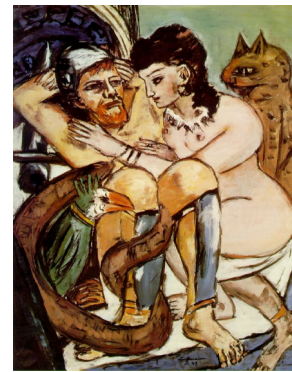


UCLA, Department of Classics  
Spring 2008

Instructor: Chris Eckerman  
Office Hours: MW 12:30-1:30  
and by appointment  
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Classics 30  
**Classical Mythology**  
(Dodd 147, MWF 10-10:50)

*Men imagine not only the forms of the gods but their ways of life to be like our own—Aristotle, Politics 1252b*



*Imagining Odysseus over time: The image on the left is a postage stamp printed by the Greek government in 1983. The image comes from an ancient vase that displays Odysseus and his men blinding the Cyclops Polyphemus; the image in the middle is a painting by the eighteenth century German painter Johann Heinrich Tischbein; it idealizes the relationship between Odysseus and his wife Penelope; the image on the right is by the German painter Max Beckmann (1943); it portrays Odysseus in the arms of the goddess Calypso with whom he lived for many years before returning home to his wife. Odysseus, like numerous characters within Greek myth, has captivated the imagination and artists have turned again and again to portray him.*

**Course Description and Objectives:** In this course, we read several literary texts, both Greek and Roman. Our focus will be on Greek myth, but we will also examine, at some length, the reception of Greek myth among the Romans and will further consider Roman foundation myths. We focus on Greek myth because the Romans have relatively little native myth; most of their myth was taken from the Greeks. One goal of the course is to provide you with a broad knowledge of Greek and Roman myths. The best way to learn about myths is to read literary texts that preserve them; however, in addition to reading literary texts, we will also look at material culture and analyze the importance of myth in Greek architecture and other material media. In addition to simply learning the stories, you will also learn how to analyze myths and consider the socio-cultural importance of myth. Greek and Roman myths were not meant to exist in decontextualized vacuums! We will see, furthermore, how myths were manipulated in the interests of power and special interest groups. Moreover, the course will introduce you to several theories, ancient and modern, that analyze myths. The class is designed to impart skills in critical

and analytical reading, writing, and thinking as well as to provide extensive knowledge of specific aspects of Greek and Roman mythology. The subject matter of this course, finally, is profoundly relevant to our lives today since our society is saturated with references to ancient Greece and Rome, and we all use stories on a daily basis to construct meaning while pursuing our personal interests.

**Course Website is available through MyUCLA:**

**<http://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view.php?name=08S-CLASSIC30-1>**

**Section locations and times are listed on-line in the UCLA Schedule of Classes.**

**Grades:**

Midterm	25%
Paper	25%
Participation (Discussion Section/Lecture)	10%
Final	40%

Midterm and Final

The midterm and final, based on material from both lecture and assigned readings, will include short IDs (including slides), excerpts from assigned readings that you will answer questions on, and short essays.

Paper

The paper (**5 pages; typed, double spaced, times new roman font; no extra spacing between paragraphs; no cover pages; 1-inch margins**) will be due in section in the eighth week. I will provide essay prompts for you to choose from later in the quarter; alternatively, you can choose your own topic to write on, provided that you have first discussed it with your TA and received his or her approval. **You will not have to do any extra research for your paper. You will integrate your ideas with material discussed in lecture and the readings. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS. KEEP IN MIND THAT A GOOD PAPER HAS A CLEAR THESIS STATEMENT AND MAKES AN ARGUMENT. YOU DO NOT WANT TO WRITE A PAPER THAT IS MERELY DESCRIPTIVE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS WHAT I MEAN BY THIS, TALK TO ME AND/OR YOUR TA.**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT PLAGIARISM HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN A PROBLEM IN THIS COURSE. A KEEN EYE WILL BE KEPT ON ALL YOUR WORK. IF CAUGHT PLAGIARIZING, YOU WILL BE PROSECUTED FULLY.**

