

CLASSICAL MYTH

CLST 3000 / RLST 3000 / SOAN 4750-04

Fall 2008

Professor: Daniel Turkeltaub Class Hours: MWF 11:00-11:50 Class Room: Murrah Hall 205

Email: turkedw@millsaps.edu Office Hours: MTh 12:30-2:00 Office: John Stone House 201

Course Description: In this class we will explore Greek mythology in an attempt to define the rather nebulous term "myth." Our investigations will focus not on the individual myths per se, a notion that we shall see is rather artificial anyway, but rather on the nature of myth itself. Particular emphasis will be placed on how Greek myth operated within its cultural context as a medium for organizing and discussing the moral, behavioral, religious, social, intellectual, and philosophical universe as well as humanity's position in that universe. Though we will certainly examine numerous visual sources, we will focus most of our energies on the primary literary evidence, broadly defined as anything that has come down to us in written form regardless of its "genre" or original mode of production.

Course Objectives:

- *To foster a deeper understand of the complex nature of myth and mythology as a system of thought through which cultures establish, understand, and regenerate themselves.
- *To acquire an understanding of Greek culture and thought through its myths.
- *To gain an appreciation for the similarities and differences between Greek and modern American cultures and conceptions of the world.
- *To understand the relationship between myth and other intellectual disciplines, in particular science, history, philosophy, literature, religion, and art.
- *To earn course credit towards graduation, perhaps credit that counts towards a major or minor.
- *To sharpen critical reading and analytic skills.

Required Texts: It is strongly recommended that you use the translations suggested for the class so that we all can discuss the same text, refer to the same page or line numbers, etc.. This is not to say that there are not other excellent translations out there, but there are some truly awful ones as well and a translation's popularity is often no indication of its quality (not to name names). If you own another translation of a particular text and simply cannot shell out ten dollars for the one assigned for the class, you may use the text you own provided that you run it by me first.

- **Anthology of Classical Myth*. Trzaskoma et al., trs. Hackett Publishing,
- *Aeschylus. 2007. *The Oresteia*. Ian Johnston, tr. Richer Resources Publications.
- *Aristophanes. 1999. *Birds*. Jeffrey Henderson, tr. Focus Classical Library.
- *Euripides. 2000. *Bacchae*. David Franklin, tr. Cambridge University Press.
- *Homer. 2000. *The Odyssey*. Murnaghan and Lombardo, trs. Hackett Publishing Company.

*Sophocles. *Philoctetes*. Carl Phillips, tr. Oxford University Press.
NOTE: Other texts will be posted in the course folder on Outlook.

Attendance Policy: Part of going to college is learning to accept greater responsibility for your own education, which includes deciding for yourself to come to class. After all, even if you're still too young to drink (legally) or rent a car or become a senator, you are old enough (or soon will be) to vote and drive and join the army. So, if you choose not to attend class, there will be no penalty. That said, the class will move at a fairly good pace, and if you do decide to skip a day you may very well miss our entire discussion of a particular text or issue. You will be responsible for knowing everything that we covered in class. Then there's the small matter of class participation, which brings us to...

Class Requirements:

- 1) Class Participation (15%): The class is too large for a seminar, but small enough that we should still have ample opportunity for discussions on most days. I have no doubt that on these days you will all eagerly display how wonderfully you have prepared for class by participating intelligently in our discussions. You might want to use the class titles in the schedule to help guide your readings. If you have any problems with public speaking, you should let me know immediately because I have some "tricks" that might help.
- 2) Midterm (20%): You will need to take a midterm on Friday, October 17th.
- 3) Final (25%): You will take a cumulative final at the end of the term.
- 4) Paper (15%): You will need to write a 4-5 page paper due on Friday, September 26th.
- 5) Mapping Project (25%): This will be a term-long project that will require you to synthesize everything we will have looked at over the course of the term. See the assignment sheet for more information. It will be due on the last day of class.

Cell Phone Use: There are very few things more discourteous or disrespectful to everybody around you than using a cell phone while in any kind of organized forum, be it a movie, conference, or class. So if you must carry a cell phone with you to class, make sure that you turn it off and stow it away before class begins. If your cell phone rings during class, if you are noticed sending or receiving text messages, if it is even seen, I will consider it an insult both to myself and to the entire class. You will automatically receive a zero in class participation for the entire week.

Honor Code: This part is really important to read, even if you've heard it before. Basically, I expect you to abide by the pledge that you swore back when you first arrived to uphold the honor code, particularly as it pertains to plagiarism in all of its nefarious forms. This is so important, in fact, that I'm going to borrow a chunk of Michael Gleason's first-day handout, since he has been teaching here far longer than I have. Notice that I'm giving him proper credit, so this doesn't count as plagiarism. Here's what he has to say:

Students and faculty are of course bound by the Millsaps College Honor Code, available on pp. 37-39 of Major Facts and on the college's homepage under "Academics" (<http://www.millsaps.edu/honor/>). Plagiarism-profiting from another's writing or ideas without proper citation-is not always intentional, but it is always reprehensible. For the

success of this course, participants must be able (1) to read and write in the confidence that their efforts will be treated honorably, (2) to work together without confounding others' work with their own, and (3) to provide full and proper citation for the many resources with which they will become familiar. Please pledge all written work as a sign of our commitment to the ideals of personal responsibility and rigorous scholarship. In the case of take-home exams and projects, I will clarify whether to collaborate with your colleagues and to what degree.

