Course description:

3 credits. This course will serve as an introduction to the variety of ancient Greek mythological traditions. We will survey the 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; 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. We will conclude by discussing skeptical views of myth in antiquity. The class will focus primarily on the ancient material (with some discussions of modern theories of myth). All readings are in English.

Course objectives:

By the end of the course students should have:

1. A good general knowledge of the principal Greek myths,
2. An understanding of how a number of those mythical traditions relate to each other,
3. A sense of the many uses and views of mythology within the ancient Greek world, and
4. 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:

The class will consist of a series of lecture videos and Powerpoint presentations, accompanied by my voice, that students will view online. There will also be substantial outside reading. Our primary texts are the finest masterpieces of Greek literature — Homer's epic Odyssey, Hesiod’s Theogony, and Greek tragedy. Although students can work at their own rate, the pace of reading is designed to cover one tragedy or its equivalent per day and shorter supplementary readings from the Homeric Hymns, Ovid’s Metamorphoses, and other texts (e.g. the Bible’s account of creation). Students will complete brief quizzes based on the video, Powerpoint presentation, and texts, and participate in Blackboard’s discussion board feature. There will be one midterm examination and one final examination.

Required books (available from the Cornell Store and Amazon.com or other online retailers)

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. Exam questions are based on them.


Other reading materials, clips, and the like will be available on the Blackboard course website. Please enroll in it as soon as you have signed up for the class.

**Grades** will be determined in the following way:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (discussion boards and quizzes)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 midterm exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 final exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Each exam will consist of names, dates, and terms for identification (in multiple choice, matching, or true/false format). Many of the questions will be analytical. This means that students will be required to identify features that characters from different texts have in common.

The final exam will be cumulative.

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 in the Policy Notebook for the Cornell Community and also on the web at [http://www.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty/docs/main.html](http://www.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty/docs/main.html). 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.