# University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

#### Greek and Roman Mythology

Philosophy 3120, Spring 2019

Tuesdays 1:40pm- 4:20pm / Columbine Hall 136

## **Syllabus**

***Associate Professor***

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Office Hours: Tues. 11am-1pm, Weds. 2-3pm, or by appt.

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### *Course Description*

This course examines Greek and Roman mythology from a philosophical perspective. Besides acquainting ourselves with Greek and Roman myths, we will address the concept of myth itself, ask how mythological thought is related to philosophical thinking, and pursue questions as to how we ought to interpret or make meaning out of these myths. Grounding our attempts at the latter will be a variety of ancient and modern hermeneutical approaches including the Comparative Method, Psychoanalysis, Ritualism, Structuralism and Ideology.

We will read excerpted versions of Hesiod’s *Theogon*y, Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, Euripides’ *Medea*, Virgil’s *Aenei*d, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, as well as chapters from a text to help guide us through these massively important and impactful texts. Some of the questions we will ask while doing so include whether free will exists, whether the heroic code of honor pertains to the rest of us, whether it might be ethically permissible for a hero or a god to lie, cheat, steal, and even murder, and what political, social, and moral functions myths themselves serve. Although the texts we focus on are thousands of years old, our inquiry is not simply historical, but rather one that ought to shed light on how we continue to use and be affected by myth today. The content of these texts is for mature audiences, and a trigger-warning is hereby issued for the duration of the course.

### *Goals*

* To develop critical reasoning, writing and analytical skills by interpreting, analyzing and evaluating primary works
* To acquaint students with Greek and Roman Mythology
* To engage in the doing of philosophy through active dialogue with each other and texts
* To challenge assumptions and unquestioned beliefs (including those many of us have about Greek and Roman Mythology)
* To think more fully and critically about the world and ourselves

### *Requirements*

10% Attendance and participation

Coming to class on time and being prepared to discuss the assigned readings are essential to the function of the course. Being on time means being in class by the time it starts, and staying throughout. Students are allowed two free absences, or four latenesses, without penalty. Being prepared means not only having done the reading, but having taken notes, comments and questions on the reading with which you will be able to contribute to class discussion. Unannounced quizzes to ensure reading and comprehension may be given.

* If you have a disability for which you are requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact Disability Services within the first week of classes.
* If you are a military student with the potential of being called to military service and /or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact me no later than the first week of class to discuss the class attendance policy.

15% Oral Presentation (due dates will vary)

You will introduce the reading to the class once this semester. Although you may be presenting in groups, you will receive individual grades. As a group, you will be responsible for addressing three things: 1. Analyzing what you think the figure represents/means 2. Evaluating the role such a figure may play within a society, and 3. Illustrating possible contemporary analogies. In other words, do we have any comparable figures in our society today? If so, what? If not, what does this tell us about the difference in our society and ancient Greek or Roman society? You are encouraged to be creative in how you approach these tasks, but do make sure that your creativity is not at the cost of illuminating the ideas presented. If you need materials or equipment for your presentation, let me know in advance and I can order or otherwise take care of them.

25% Paper #1(6 pages, due March 12th)

More information on this paper TBA. This course counts as a Writing Intensive course in the Compass Curriculum. This will be the first of three papers you write in this course. The first paper will include a required peer review of your paper draft that you will turn in along with your revised paper. The peer review will happen on the day we do a writing workshop in preparation for submission of the paper.

25% Paper #2 (6 pages, due April 16th)

25% Paper #3 (6 pages, due in my office by noon on May 14th)

###### Texts

Required:

* Classical Mythology: Images and Insights (6th ed). Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012.

The text is available at the bookstore (on the first floor of the University Center), and you should bring the appropriate text and/or handout with you to class daily.

Recommended Readings:

Classical:

Apollodorus, The Library of Greek Mythology, R. Hard (trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Euripides, Ten Plays, P. Roche (trans.). New York: Penguin, 1998.

Hesiod. Theogony, M.West (trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

———Works and Days, D. Tandy and W. Neale (trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Homer. The Iliad, R. Fagles (trans.). New York: Penguin, 1997.

———The Odyssey, R. Fagles (trans.). New York: Penguin, 1997.

Ovid. The Metamorphoses, H. Gregory (trans.). New York: Viking Press, 1958.

Sophocles, The Complete Plays, P. Roche (trans.). New York: Penguin, 2001.

Vergil. The Aenead, H. Fairclough (trans.) (Loeb vols. 63-64. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press,

2001.

More Contemporary:

Bakhtin, Mikhail. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. University of Texas, 1982.

Brisson, Luc. How Philosophers Saved Myths: Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology, C.

Tibanyi (trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Burkert, Walter. Greek Religion, J. Raffan (trans.). Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1985.

Buxton, Richard. Greek Mythology (illustrated). London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 2004.

Campbell, Joseph. The Power of Myth. New York: First Anchor Books, 1991.

Csapo, Eric. Theories of Mythology. Malden (MA): Blackwell Publishing, 2005

Dundes, Alan (ed.). Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth. Berkeley: University of California

Press, 1984.

Eliade, Mircea. The Myth of the Eternal Return, or Cosmos and History. W. Trask (trans.). New York:

Princeton University Press, 1954.

