Recent Announcements

Where do I start?!?
[https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1562/discussion_topics/6305](https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1562/discussion_topics/6305)
Welcome to Greek Mythology! Start with the syllabus. After that, your next stop ... [https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1562/discussion_topics/6305](https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1562/discussion_topics/6305)

CLASS 2604 Summer'19 sandbox

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CLASS 2604 001-LEC
Summer Mythology
Summer Term 2019 (May 29-June 14, 2019)

Professor [Michael Fontaine: email, mf268@cornell.edu](mailto:mf268@cornell.edu)
TA: [Samantha Davis: email, scd225@cornell.edu](mailto:scd225@cornell.edu)

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Course description
3 credits. This course serves as an introduction to the variety of ancient Greek mythological traditions. We will survey the major Greek myths, with emphasis on the content and significance of the myths in Mediterranean society, including the place of myth in Greek life and consciousness; the factors and influences involved in the creation of myths; and the use of myths for our understanding of Greek literature, religion, and moral and political concepts. Topics include the twelve Olympian gods; Hesiod and the creation of the world; Homer and the Trojan Cycle of myths; mythical epics and traditions about Thebes, Argos, Athens, and other parts of the Greek world; and, in particular, the relationship between Greek tragedy and myth. The class focuses primarily on the ancient material, but with many parallels, adaptations, and retellings taken from modern times. All readings are in English.

Course objectives

By the end of the course students should have:

- A good general knowledge of the principal Greek myths,
- An understanding of how a number of those mythical traditions relate to each other,
- A sense of the many uses and views of mythology within the ancient Greek world, and
- The ability to recognize references to Greek mythology and their symbolism in modern media (e.g. literature, art, commercial media, in museums, etc.).

Course format and pace
Our course consists of a series of lecture videos, film and documentary clips, and Powerpoint presentations, accompanied by my voice, that you will view online. There is also substantial outside reading.

With a few exceptions, the film and documentary clips are professional-grade productions. I have made extensive use of two documentary series about Greek mythology, including one for the History Channel for which I was an on-screen commentator (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clash_of_the_Gods_(TV_series)). In both series the commentators are professional classicists working in some of the finest universities in the US and England. In short, these are top-notch productions, and a lot more exciting than the usual Powerpoint classroom slide show. Other clips are from recent productions or classic film versions of Greek tragedy. I have selected them to help bring the words on the page to life.
Still others are cartoons. This might sound unserious, but cartoons are—perhaps paradoxically—one of the most effective ways to represent Greek myths in modern society. Finally, I have chosen a smaller number of clips to help you summarize the main points, make connections across myths, to spark or challenge your thinking, or (in the case of The Simpsons parody), just for fun. You should make a point of watching them all and making notes as you go.

Our primary texts are the finest masterpieces of Greek literature – Homer’s epic Odyssey, Hesiod’s Theogony, and a selection of Greek tragedies from each of the three canonical Greek tragedians—Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

I have also included three lighthearted takes on Greek myth: Euripides’ Cyclops (a satyr play) and Aristophanes’ Frogs, a Greek comedy, and “The Gods in Council,” a satire by Lucian.

Assignments

Although you can work at your own rate, the pace of reading is designed to cover one tragedy or its equivalent per day and shorter supplementary readings from Ovid’s Metamorphoses and other texts (e.g. the Bible’s account of creation or the serpent in the Garden of Eden). I very strongly suggest you work at the rate of one module per day. You can work faster or slower than that, but the dates of the two exams are inflexible:

- You must take the midterm exam on Tuesday, June 4.
You must take the final exam between Tuesday, June 11 and the end of Thursday, June 13.

These two exams comprise the bulk of your grade, but a portion of your grade also comes from your participation in Canvas’ discussion board feature. Hence regular discussion is a requirement of the class:

- You are required to make one post and reply to two classmates for each module.
- You must make your posts and replies before the midterm and final, respectively (you will receive credit for modules 7 and before only if you post them before taking the midterm, and for modules 8 and later only if you post them before taking the final exam. If you’ve already taken the exam, you won’t receive any credit.
- Even if you are taking this course Pass/Fail, you must still complete all of the discussion posts. My aim is to help build community and give you the opportunity to think and share together as you would in a face to face course. Samantha, our TA, will be checking in, reading, and occasionally joining your discussions. So will I!

In addition to these regular posts, you will write a short reflective essay (2-5 paragraphs) on Lucian’s “The Gods in Council.”

- You must post your essay no later than Wednesday, June 5. I recommend you write and post it just after you finish the midterm.

This is a fun exercise meant to give you a break from me doing all the talking, and give you a chance to do some of your own. Like the discussion posts, you must write the essay even if you are taking the course Pass/Fail. In the spirit of Momus, I encourage you to be as frank and fearless in your statements as you like.

Books

![A manuscript of Homer's Odyssey](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Odyssey_manuscript.jpg)

A manuscript of Homer’s Odyssey ([here](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Odyssey_manuscript.jpg))

The following books are required.

- Reserve e-copies are on reserve via Olin Library. Click [here](https://blackboard.cornell.edu/webapps/blackboard/content/contentWrapper.jsp?course_id_78822_1&displayName=Library-Course-Reserves&href=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2FfbIti%2FlaunchPlacement%3FfbIti_placement_id%3D.70.1%26course_id%3D.78822.1%22) to see what’s available (not everything is). For help accessing them, please contact Troy Shaver ([mailto:tbs23@cornell.edu](mailto:tbs23@cornell.edu)), at Olin Reserves.

- Physical copies are on reserve at Olin Library. If you are in Ithaca during the course, you can request them at the Circulation Desk.

- Please buy anything that is unavailable from an online retailer.


Note: You can find free translations of all these works online but because translations are not created equal, the books listed below are required for this course. My lectures and exam questions are based on them.

Grades
• 20% participation (discussion boards)
• 35% midterm exam
• 45% final exam
• 100%
  ○ You can find my rubric for evaluating your discussions here.
  ○ You can find the number-to-letter-grade conversion chart here.

Please note that there are no quizzes in the course. When you hear me refer to them in one of the lectures, please disregard it.

Each exam consists of 50 multiple choice questions covering names, a few dates, and terms for identification. Each question has six possible answers and many questions are analytical. This means you will be have to identify features that characters from different texts have in common. For example, you might be asked to identify examples of characters who transform themselves or others into other shapes. (One right answer might be Circe and Proteus, both characters you'll meet in the Odyssey).

• The midterm exam covers modules 1-6 (Hesiod, Homer's Odyssey, Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound, and Euripides' Cyclops).
• The final exam is cumulative, covering modules 1-14.

On Academic Integrity

St. Jerome in His Study, by Pieter Coecke van Aelst (here).

Like all courses at Cornell University, Classics 2604 adheres to the Code of Academic Integrity and Acknowledging the Work of Others. This document is available for you read here. Please note that each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.

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Now that you've read the syllabus, head over to Read me first! to get started. Good luck!
Two scholars in ancient Pompeii (they died 1,950 years ago), one pensively holding a stylus to her lip.

Course Summary:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Due by</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tue Jun 4, 2019</td>
<td><a href="https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1562/assignments/12716">Midterm exam (2019)</a></td>
<td>10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Jun 5, 2019</td>
<td><a href="https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1562/assignments/12723">Intermezzo: Momus</a></td>
<td>10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu Jun 13, 2019</td>
<td><a href="https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1562/assignments/12717">Final exam (summer 2019)</a></td>
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