CLASSGEN 18: GREEK MYTHOLOGY
M and W 1:15-2:45, Building 250-108
Instructor: Dan-el Padilla Peralta (dpadilla@stanford.edu)
Office hours: Building 110, 2nd fl., M and W 11:00am-noon

Course Description and Objectives

In this course we will study Greek mythology—the unruly mass of stories that have provoked and inspired audiences from archaic Greece to the 21st century. What are these stories? What do they tell us about the societies in which they emerged, and what does our continuing obsession with them say about us? In pursuit of some answers, we will familiarize ourselves with the major narratives of these myths; learn about the cultural and historical contexts in which the myths arose and flourished; track their reception over time; and take a stab at writing our very own.

Texts

Required:

These books are all available for purchase at Stanford Bookstore (and through Amazon). Copies will be kept (1) at Green Library, on three-hour reserve; (2) at the Classics Department Library (Building 110, 2nd floor), on a non-circulating shelf.

Grading

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Each Thursday of weeks 1-3 and 5-6, I will circulate via e-mail a short prompt that asks you to reflect on an issue covered in our readings and/or in class. Your written response—to be no fewer than 500 and no more than 1,000 words—will be due (via e-mail) by NOON Monday of the following week. If you take the course for 5 credits, you must submit 5 responses; if for 4 credits, 4; if for 3, 3. The midterm (July 21) will feature multiple-choice questions, several short identifications, and an essay. The “myth-writing exercise” due at the beginning of week 8 (Aug. 11) will ask you to choose one of the mythic characters discussed in class and weave your very own 1,500/2,000-word story around him/her; I will send around specific instructions and guidelines two weeks before the due date. The final exam (Aug. 15; time TBA) will test all material covered after the midterm.
Since class will be a combination of lecture and discussion, you’re expected to come prepared and participate actively. Just to keep you on your toes, I’ll be administering three unannounced ten-minute quizzes (the lowest score will be dropped when I calculate your final grade). Attendance at all classes is mandatory; if an unavoidable conflict or commitment requires you to miss a session, please write to me in advance. Any unexcused absence will lower your final participation grade by a full letter (e.g., A to B).

**Stanford Honor Code**

You are strongly encouraged to exchange ideas with your classmates, but all submitted work must reflect your own, independent effort. For the weekly responses, you may NOT employ any resource except your brain and the text(s) indicated on the assignment prompt. You are also expected not to copy from classmates during quizzes and exams. For more information: [http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm). Don’t hesitate to approach me via e-mail or at office hours if you have any questions.

**Students with Documented Disabilities**

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with Stanford’s Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: [http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae](http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae)).

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**NB:** Readings are to be completed by date indicated on syllabus

**Abbreviations:** ANTH (= *Anthology of classical myth*); CW (Coursework PDF)

**June 23**
- What is myth? Definitions and aims
  - In class: Sallustius *On the gods and the cosmos* [ANTH 383-4]

**Part I: Stories**

**June 25**
- Cosmogony and creation
  - Hesiod *Theogony* 1-572 [ANTH 129-48] and Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.1-88 [CW]

**June 30**
- The rise of the Olympians
  - Hesiod *Theogony* 572-end [ANTH 148-60]; *Homerian Hymns* [ANTH 168-210]; Ovid *Met.* 1.89-162 [CW]
  - SKIM: W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 125-70 [CW]

**July 2**
- The Trojan War
  - Homer *Iliad* (as abridged in Lombardo, pp. 1-240) and Ovid *Heroides* 3 (Briseis to Achilles) [ANTH 309-13]

**July 7**
- The aftermath
  - Homer *Odyssey* (as abridged in Lombardo, pp. 241-482) and Ovid *Her.* 1
  - (Penelope to Ulysses) [ANTH 306-9]

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**Greek Mythology**

2
July 9
Heroes, monsters, demi-gods I
Jason and the Argonauts
Apollonius Rhodius Argonautica I.1-568 [CW] and Ovid Her. 12 (Medea to Jason) [ANTH 322-28]
Heracles
Apollodorus 2.4.8-2.7.7 [ANTH 33-45]; Xenophon Memorabilia 2.1.21-2.1.34 [ANTH 435-7]; Ovid Her. 2 (Deianira to Hercules) [CW]
The Dioscouri
Eratosthenes Constellation Myths 10 [ANTH 103] and Hyginus Stories 77-81 [ANTH 239-40]
Theseus and the Minotaur
Apollodorus 3.15.6-E.1.19 [ANTH 54-57] and Ovid Her. 10 (Ariadne to Theseus) [ANTH 318-22]

