

CL 222 (Greek and Roman Mythology)

Core Designation: H(umanities)

TR 2:00-3:15, Alston 10

Professor Kirk M. Summers, GTA Mariah Degruy

Required Texts:

Kirk Summers, *Greek and Roman Mythology*, 2nd ed. (Kendall-Hunt, 2003).

This book contains background readings tailored to this particular class. It replaces readings that used to be distributed via the internet. Other background materials, including images with notes, can be accessed through <http://bama.ua.edu/~ksummers/cl222/>. You may print them up if you wish, or just read them off the web. All readings should be done BEFORE you come to class, otherwise you will not get the most out of the lectures (which are not merely a repetition of the material on the web or in the book). Also, the following two books are recommended, but not required (any translation will do, but I like these):

1. Hesiod's *Theogony*, as translated by Apostolos N. Athanassakis, published by Johns Hopkins University Press; ISBN 0-8018-2999-2;
2. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as translated by Rolfe Humphries, Indiana University Press; 0-253-20001-6. [NOTE: THIS BOOK APPEARS TO BE OUT OF PRINT, BUT CAN BE PURCHASED ON THE USED BOOK MARKET. TRY bookfinder.com.]. Read only Book One (the first chapter).

These two books are relevant to some of the earliest lectures, so if you plan to purchase them, do so immediately (see the Hesiod [creation] and Ovid lectures for more information). You can purchase them through local bookstores or using online services such as amazon.com.

Objectives and Course Description: This course is designed for the general student; there are no prerequisites. Greek and Roman mythology is at the spiritual core of much of Western civilization. For the ancients, myth was a religion, a means of alleviating common fears, a way of adding structure to the world, and a means of communicating values from one generation to the next. For literary authors and dramatists from ancient times to now, myth has provided a mechanism for conveying the desired message and image to the mind of the reader. For material artists of all periods, myth has been a favorite subject matter. Thus, the investigation of myth should be undertaken early in one's studies in order to lay the foundation for understanding other cultural and artistic disciplines.

At its most basic level, the course will focus on the stories about the Greco-Roman gods and heroes, their attributes, their accomplishments, their cult (that is, how they were worshiped). On another level, however, our objectives will be much higher (after all, this is a college course, not a high school one). We will examine together the insights these myths give us into the human psyche as it is extracted from the confines of linear time. You will see that myths reveal the recurring patterns of human thought in regard to the physical workings of the universe, the stages of our existence (birth, puberty, marriage, adulthood, old age, death), and problems of our relationship to one another and the gods. We will note also the way those patterns work themselves out in our own institutions and mythology. Therefore, you will be expected to know both the important details of the myths that we study and also the

interpretations that are applied to them in class. Unfortunately, in a class of this size, we cannot carry on discussions or answer complex questions during the class period, but you should feel free to come share your views and questions with me before and after class, or during my office hours. Note also my e-mail below. Please contact me through that medium if you prefer.

AUGUST 26 (2004)

Introduction to the course.

You should look over the web pages ASAP, and look at anything that relates to the next lecture (NEW THINGS ARE BEING ADDED ALL THE TIME, SO KEEP CHECKING). All readings from the book must be done BEFORE the class, otherwise you will not fully understand the lectures.

AUGUST 31 (2004)

READ: Chapter One, "Introduction to Myth." Today we will talk about the interpretation of myth; the geography and major sites of Greece; the time line of mythology; the nature of Greek myth; Greek and Roman skepticism about myths. Make sure you know, among many, many other things, the difference between the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations, that you know how myth fits in with the Time Line, that you know what are the "Cyclopean Walls," and who are the Dorian Greeks. What is the Parthenon, and where is it located? What is the significance of the town Mycene? Can you identify Delphi and other major sites on the maps provided on the web?

SEPTEMBER 02

READ: Chapter Two, "Creation According to the Greeks." Today we will discuss Cosmogony (division and union in the universe), Theogony (the power of intelligence), and Creation (the problem with Prometheus: humans at odds with the gods). Also, Pandora. Note differences in spelling conventions; study the Generations chart.

SEPTEMBER 07

A continuation of the August 28 Lecture.

READ: Chapter Three, "Ovid's Creation Story." Today we will also discuss the Roman version of Creation, The Four Ages, Jove's (Zeus') Intervention, The Story of Lycaon, The Flood, Deucalion and Pyrrha. Know when Ovid lived and what is meant when we say he wrote in a "Comic Tone".

If you did not understand the lecture, try reading the following for similar arguments: Richard McKim, "Myth against Philosophy in Ovid's Account of Creation," *Classical Journal* 80 (1985) 97-108.

SEPTEMBER 09

READ: Chapter Four, "Zeus and Hera." We will also talk about Hera. Who are Dike, Eileithyia and Hebe?

SEPTEMBER 14

READ: Chapter Five, "Poseidon, Ares, Hephaestus, Hermes." Know the term "psychopompos".

SEPTEMBER 16

READ: Chapter Six, "Artemis and Athena." For more interesting details on Artemis' cult and the myth of the she-bear, see William Sale, "Temple Legends of the Arkteia," *Rheinischer Museum* 118 (1975) 255-284 and Paula Perlman, "Acting the She-Bear for Artemis," *Arethusa* 22 (1989) 111-134. The Athenian coinage depicting the head of Athena and her owl are very significant.

