Jan. 28	M&L 4: Zeus
Feb. 2	M&L 5&6: Olympians and the Nature of the Gods
Feb. 4	M&L 7&8: Poseidon & Athena
Feb. 9	M&L 9: Aphrodite & Eros
Feb. 11	TEST 1
Feb. 16	M&L 10: Artemis
Feb. 18	M&L 11: Apollo
Feb. 23	M&L 12: Hermes
Feb. 25	M&L 13: Dionysus
Mar. 2	M&L 14: Demeter
Mar. 4	M&L 15&16: Hades & Orpheus
Mar. 9	Catch-up and review
Mar. 11	TEST 2
Mar. 15-19	SPRING BREAK
Mar. 23	M&L 17: The Theban Saga
Mar. 20	M&L 18: The Mycenaean Saga
Mar. 30	M&L 19: The Trojan Saga
Apr. 1	M&L 19: The Trojan Saga continued

Apr. 6	M&L 20: The Returns and the <i>Odyssey</i>
Apr. 8	M&L 20: The <i>Odyssey</i> continued
Apr. 13	Catch-up and review
Apr. 15	TEST 3
Apr. 20	M&L 21: Perseus & Argos
Apr. 22	M&L 22: Heracles
Apr. 27	M&L 23: Theseus & Attica
Apr. 29	M&L 24: Jason and the Argonauts
May 4	M&L 25: Local Heroes and Heroines
May 6	M&L 26: Roman Mythology

Final: Wednesday May 12th, 2-5 p.m.

Statement on Academic Dishonesty

Like all faculty at UT I take a very serious view of academic dishonesty. Any student found guilty of cheating in any way will receive an F in the course and will be reported to Student Services. In some cases academic dishonesty can result in expulsion from the University. Moreover many professional schools will not admit a student who has such a violation on their record. Scholastic dishonesty includes any kind of cheating, including plagiarism; if you are unsure about the exact definition you should consult the General information catalogue, Appendix, Section 11-802, online at:

http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi01-02/app/appc11.html.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471 4641, or the information is available online at: http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/ssd/index.html.

Religious holidays

Students can make up work missed for a religious holiday if they bring a request and documentation of the holiday fourteen days ahead of time.