Discussion Section: You are required to attend discussion section every week. I have assigned readings for the discussion sections. Your TA will “discuss” these readings with you as well as “discuss” any questions that you would like to raise regarding the subject matter of the lectures. To facilitate your participation in your discussion section, you are required to write a one-paragraph response to the reading assigned for the discussion section. You should say in two or three sentences what the reading was about. Two or three more sentences should say how you felt about the reading; for example, you

might say what you liked or did not like and what you learned. Finally, you must prepare one discussion question for every section. After you write your one-paragraph response to the reading, write a question that you think would be interesting to discuss in section regarding the reading for section. You must also answer your own discussion question, though your answer may be brief. So, your typed paper to hand in at the beginning of discussion should include a paragraph in which you respond to the required reading for the section and a paragraph providing a question that you find interesting and an answer to your question. Your participation grade will be marked down accordingly if you fail to do this exercise and/or fail to participate productively in the discussion section— participation points are not free points, they require your active participation!

### **Required Reading Material:**

Hesiod, *The Theogony, Works and Days, Shield*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. Athanassakis (Johns Hopkins UP, 2004)  
*The Homeric Hymns*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., transl. Athanassakis (Johns Hopkins UP, 2004)  
Homer, *The Essential Odyssey*, transl. Lombardo (Hackett, 2007)  
Homer, *The Essential Iliad*, transl. Lombardo (Hackett, 2000)  
Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, trans. Meineck (Hackett, 1998)  
Euripides, *Bacchae*, trans. Woodruff (Hackett, 1998)  
*Two Faces of Oedipus: Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus and Seneca's Oedipus*, trans. Frederick Ahl (Cornell UP, 2007)  
Virgil, *The Essential Aeneid*, trans. Lombardo (Hackett, 2006)  
Dowden, Ken. *The Uses of Greek Mythology* (Routledge, 1992)

### **Optional Reading Material (highly recommended):**

The most important things to learn in college are, perhaps, to think analytically, to construct arguments that develop your analytic thought, and to write those arguments persuasively in essays. This is a course on classical mythology, not English composition and critical thinking; nonetheless, it is expected that you will think critically with the material presented in this course and present your work in a professionally written manner. To aid you in this, I recommend the following books. If composition and the construction of arguments are topics of interest to you, let me know, and I'll be happy to provide you with further suggestions.

Harvey, Michael. *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing* (Hackett 2003)  
Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Hackett 2000)

## **PART 1: THE ORIGINS OF GODS AND MEN**

### **Week 1: Myth, Cosmology, and the Origins of Gods and People**

**Monday March 31: Monday: Introduction to Class; What is Myth?; Sources for the study of Greek and Roman myth**

Required Reading: Powell, “The Nature of Myth” [this will introduce you to the complicated terms myth, mythology, divine myth, legend, saga, and folktale as well as introduce you briefly to the media through which myths can be studied] (**reader**)

**Wednesday April 2: Cosmogony (Origin of the Cosmos); Theogony (Origin of the Gods); the Titanomachy (Battle with the Titans); and other battles leading to the establishment of the order of the Olympian Gods.**

Required Reading: Hesiod *Theogony* (tr. by Athanassakis, pp. 11-36)

Suggested Reading: On the Altar of Zeus at Pergamon: Pollitt, J.J. “The Sculpture of Pergamon” from *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986) [Architecture: Gigantomachy: Altar of Zeus at Pergamon—using mythology to construct identity]

**Discussion Section: Powell, “The Cultural Context of Greek Myth”** [Myths cannot be adequately understood divorced from the culture and society that construct them. Myths are reflections of a culture’s needs and belief systems. This essay should give you a lot to think about concerning Greece and the myths that Greeks developed.] (**reader**)

**Friday April 4: The Origin of Men and Women: Prometheus; Pandora; The Five Races of Men; The Flood; Plato’s Aristophanes**

Required Reading: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.1-462 (Melville tr. p. 1-14; Hesiod *Theogony* (ll. 535-557, reread); Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* 442-506 (Vellacott tr. p.33-35); Pandora: Hesiod *Works and Days* (ll. 42-104), *Theogony* (ll. 591-610); The Five Races of Men: Hesiod *Works and Days* (ll. 106-201); Plato’s Aristophanes on the origin of men: Plato *Symposium* 189c-193e (**all these readings, with the exception of Hesiod, are in the reader**)

*Movie Suggestion: If you like the story of the origin of men put forth by Aristophanes in Plato’s Symposium, then view Hedwig and the Angry Inch by director John Cameron Mitchell (2001).*