July 14
Heroes, monsters, demi-gods II
**Response #3 due by e-mail
Orpheus
Apollodorus 1.3 (B2) [ANTH 19]; Diod. Sic. 4.25 [ANTH 96]; Vergil Georg. 4.453-527 [ANTH 430-32]
Perseus
Apollodorus 2.4.1-2.4.5 [ANTH 31-33] and Ovid Met. 4.604-803, 5.1-249 [CW]
Pelops
Pindar Olympian 1 [ANTH 356-60]
The Cyclops
Theocritus Idyls 11 [ANTH 399-401]

July 16
Prideful (and/or?) foolish humans
Actaeon
Apollodorus 3.4 (M3) [ANTH 48]; Hyg. Stories 180-81 [ANTH 269]; Ovid Met. 3.139-252 [CW]
Daedalus and Icarus
Ovid Met. 8.183-235 [CW]
Narcissus
Ovid Met. 3.350-510 [CW]
Niobe
Apollodorus 3.5 (M5) [ANTH 49-50]; Ovid Met. 6.146-312 [CW]

July 21
MIDTERM (in class; no reading)

Movie screening I: Orfeu Negro (1959)
Tuesday, July 22, 7:30pm | Building 110, Rm. 112

II: Themes (in performance)

July 23
Pride before the fall
“Only Zeus is free” [Aesch.] Prometheus Bound (entire)
“The wise is not wisdom” Euripides, The Bacchae (entire)

July 28
Loneliness and grief
**Response #4 due by e-mail
Sophocles Philoctetes (entire)
July 30  (Illicit) desire
Euripides *Hippolytus* (entire)

Aug. 4 They mess you up, your mum and dad  **Response #5 due by e-mail**
Aeschylus *Oresteia* (entire)

III: Reactions (past and present)

Aug. 6 What to do with myths?
[ NB: these readings will be split up among groups]
**Criticize**
Xenophanes frs. 11, 14-16 D-K [ANTH 433]; Critias *Sisyphos* [ANTH 92-93];
Plato *Republic* 2.376d-2.380c [ANTH 363-67]; Lucretius *DRN* 1.1-101, 2.589-660, 5.1161-1240 [ANTH 298-305]; Lucian *On Sacrifices* [ANTH 293-97]

**Rationalize**
Herodotus 1.1-1.5, 1.23-24, 2.113-2.120 [ANTH 123-28]; Palaephatus *On Unbelievable Things* [ANTH 329-39]; Diod. Sic. 5.66-5.73 [ANTH 96-101];
Heraclitus *Homeric Problems* [ANTH 116-20]; Cornutus *Compendium* [ANTH 89-91]

**Politiciize**
Plutarch *Life of Alexander* (selections) [CW]; E. Champlin “Tiberius and the heavenly twins” *JRS* 2011 [CW]
“Accessorize”
Plutarch *Life of Crassus* 31-33 [CW]; K. M. Coleman “Fatal charades” *JRS* 1990 [CW; focus on pp. 60-66]

Aug. 11 Perennial Homer  **“Your myth” due by e-mail**
 **The Victorian moment**
Alfred Lord Tennyson, “Ulysses” [CW]
“Postcolonial Homer”
D. Walcott, *Omeros*, Bk 1 [CW]
A Penelope for our times?
T. Villanueva, “So spoke Penelope”, “Against all odds”, “Speaking as a mother”,
“Twenty years waiting” (in *So Spoke Penelope* [2013]) [CW]

Tuesday, Aug. 12, 7:30pm | Building 110, Rm. 112

Aug. 13 (Post-)modernities?
Herakles and Geryon in love
The lives of Icarus
Pieter Brueghel the Elder’s (?) painting “Fall of Icarus” [CW]
W. H. Auden, “Musée des Beaux Arts” (1939) [CW]
W. C. Williams, “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus” (1960) [CW]
A. Sexton, “To A Friend Whose Work Has Come To Triumph” (1960) [CW]
Jay-Z, *Decoded*: lyrics and notes to “Beach Chair” (2010) [CW]

***Final exam Aug. 15 (time and location TBA)**