Classics 31: Greek Mythology

Class Schedule: MW 1:15-2:45PM, 110-112 (Classics department seminar room)
Instructor: Alan Sheppard
Email: ashep@stanford.edu
Office Hours: W 2:45-4PM or by appointment

Course Description
In this course we will study Greek mythology – the diverse group of stories about the gods and heroes of ancient Greece that have provoked and inspired audiences from Archaic Greece to 21st Century America. We will familiarize ourselves with the principal characters and stories of Greek mythology through reading the Greek and Roman literary texts (e.g. Homer, Greek Tragedy, Ovid) in which these stories are preserved. Along the way we will also look at visual representations in Greek and Roman art, learn about the historical and cultural context in which these myths were produced, and examine some of the methodologies with which ancient and modern readers have interpreted these myths. Finally, we will consider the enduring importance of Greek mythology in our society today.

Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students should be able to

- identify the contents, contexts, plots and characters of Greek mythology.
- locate Greek mythology and its sources within the ancient context of Greek culture.
- interpret the ancient sources for Greek mythology through close study.
- evaluate the variety of ancient and modern methodologies which are used to interpret myth.
- demonstrate an understanding of how mythology is relevant to and used in contemporary society.

Required Texts

Required texts are all available at the Stanford bookstore and online through the usual sources. They will also be on reserve in Green Library.
N.B. If buying the Euripides edition online make sure you get the edition of these four plays published by Focus Publishing and not CreateSpace. Amazon has amalgamated the two listings so it’d probably be simplest to purchase directly from the publisher.

Provisional Class Schedule

ACM = Anthology of Classical Myth
CW = Available in pdf form on coursework

Week 1.1, Mon June 22nd: Introduction & Contexts I
Themes and aims of the class, review of syllabus, defining myth, Greek myth in its ancient and modern contexts.

Week 1.2, Wed June 24th: Introduction & Contexts II
Apollo, Aetiologies, Performance, Religion.
Reading: Buxton 16-41, Homeric Hymn to Apollo (ACM 178-86)

Week 2.1, Mon June 29th: Origins I
Zeus & the Origins of the Gods. Hermes
Reading: Buxton 44-65, Hesiod Theogony (ACM 129-159), Homeric Hymn to Hermes (ACM 187-97)

Week 2.2, Wed July 1st: Origins II
Origins of Humans, Flood Stories, Comparative Mythology.
Reading: Hesiod Works and Days 1-234 (ACM 160-7), Pausanias J (ACM 350), Ovid, Metamorphoses 1.1-415 (CW), selections from the Epic of Gilgamesh (CW).
Quiz 1

Week 3.1, Mon July 6th: Origins III
Demeter, Culture Heroes & City Founders, Ancient Modes of Interpretation I
Reading: Homeric Hymn to Demeter (ACM 169-77), Ovid Metamorphoses 3.1-137 (CW), Apollodorus M1 (ACM 46-7), Hyginus 166, 164 (ACM 265, 264), ‘the Pride of Halicarnassus’ (CW), Diodorus of Sicily 5.66-5.73 (ACM 96-101), Thucydides 1.1-1.12 (ACM 404-9)

N.B. July 6th is the Final Study List Deadline. This is the last day you can change your grading basis or adjust the number of units your taking the class for.

Week 3.2, Wed July 8th: Gods I
Artemis, Dionysus, Ancient Modes of Interpretation II
Reading: Buxton, 68-103, Ovid Metamorphoses 3.138-338, 511-733 (CW), Euripides Bacchae, Cleanthes Hymn to Zeus (ACM 84-5), Lucretius 1.1-1.101 (ACM 298-301).
Quiz 2

Week 4.1, Mon July 13th: Gods II
Aphrodite, Ancient Modes of Interpretation III
Reading: Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (ACM 197-202), Sappho 1 (ACM 385-6), Euripides Hippolytus, selections from Lucian Dialogues of the Gods (ACM 280-4), selections from Palaephatus (Prologue – Europa, ACM 329-33), selections from Xenophanes (ACM 433-4), selections from Heraclitus (ACM 116-20).

Week 4.2, Wed July 15th
Midterm (in class)

Week 5.1, Mon July 20th: Heroes I
Herakles, Theseus, Myth & History
Reading: Buxton, 104-145, Apollodorus on Heracles (ACM 33-45) and Theseus (ACM 54-7), Ovid Metamorphoses 9.1-323 (CW), selections from Plutarch’s Life of Theseus (CW), Arrian 4.10.5-4.11.8 (ACM 59-60)

Week 5.2, Wed July 22nd: Heroes II
Medea, Gender Studies & Myth
Reading: Euripides Medea, Ovid Heroides 3, 10, 12 (ACM 314-28), Pausanias C (ACM 345)
Quiz 3

Film Screening 1, Thursday July 23rd: Percy Jackson & The Olympians: The Lightning Thief
7.00-9.00pm, 110-112

Week 6.1 Mon July 27th: Heroes III
The Theban Cycle & Family Dramas
Reading: Buxton, 148-77, Apollodorus on Thebes (ACM 46-54), Sophocles Oedipus Tyrannus

Week 6.2, Wed July 29th: Homer I
The Trojan War
Reading: Homer Iliad 1-3, 5-6, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20-22, 24 (as abridged in Lombardo), Proclus on the Epic cycle (ACM 378-82).
Quiz 4

Myth Tracking Assignment Due, 5pm Friday July 31st

Week 7.1, Mon August 3rd: Homer II
Landscapes and Wanderings
Reading: Homer, Odyssey 1, 4-12 (as abridged in Lombardo), Buxton, 180-213.