## **PART 2: THE OLYMPIAN DIVINITIES**

### **Week 2: Olympian Gods: Associations, Rituals, Ideological Imperatives, Interpretive Turns**

**Monday April 7: Zeus and Hera**

Required Reading: *Essential Iliad* Book 1.525-643 (Zeus and Hera quarrel (Lombardo, pp. 16-19)); Callimachus’ *Hymn to Zeus* (**reader**)

**Wednesday April 9: Poseidon and Apollo**

Required Reading: *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (pp.14-28), Callimachus’ *Hymn to Apollo* (**reader**)

[Architecture: Apollo: Delphi; Poseidon: Sounion]

**Discussion Section: Powell, “The Development of Classical Myth”** [Discussion of the Mesopotamian origins of much Greek myth as well as discussion of the sources available for the study of Greek myth] (**reader**)

**Friday April 11: Hephaestus, Ares, and Hermes**

Required Reading: The Ares, Hephaestus, Aphrodite debacle: Homer *Odyssey* 8. 286-399 [Powell’s *Essential Odyssey* pp. 54-57]; *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (pp. 28-42)

**Week 3: Olympian Gods: Associations, Rituals, Ideological Imperatives, Interpretive Turns**

**Monday April 14: Demeter, Persephone, and the Eleusinian Mysteries; Physical Allegorical Interpretation; Aetiological Myth**

Required Reading: Homeric Hymn to Demeter (pp.1-14); Callimachus’ Hymn to Demeter (**reader**)

Suggested Reading: Clay, Jenny Strauss, *The Politics of Olympus: Form and Meaning in the Major Homeric Hymns* (essay on the hymn to Demeter); Foley, H.P., ed. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays* (Princeton, N.J., 1993); Mylonas, G.E., *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton, N.J., 1961).

**Wednesday April 16: Athena and Athens; Image, Power, and Propaganda: Athena and the Athenian Acropolis**

Required Reading: Camp, John, M., *The Archaeology of Athens* (Yale UP 2001), pp. 74-101 (on the classical acropolis; **reader**)

**Discussion Section: Dowden, “Myth and Identity”** [After reading this chapter, you will have a strong understanding of the manner in which people use myth to construct their own identity and to further their own propaganda and ideological needs. Consider closely the case study of Athens.]

**Friday April 18: Aphrodite and Artemis**

Required Reading: Aphrodite: Sappho, fragment 1 (**reader**); *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (pp. 42-50); Callimachus’ *Hymn to Artemis* (**reader**)

[Myth, Cult, and Art: Artemis of Ephesos]

**Week 4: Dionysus, Death, and the MIDTERM**

**Monday April 21: Dionysus and Euripides’ *Bacchae***

Required Reading: *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* (pp. 50-52); Euripides’ *Bacchae*

Suggested Reading: Apollodorus’ *Library* (3.26-38 “On Dionysus”); Nietzsche, F.W., *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York, 1968). [Exekias cup]

**Wednesday April 23: Where do Greeks go when they die? The Soul; Hades; the Elysian Fields; Odysseus’ descent; The myth of Er; Orpheus and Eurydice**

Required Reading: Homer's *Essential Odyssey* Book 11 (pp. 95-111, Odysseus' descent to the underworld); Plato's Myth of Er (*Republic* 10.614-621, pp. 1218-1223; **reader**); Orpheus and Eurydice: Vergil's *Georgics* 4.452-528 (pp. 139-142; **reader**)

Suggested Reading: Vergil's *Essential Aeneid*—Lombardo edition, Book 6 (pp. 75-104, Aeneas' descent); Vermeule, Emily, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley, 1979); Aristophanes' *Frogs* (Comic Representation of the Underworld); Edmonds, Radcliffe G, III, *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets* (Cambridge 2004)

*Movie Suggestion: If you like the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, see Black Orpheus by French director Marcel Camus (1959)—A retelling of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth set in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during Carnival.*

**Discussion Section: Dowden, "Arrival at the Cult Site"** [This reading will help you understand the manner in which Greeks often constructed myth around sites such as Delphi and Eleusis to explain the importance of these sites. When people tell themselves that the gods themselves chose their cult sites, how much more important these sites become for religious practice!]

**Friday April 25: MIDTERM**

### **PART 3: LEGENDS AND HEROES**

#### **Week 5: Homer's *Iliad*, the War at Troy, and the Epic Cycle**

*Movie Suggestions:* Wolfgang Peterson's *Troy* (2004) should give you food for thought.