SEPTEMBER 21

TEST ONE. Look on the course web page for a study guide. BRING A PENCIL!

SEPTEMBER 23

READ: Chapter Seven, "Cybele." READ: Chapter Eight, "Aphrodite." Who is Cupid in relation to Aphrodite?

SEPTEMBER 28

READ: Chapter Nine, "Demeter and Persephone." Note the *Hymn to Demeter*. For more information on the mysteries of the Maiden and the Mother, visit this web site (remember that web addresses are case sensitive): <http://yellow.crc.ricoh.com/~rowanf/TRINE/mysteries.html>.

SEPTEMBER 30

READ: Chapter Ten, "Apollo."

OCTOBER 05

READ: Chapter Eleven, "Dionysus." I will give an overview of Euripides' *Bacchantes*. It is definitely a play worth reading if you have not already, since it's one of the most interesting and influential to come out of antiquity. You might also want to look at the novel, *The Secret History*, by Donna Tartt, a young Mississippi author. She spins a tale of some college kids who are able to recreate the spirit (and danger) of the Dionysiac cult.

OCTOBER 07

TEST TWO. Look on the course web page for a study guide. BRING A PENCIL!

OCTOBER 12

READ: Chapter Twelve, "The Topography of Hell." You have to know the names of those who received special punishments in Hades and why.

OCTOBER 14

READ: Chapter Thirteen, "Orpheus."

OCTOBER 19

READ: Chapter Fourteen, "Herakles." We will also discuss the Heroic Pattern. If you saw the Disney film on Hercules/Herakles, don't let its inaccuracies confuse you!

OCTOBER 21

NO CLASS (MEDEA SYMPOSIUM)

OCTOBER 26

Herakles continued.

OCTOBER 28

READ: Chapter Fifteen, "The Cretan Myths." Also, we will discuss Minoan civilization.

NOVEMBER 02

READ: Chapter Sixteen, "Theseus and Perseus."

NOVEMBER 04

TEST THREE. Same as always.

NOVEMBER 09

Trojan War. READ: Chapter Seventeen.

NOVEMBER 11

Conclusion of the Trojan War.

NOVEMBER 16

READ: Chapter Eighteen, "The Adventures of Odysseus."

NOVEMBER 18

READ: Chapter Nineteen, "The Return of Agamemnon". We will discuss his return to Mycenae and its aftermath.

NOVEMBER 23

Agamemnon (cont.)

NOVEMBER 30

READ: Chapter Twenty, "Oedipus". We will discuss our "ephemeros" nature, among other things.

DECEMBER 02

READ: Chapter Twenty-One, "Jason and the Argonauts." If you have the time and interest, read the play *Medea* by Euripides.

DECEMBER 07

READ: Chapter Twenty-Two, "Roman Myths". Aeneas.

DECEMBER 09

Study Session for final.

FINAL EXAM: December 14, Tuesday 8:00-10:30 a.m., in Alston 10.

Grading: All four exams (including the final) will have equal weight. No exam is comprehensive or cumulative (that is, it does not include material from a previous segment of the course), except to the reasonable extent that all knowledge is cumulative. In other words, you can't forget your ABC's from the 1st grade, else you're sunk.

Special Needs: Students with special needs and disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services, 348-5175 (111/112 Osband Hall), part of the Center for Teaching and Learning. It is the student's responsibility to make known a need for academic adjustments and services by providing documentation of his or her disability to ODS.

Attendance: Attendance is expected but not required. Students are responsible for all information, schedule changes, etc. that are announced in class. *I will not provide anyone with lecture notes.*

Test Format: Mostly multiple choice, computer graded, though there may be some short-answer questions. A typical test will have 35 questions from the readings, 35 questions from the lectures, and 10 from the internet slides. *Any incidents of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Dean's office for discipline.*

Slides/Images: During the course of the semester you will view several hundred slides in class. The slides show vase paintings, sculptures, and reliefs from ancient Greece and Rome. On the tests I will ask you questions that relate to information you gleaned from looking at the slides and listening to me explain them (e.g., what attributes help us recognize Athena in vase paintings? and so on). You *will* have questions about slides on the test. If you miss a class, or you simply want to review slides that we've seen in class, you can see them all on the course web page.

Make-up Policy: I only give essay exams for make-ups. **YOU MUST INFORM ME THAT YOU MISSED THE EXAM WITHIN 48 HOURS OF THE EXAM TO TAKE THE MAKE-UP AND PROVIDE ME WITH A WRITTEN EXCUSE DEMONSTRATING EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO YOUR ABSENCE.**

Extra Credit: There will be TEN additional questions on the final exam that you can try to answer for up to TEN additional points on your final average. The questions will be based on Vergil's *Aeneid*, which is not part of the assigned reading for the course. More on this later.

How to contact me:

Professor Kirk Summers

239 B.B. Comer Hall

Phone: 348-2503

e-mail: ksummers@ML.AS.UA.EDU

Office Hours: Dr. Summers, TTh, 11:00-12:15 and by appointment after class.

WEB SITE

To learn more about what we do in Classics (= the study of ancient Greek and Latin languages and literature), what our faculty members have published, and what you can do with a Classics degree, visit http://bama.ua.edu/~mlc/classics/gt_la.htm.