Film Screening 2, Tuesday August 4th: O Brother Where Art Thou
7.00-9.00pm, 110-112

Week 7.2, Wed August 5th: Homer III
The Return Home, End of the Heroic Age and Reception

**Quiz 5**

*Week 8.1, Mon August 10th: Receptions*

Antigone & her reception
Reading: Buxton 216-245, Sophocles *Antigone*, selections from Mee & Foley *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage* (*CW*).

*Week 8.2, Wed August 12th: Review Session*

**Film Analysis Project due 5pm Friday August 14th.**

**Final exam: Sat August 15th 12.15pm (tbc)**

**Requirements**

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**Participation and Quizzes**

Class time will be primarily run as seminars (with a few mini-lectures interspersed) and thus require full participation from all students. In addition to the regular class sessions, there will be two film screenings featuring modern adaptations of Greek myths. These will take place on the evenings of Thursday July 16th (week 4) and Thursday August 6th (week 7).

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).

In order to participate fully in the class, it is expected that you read carefully the day’s assigned reading ahead of time and contribute to class discussions. These will involve both close study of the texts you’ve read as well as consideration of the broader themes we’ve encountered.

Finally, there will be five quizzes during the course of the class. These will take place in class on the Wednesday of weeks 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7. The quizzes will test you on material covered in the previous week’s readings.
A note on reading for class
Read actively not passively! This means when reading you should be prepared to take notes and consider how the text ties in to the broader themes of the course. Try to do your reading in an environment where you’ll be more likely to take notes and retain information. You will need to be able to consider how the texts relate to broader themes of the course as well as recall individual details about the myths and characters (see learning objectives above). Helpful methods include underlining/highlighting key phrases and passages, taking notes on the structure, key themes and characters of the texts you’re reading, and noting down key questions you’d like to bring to class. These will range from basic questions about the material to broader conceptual queries.

In-class Technology Policy
Given the now-abundant literature on the “cognitive costs” of multitasking, please refrain from using laptops, iPads, Kindles etc. during class (except as required by a documented disability, on which see below). You might find that taking notes by hand improves your recall, no matter how terrible your handwriting.

Mid-term and final
These exams will both be 90 minutes long. They will consist of identification questions, invite you to comment on a passage of mythological significance (these will be taken from the readings), and write a short response essay. The mid-term will be held in class on Wednesday July 15th (week 4) while the final will be held at a time to be announced at the end of term exam period (Friday 14th or Saturday 15th August).

Myth Tracking Exercise and Film Analysis (4 and 5 units only)
Students taking the course for four units must complete one of these assignments. Students taking the course for five units must complete both. Further details on these assignments will be provided at the start of the quarter and I am happy to advise on appropriate topics and passages.

Myth Tracking Exercise
Students taking the course for four or five units must also complete a myth tracking exercise. This assignment will ask students to pick a particular character or event from Greek mythology and analyse how it is presented in three separate texts or images (ancient or modern). This assignment has a word limit of 1,500 words and will be due on Friday July 31st at 5pm.

Film Analysis
Students must complete an analysis of one of the two films screened for the class during the course (Percy Jackson and the Olympians or O Brother Where Art Thou). In this paper students will be asked to assess how successful the film was in adapting characters and stories from Greek mythology. This assignment has a word limit of 1,500 words and will be due on Friday 14th August at 5pm.
Policy on Late Work
Late work will not be accepted, but extensions will be given at the instructor’s discretion. If you think you will be unable to meet a due-date set in the course schedule, you should ask for an extension no less than 48 hours before the original due-date.

Resources for Further Research
I am very happy to provide further advice on materials and resources for research. The following is a small starting-point, see me for more details or if you have any questions:
- Buxton provides an excellent bibliography (246-9) broken down by chapter themes. This allows you to zero in on particular topics with ease.
- The Anthology of Classical Myth has a comprehensive index. This allows you to investigate further passages relating to particular characters or stories as well as dive into many of the primary sources relating to myths we haven’t been able to cover in detail.

Online Resources
There is a lot of helpful material on the internet. There is also a lot of unhelpful, misleading, and wrong material. As with most other subjects, this statement holds true for Greek Mythology. Happily, Stanford Libraries provide free access to two important online encyclopaedic resources. When researching topics online, I highly recommend starting at one of these resources:

- Brill’s New Pauly Supplement I – Volume 4: The Reception of Myth and Mythology (http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-new-pauly-supplements-i-4) is an excellent resource. The articles not only provide details of modern reception but also supply a summary of the myths a character is associated and in-depth discussion of their treatment in ancient Greek and Roman literature and art.
- Brill’s New Pauly (http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-new-pauly) is a comprehensive encyclopaedia of the ancient world. This is useful for exploring further aspects of the ancient world beyond Greek myth as well as for filling in gaps not covered in the Supplement.

There are also plenty of out of copyright translations of classical texts online. http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/ is the most complete set.

Students with Documented Disabilities:
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC 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 SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066).
The Stanford University Honor Code
The Stanford University Honor Code is Stanford’s statement on academic integrity first written by Stanford students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work. It is agreed to by every student who enrolls and by every instructor who accepts appointment at Stanford. The Honor Code states:

1. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:
   1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;
   2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

2. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.

3. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

Penalties for violation of the Honor Code can be serious (e.g., suspension, and even expulsion). Please reread the honor code if you are unsure of any details. Full information can be found at [http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/communitystandards/honorcode](http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/communitystandards/honorcode)