**Monday April 28: Oath of Tyndareus; Wedding of Peleus and Thetis; Judgement of Paris; Anger of Achilles; Hector and Andromache**

Required Reading: *Essential Iliad* Books 1-8

Suggested Reading: Catullus, Poem 64, The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis

**Wednesday April 30: Embassy to Achilles; The War Continues**

Required Reading: *Essential Iliad* Books 9-16

Suggested Reading: Owen, E.T., *The Story of the Iliad* (New York, 1946) (Plot analysis, book by book)

**Discussion Section: Dowden, "Myth and Prehistory"** [What is the relationship between myth and people and places discussed in myths? Was there a Trojan War, and, if so, how much can we learn about the Trojan War from reading Homer? This reading should make you think critically about relations between myth and history. By the end of the reading, you will be more knowledgeable about the role of myth in relation to history than many of the Greeks themselves were.]

**Friday May 2: The Deaths of Patroklos and Hector; The Trojan Horse; The Fall of Troy**

Required Reading: *Essential Iliad* Books 17-24; *Essential Odyssey* 4.220-309 (The Trojan Horse; pp. 17-20)

Suggested Reading: Schein, S.L., *The Mortal Hero: An Introduction to Homer's Iliad* (Berkeley, 1984); Euripides' *The Trojan Women*; Davies, Malcolm, *The Greek Epic Cycle* (Bristol, 2001); Quintus of Smyrna, *The Trojan Epic*, translated by Alan James (Johns Hopkins 2007)

## **Week 6: Homer's *Odyssey* and the Homecoming of Odysseus**

*Movie Suggestion:* If you like Homer's *Odyssey*, consider viewing *O Brother Where Art Thou?* by the Coen Brothers.

### **Monday May 5: Setting the tale: Telemachus, Penelope, the suitors, and the lonely home**

Required Reading: *Essential Odyssey* Books 1-8

### **Wednesday May 7: Odysseus' wanderings and his encounters with mysterious beings**

Required Reading: *Essential Odyssey* Books 9-16

**Discussion Section: Dowden, "Greeks on myth"** [This reading will help you consider how some Greeks interpreted their myths: physical allegory, the rationalization of myth, moral allegory, and Euhemerism. Consider the appeal of such readings of myth. Why would some Greeks want to read their myths in these various ways? What types of myth might work for these methods of interpretation? With what types of myth do some of these methods of interpretation fail?]

### **Friday May 9: Odysseus' return, the death of the suitors, and the reunification of the family**

Required Reading: *Essential Odyssey* Books 17-24; *Ithaca* by Constantine Cavafy (reader)

Suggested Reading: Tracy, Steve, *The Story of the Odyssey* (Princeton, 1991) (A book by book retelling and analysis of the poem); Walcott, Derek, *Omeros* (New York, 1990) (A new vision of Homer's *Odyssey*, set in the Caribbean)

## **Week 7: The Use and Abuse of Heroes: Herakles, Theseus, Perseus, and Jason**

### **Monday May 12: Herakles: The marriages and the labors; Euhemerism (Historical Allegory)**

Required Reading: Pindar *Nemean* 1 (reader); Apollodorus' *Library* 2.61-180 ("on Herakles"; reader)

Suggested Reading: Euripides' *Insane Heracles*; Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*; Brommer, Frank, *Heracles: The Twelve Labors of the Hero in Ancient Art and Literature*, trans. and enlarged by S.J. Schwarz (New Rochelle, N.Y., 1986)  
[Art: Heracles' labors on the metopes of the temple of Zeus at Olympia]

**Wednesday May 14: Theseus, the Cretan Minotaur, the Amazons, and Politics at Athens (Manipulating Theseus)**

Required Reading: Plutarch's *Theseus* (reader); Bacchylides' *Dithyrambs* 17 & 18 (reader)

Suggested Reading: Ward, A., ed., *The Quest for Theseus* (New York, 1970)

**Discussion Section: Dowden, "The World of Myth"** [Myths do not exist in vacuums—they occur in places, are performed in spaces, and reflect physical landscapes. The first part of this reading will introduce you to the physical surroundings of myths and consider them as important characters within mythic narratives. The second half of the chapter discusses heroes including Herakles, Perseus, and Theseus and questions the relation between psychoanalysis and these myths.]