Frazer, James. The Golden Bough. New York: Macmillan, 1922.

Freud, Sigmund. The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, A. Brill (trans.). New York: Random House, 1998.

Gordon, R.L. Myth, Religion and Society (essays on Structuralism and Myth). Cambridge (UK):

Cambridge University Press, 1981

Harrison, Jane. Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press,

1991.

———Themis. London: South End Press, 1983.

Jung, Carl. Man and His Symbols. New York: Dell Publishing, 1964.

Lefkowitz, Mary. Greek Gods, Human Lives: What We Can Learn From Myths. New Haven (CT): Yale

University Press, 2003.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. The Savage Mind. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

deSaussure, Ferdinand. Course in General Linguistics. Paris: Open Court Publishing, 1972.

###### Schedule

##### DATE *TOPIC*  READING

Tues. Jan. 22*Introductions*: Who are you, why are you here, and what have you heard about Greek and Roman Mythology?

 THE AGE OF GODS

 *Sources, Oral tradition, history*. READ: Ch. 1

Tu. Jan. 29 *Ways of Interpreting Myth,* READ Ch. 2.

 *Creation Myths: Hesiod’s* Theogony, Read Ch.3

Tu. Feb. 5 *The Olympians,* Read Ch. 6

THE AGE OF HEROES AND MORTALS

 *The Hero/Heroine*, Read Chs. 10 & 11

Tu. Feb. 12 *Homer’s* Iliad, READ Ch. 12 (read *Iliad* Book I)

Tu. Feb. 19 cntd. (read *Iliad* Books 2-9)

 cntd. (read *Iliad* Books 10-end)

Tu. Feb. 26 *Homer’s* Odyssey, Read Ch. 13 (read *Odyssey* Book I)

 cntd. (read *Odyssey* Books 2-10)

Tu. March 5 cntd. (read *Odyssey* Books 11-end)

 *Writing Workshop and Peer Review*, **DUE: Draft Paper #1**

Tu. March 12 cntd. **DUE: PAPER #1**

MYTHICAL FAMILIES

 *Aeschylus’s* Oresteia, Read Ch. 15 (read *Agamemnon*)

Tu. March 19 cntd. (read *Eumenides*)

Tu. March 26 Spring Break —No classes.

Tu. April 2 *Sophocles’* Oedipus, Read Ch. 16

Tu. April 9 *Sophocles’* Antigone, Read Ch. 16

Tu. April 16 *Euripides’* Medea, Read Ch. 17

 **DUE: PAPER #2**

ROMAN MYTHOLOGY

Tu. Apr. 23 *Roman Mythology*, Read Ch. 18

 Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Read Ch. 19 (read *Aeneid* 1-5)

Tu. Apr. 30 cntd. (read *Aeneid* 6-end)

 *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*, Read Ch. 20 (read *Metamorphoses* 1-4)

 cntd. (read *Metamorphoses* 5-end)

Tu. May 7 Wrap -up and FCQs

Tu. May 14 Class does not meet. **DUE (in my office): PAPER #3**

##### *Grading Rubric*

There are many factors to consider in writing (and grading) a paper. In order to clarify what I expect of papers and so to help you do well, here is roughly what grades mean to me:

A Focused thesis, organized to support thesis, effective and germane use of textual support, originality of ideas, clear and well-formulated sentences, correct mechanics and citation, effective vocabulary, fluid transitions.

B Focused thesis, adequate organization in support of thesis, some originality of ideas, clear and well-formulated sentences, correct mechanics and citation.

C Unfocused and/or weak thesis, partially organized to support thesis, paucity of original ideas, ineffective textual support, incomplete or poorly formulated sentences, informal or inappropriate language, careless editing.

D No thesis, lack of organization, no original ideas, little or irrelevant textual support, mechanical errors, lack of editing, inadequate length.

F Plagiarism, no thesis, unintelligibility, no organization, inadequate length.

The *Writing Center* (Columbine Hall, Room 316, or <http://web.uccs.edu/wrtgcntr>) is a great resource to help you develop your writing skills. They can also help you understand proper citation. I do not require you to use any particular style manual, but whichever you choose (Chicago, MLA, APA, etc.) stay consistent with that one, rather than mixing styles.

### *Academic Integrity*

No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. So as to avoid any inadvertent cheating, let’s review what this might mean. Academic dishonesty might involve plagiarism, multiple submissions, purchasing papers from paper mills, or improper citation. Plagiarism is trying to pass off another’s thinking as your own. Submitting multiple copies of the same paper, or getting papers from a paper mill are clear examples of cheating. The internet has made plagiarizing even easier, but it’s also made it a lot easier to detect. If the thought did not originate with you, be sure to cite it, either with quotation marks and footnote, if it’s a direct quote, or with a footnote, if it’s a paraphrase. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the university’s academic integrity policy, which can be accessed online at: <http://www.cusys.edu/policies/Academic/misconduct.html>

*A note on this syllabus – syllabi are plans for classes, which have a life of their own. There may be times when we deviate from the syllabus to address particular interests. I reserve this right and ask your flexibility in doing so. This syllabus, while fairly detailed, is therefore only tentative.*