

ENGL 3123: Mythology

MWF 10:30-11:20 CLB 219

Office: Morrill 201C

Hours: MW 12:30-1:30; F 9:30-10:30

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What is myth? How do myths differ from other kinds of stories? What functions did myths serve in the past, and why do we still read them now? Why is the word myth sometimes used interchangeably with the word “lie”? This course pursues these questions through a range of Greek and Roman texts: Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Lucretius’s *On the Nature of Things*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. We may also consider critical and artistic responses to classical myth by writers such as Plato, St. Augustine, Milton, and Yeats. In addition to the daily readings, assignments include essays, quizzes, and exams.

Required Texts:

Works of Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns tr. Apostolos Athassanakis (Johns Hopkins University Press)

The Iliad tr. Barry Powell (Oxford University Press)

The Odyssey tr. Barry Powell (Oxford University Press)

On the Nature of Things: De Rerum Natura tr. Anthony Esolen (Johns Hopkins University Press)

The Aeneid tr. Robert Fitzgerald (Vintage)

The Metamorphoses tr. Charles Martin (WW Norton)

While everything we will read is readily available from a variety of sources, individual translations of texts can vary widely. Note well: open source/public domain versions of many of the works we will be reading tend to draw on often inaccurate and difficult to read 18th and 19th century editions with no explanatory glosses.

Percentages, Policies, etc.

Paper 1 20%

Paper 2 20%

Midterm Exam 20%

Final Exam 25%

Participation (Includes attendance and in-class discussion, etc.) 15%

All written work will be graded according to the following standards: 1) a clear thesis that is supported logically by substantive, relevant material evidence drawn from YOUR interpretation and analysis of the text(s) being considered; 2) standard American English spelling and grammar; 3) a recognized form of citation, if needed (MLA). Papers must be in Times New Roman 12 pt. font with 1-inch margins and printed in black ink. **All papers must be stapled.** Papers that are not stapled will not be read.

Plagiarism:

Please view the following link: <http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu>

Plagiarism is cheating and it is wrong. The school has in place a variety of systems and policies in place to deal with plagiarists. PLEASE know the policies as they are spelled out on this website! If you have any other questions concerning this issue, or need some further clarification, please speak to me.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is both necessary and required. Informed discussion is just as integral to this course as the readings. In order to participate in these discussions, you must be in class. Your mere physical presence does not constitute attendance. You must have your book and/or copies of the daily readings. **I will mark as absent students who choose to study for other exams, do the crossword puzzle, or read the O'Colly.**

That being said, I realize that you may, on occasion, be forced to miss class. As such, I will allow you the benefit of missing **two** classes, no questions asked. Every class you miss after these two will result in **two and a half** points (i.e. one quarter of a letter grade) being subtracted from your final grade. Eight or more absences beyond the allotted two freebies (i.e. at which point you will have missed a total of five weeks, or a third of the semester) will result in automatic failure of the course. I do reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy, solely at my discretion, and solely in extreme circumstances, for instance hospitalization, death in the family, etc.

It is the responsibility of the students to be prepared, prompt, attentive, and courteous. If you are more than 5 minutes late, please do not bother to come in.

General decorum and E-policies:

I am Dr. or Professor Wadoski. I **do not** go solely by my last name, nor have I since high school (and I did not much like it then). Be on time. Pay attention. Be courteous to everyone. Do not sleep. Avoid eating noisy food. Turn off your cell phone.

DO NOT send or receive text messages or phone calls in class. I WILL MARK YOU ABSENT!!! I prefer that you not use your laptop to take notes. The temptation to visit Facebook, check e-mail, or watch Youtube clips of kittens falling out of baskets is simply too strong, and serious intellectual engagement cannot coexist with multitasking.

Please use your @okstate address to e-mail me. I do not open e-mails from addresses I do not recognize, especially if they come bearing attachments.

Assignments:

Assignments are to be completed on the date listed on the syllabus. If you have not done the readings, you cannot participate in class. Papers are, without exception, to be handed in on the day listed on the syllabus. Late papers will be docked half a letter grade per class meeting overdue.

A quick note concerning 'extreme circumstances:'

An acceptable circumstance for not turning an assignment in on time or missing class beyond the allotted three freebies is something along the lines of hospitalization or a death in the family. Non-refundable plane tickets to Bermuda are not an extreme circumstance, nor are pledging and other Greek related activities, O-chem exams, hangovers, or head colds. Ultimately, it is open to my discretion; however your lack of foresight and planning is not my responsibility. Save obsessively to your hard drive *and* jump drive/disk, print early and often.

Learning Disabilities:

If you have a learning disability, the university provides a number of services designed to help you. I will work with you as much as I can to ensure that you will benefit from being in my class. I maintain the same expectations for everyone in my class, and am happy to work with you to ensure that those expectations are met.

January

12: Intro

14: Hesiod, *Works and Days* (in Athassanakis pp.)

16: Hesiod, *Theogony* (in Athassanakis pp.)

19: MLK day (no meeting)

21: Homer, *The Iliad*, books 1-3

23: Homer, *The Iliad* books 4-6

26: Homer, *The Iliad* books 7-9

28: Homer, *The Iliad* books 10-12

30: Homer, *The Iliad* books 13-15

February

2: Homer, *The Iliad* books 16-18

4: Homer, *The Iliad* books 19-21

6: Homer, *The Iliad* books 22-24

9: Homer, *The Odyssey* books 1-3

11: Homer, *The Odyssey* books 4-6
13: Homer, *The Odyssey* books 7-9

16: Homer, *The Odyssey* books 10-12

Essay 1 due

18: Homer, *The Odyssey* books 13-15
20: Homer, *The Odyssey* books 16-18

23: Homer, *The Odyssey* books 19-21
25: Homer, *The Odyssey* books 22-24
27: **Exam 1**

March

2: Lucretius, Intro and Book 1
4: Lucretius, 2
6: Lucretius, 3-4

9: Lucretius, 5-6
11: Virgil, *Aeneid* book 1
13: Virgil, *Aeneid* books 2-3

Spring Break

23: Virgil, *Aeneid* books 4-5
25: Virgil, *Aeneid* books 6
26: Virgil, *Aeneid* books 7-8

April

30: Virgil, *Aeneid* books 9-10
1: Virgil, *Aeneid* books 11-12
3: Virgil, *Aeneid* books 11-12, cont.

6: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Books 1-2
8: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* books 3-4
10: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* books 5-6

13: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* books 7-8
15: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* books 9-10
17: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* books 11-12

20: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* books 13-14
22: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* book 15
24:

Myth and the Modern World

27: Yeats, excerpts from *The Tower*: Leda and the Swan; Picture of a Black Centaur; Among School Children; Colonus Praise; From "Oedipus at Colonus" (handout)

29: Louise Glück: "Triumph of Achilles" and from *Averno*: "Persephone the Wanderer"; "A Myth of Devotion"

1: **Essay 2 Due**

Final exam: FRIDAY, MAY 8 10:00-11:50