**Friday May 16: Perseus, Medusa the Gorgon, and Andromache, Freud and the Medusa Myth; Jason, the Argonauts, the Golden Fleece**

Required Reading: **Perseus:** Pindar *Pythian* 12 (reader); **Jason:** Pindar *Pythian* 4 (reader)

Suggested Reading: Woodward, Jocelyn, M., *Perseus, A Study in Greek Art and Legend* (Cambridge, U.K., 1937; reprinted New York 1976); Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*; Gaius Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*

**Week 8: Aeschylus' Oresteia (Story of Orestes): Justice and the Shaping of Athens**

**Monday May 19: Clytemnestra's Murder of Agamemnon**

Required Reading: Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*

Suggested Reading: Goldhill, Simon, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Two chapters on the Oresteia)

**Wednesday May 21: Revenge of Orestes against his mother, Clytemnestra**

Required Reading: Aeschylus' *Choephoroe (Libation Bearers)*

Suggested Reading: Goldhill, Simon, *Aeschylus: The Oresteia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge, 2004)

**Discussion Section: Dowden, "Myth and Initiation Ritual"** [Myth fulfilled important social functions and myths were crafted to respond to important events that occurred at different stages of life, such as marriage. This reading will help you understand the manner in which myth accompanied ritual acts of initiation.]

\*\*\*\*\*PAPER DUE\*\*\*\*\*

**Friday May 23: The Trial of Orestes for Matricide**

Required Reading: Aeschylus' *Eumenides (The Kindly Ones)*

**Week 9: Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus and Seneca's Oedipus; Theban Myth and Roman Appropriation; Modern fascination with Oedipus: Freud et al.**



*But do not worry about marriage with your mother; no end of males have dreamed of sleeping with theirs—Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus 980-982*

**Monday May 26: Memorial Day Holiday**

Required Reading: NONE

Suggested Reading: On Theban Saga: Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*; Euripides' *Phoenician Women*

**Wednesday May 28: Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus and Freud**

Required Reading: Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*

Suggested Reading: Mullahy, Patrick, *Oedipus: Myth and Complex* (New York, 1948) [Psychoanalytic interpretations of the Oedipus myth]

**Discussion Section: Dowden, "Mythic Society"** [This chapter addresses the relationship between myths and the society that produces them. How do myths reaffirm or question social structures such as kingship? How do myths reaffirm or question the subordination of women in Greek society? How do myths reflect social status? Why the seeming obsession with the upper classes in Greek myth? Questions such as this will make you reflect on the messages, sometimes subtle, in myths that reflect Greek social interests.]

**Friday May 30: Seneca's Oedipus and the Roman Appropriation of Greek Myth**

Required Reading: Seneca's *Oedipus*

Suggested Reading: On Theban Saga: Sophocles' *Antigone*; Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonnus*

**PART 4: ROMAN FOUNDATION MYTH**

**Week 10: Virgil constructs identity for Romans in need of an heroic past**

**Monday June 2: Virgil's Aeneid: Roman Myth and Augustan Propaganda**

Required Reading: "Roman Myth" by Powell (pp. 595-614; **reader**); *Essential Aeneid* (Books 1-6)

Suggested Reading: Bremmer, J.N., and N.M. Horsfall, *Roman Myth and Mythography* (London, 1987)

**Wednesday June 4: Virgil's Aeneid: Roman Myth and Augustan Propaganda**

Required Reading: *Essential Aeneid* (Books 7-12)

Suggested Reading: Cairns, Francis, *Virgil's Augustan Epic* (Cambridge, U.K., 1989)

**Discussion Section: Dowden, "Conclusion: What Greek Myth Is"** [Dowden says that myth is: local heritage; national heritage; the story of the past; and, a relationship between ritual. Thinking through Dowden's concluding thoughts ask yourself in what ways you agree with Dowden. Particularly, it should be interesting to discuss whether Dowden has left anything out from his list. For your last, required assignment for your discussion section, give your own answer to the question: What is myth? You should

address the way people use myths and suggest an answer for why people use and transmit myths.]

**Friday June 6: Tying up loose ends before the final**

**FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, June 11, 2008**

**BOOK SUGGESTION**

If you are looking for a good book that retells in modern English the Greek myths, pick up Richard Martin's *Myths of the Ancient Greeks* (New American Library, 2003); this is like Bulfinch's classic collection of myth, but updated for the 21<sup>st</sup> century reader.