

CLAS 160: Classical Mythology

Fall 2019

Instructor information:

Instructor: Matthew Semanoff

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Office hours: Monday through Friday, 1:00-2:00 pm, or by appointment

Course Information:

Time and Days: 2:00-2:50 MWF

Room: Social Science 352

Course description:

Classical Mythology is an exploration of the ancient stories, legends, and folk tales of the gods and heroes of the Greeks and Romans. We will study ancient stories – many of which will be familiar through adaptations in film, music, art, and contemporary retellings – through Greek and Roman literature. Although many of these stories come down to us as told by a particular poet (e.g. Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, or Ovid) we will try to explore how myths fulfill a variety of functions, how myths can be told and re-told for different purposes, and how myths often provide a symbolic framework through which the world can be better explained and understood. While this class will focus on the myths of the Greeks and the Romans, we will also discuss Near Eastern sources and parallels as well as later versions and adaptations of these Classical Myths.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, the successful student will be able to:

1. define “myth” and the various categories of it;
2. list and understand the importance of the specific characteristics which define Greek and Roman mythology;
3. identify the gods and goddesses of the Greek pantheon, recognize the “attributes” of each deity, and discuss the roles of the various deities in the ancient world;
4. discuss the classical myths represented in ancient art and literature within their historical and cultural frameworks;
5. identify major frameworks, ancient and modern, by which classical myth has been interpreted.
6. apply various interpretative frameworks to major myths as appropriate;
7. be able to recognize features of classical myths that have influenced western culture in general and continue to influence contemporary art and literature;
8. understand the continued legacy of classical myth in our art, literature, and thought.

Required textbook:

Powell, Barry B. *Classical Myth*. 8th edition. Pearson. 2014.

Additional readings will be made available on the Moodle Course Shell. Please bring the appropriate books to lecture, or have access to those posted on Moodle.

Course Calendar:

A full schedule of readings, assignments, is available on the Moodle Course Shell. Please note that this schedule is subject to change.

There will be an opportunity for the class to direct the readings and topics covered following the second exam. At least three classes will be devoted to heroic myth, but the heroes studied will depend on class interests. There will

also be one week devoted to a Classical Reception projects, that will provide an opportunity for students to present on topics of their own choice. (More details to follow)

Course guidelines and policies:

Grading policy

Grades will be calculated according to the following breakdown: 15% Participation and Engagement; 35% Micro-themes; 15% Classical Reception Assignment; 35% Exams.

- **Participation and Engagement:** Student participation grades will be based on attendance, periodic quizzes during lectures, and other student engagement activities. Many of these activities will be conducted online in class, using a variety of on-line tools accessible on laptops, tablets, or smartphones.
- **Microthemes:** Students will be assigned 8 micro-themes based on assigned topics over the course of the semester. These will be brief essays 250-400 words based on recent readings, lectures, and discussions. Microthemes will be submitted via Moodle and due by 11:59 pm.
- **Classical Reception Assignment (Groups or Individuals):** Students will work on a project that examines how a specific Greek or Roman myth is re-told and re-interpreted after the classical period. These projects may focus on myth in visual arts and performing arts, literature, or film. Students may choose to work individually or in groups (requirements for individual or group projects will vary). Students may also decide to create their own re-telling of a myth and write an artist's statement explaining the relationship of the ancient myth within today's culture. More details to follow. The last week of the semester will be devoted to presenting these projects to the class.
- **Quizzes and Exams:** Students will take two mid-term examinations and a final examination. Exams will be multiple choice and require a scantron sheet and #2 pencil.

Attendance

I expect you to make every effort to attend class. If you are unable to do so, please contact me; you are responsible for making any necessary arrangements for whatever you missed in class. Late assignments will be penalized by one grade per day, unless prior arrangements have been made. I will not reschedule quizzes or exams unless arrangements have been made prior to the absence.

Disability modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Student Conduct Code

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [Student Conduct Code](#).