Millsaps College is an academic community dedicated to the pursuit of scholarly inquiry and intellectual growth. The foundation of this community is a spirit of personal honesty and mutual trust. Through their Honor Code, the students of Millsaps College affirm their adherence to these basic ethical principles.

An Honor Code is not simply a set of rules and procedures governing students' academic conduct. It is an opportunity to put personal responsibility and integrity into action. When students agree to abide by an Honor Code, they liberate themselves to pursue their academic goals in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and respect.

The success of the Code depends on the support of each member of the community. Students and faculty alike commit themselves in their work to the principles of academic honesty. When they become aware of infractions, both students and faculty are obligated to report them to the Honor Council, which is responsible for enforcement.

The pledge signed by all students upon entering the College is as follows:

As a Millsaps College student, I hereby affirm that I understand the Honor Code and am aware of its implications and of my responsibility to the Code. In the interests of expanding the atmosphere of respect and trust in the College, I promise to uphold the Honor Code and I will not tolerate dishonest behavior in myself or in others.

Each examination, quiz, or other assignment that is to be graded will carry the written pledge: "I hereby certify that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment. (Signature)" The abbreviation "Pledged" followed by the student's signature has the same meaning and may be acceptable on assignments other than final examinations.

It is the responsibility of students and faculty to report offenses to the Honor Code Council in the form of a written report. This account must be signed, the accusation explained in as much detail as possible, and submitted to the Dean of the College.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK ONE

Wednesday, August 27th: Introduction

Thursday, August 28th: A Brief History of Greece and *Mythos*

Friday, August 29th: The Muses and Knowledge of the Divine

Read in Trzaskoma--Hesiod's *Theogony* 1-115

Read excerpts from *Iliad* and Plato's *Ion*

UNIT ONE: MYTH FROM CHAOS TO ORDER

WEEK TWO: Creating the Universe

Monday, September 1st: Establishing an Ethical Order

Read in Trzaskoma--Introductions to Hesiod and *Theogony*. Then read *Theogony* 116-end.

Wednesday, September 3rd: The Psychoanalysis of Myth

Read Richard Caldwell's essay on Hesiod's *Theogony*

Friday, September 5th: Human Suffering

Read in Trzaskoma--Hesiod's *Works and Days* 1-234

WEEK THREE: Ordering the Universe

Monday, September 8th: Structural Analysis of Myth

Reread in Trzaskoma--*Theogony* 509-620 and *Works and Days* 58-128

Wednesday, September 10th: Delineating Gender

Read in Trzaskoma--Semonides' *Ode to Women*

Read the rest of Hesiod's *Works and Days*

Friday, September 12th: Reflections onto the Divine

Read in Trzaskoma--*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (#5)

WEEK FOUR: The Human and the Divine

Monday, September 15th: Life and Death

Read Charles Segal's essay on the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*

Wednesday, September 17th: Hermes and Crossing Boundaries

Read in Trzaskoma--*Homeric Hymns to Hermes* #4, #18, #29

Friday, September 19th: Cultic Aetiology--Myth and Ritual Theory

Look at images of sacrifice

Read excerpts from Walter Burkert's *Homo Necans*

UNIT TWO: FROM MYTH TO STORY TO LIFE

WEEK FIVE: The Human and the Animal

Monday, September 22nd: Theoxeny and Cannibalism

Reread in Trzaskoma--Hesiod's *Theogony* 456-572 and 886-911

Read in Trzaskoma--Pindar's *Olympian* 1 (with introduction)

Read in Trzaskoma--Pausanias 2.18.1 and 8.2.3-7 (with introduction)

Read Herodotus 1.107-113

Read Apollodorus 3.8.1, Epit. 2.1-16

Wednesday, September 24th: Confronting the Other

Read Sophocles' *Philoctetes*

Friday, September 26th: Wisdom from the Wilderness--Initiation and Enculturation

Read Sophocles' *Philoctetes*

PAPER DUE

WEEK SIX: Establishing Social Bonds

Monday, September 29th: Two Lost Princes--Telemachus and Orestes

Read *Odyssey* 1-2

Wednesday, October 1st: Two Lost Fathers--Odysseus and Agamemnon

Read *Odyssey* 3-4

Friday, October 3rd: A Precarious Return to Humanity

Read *Odyssey* 5-8

WEEK SEVEN: Establishing Social Bounds

Monday, October 6th: Negative Social Paradigms

Read *Odyssey* 9-10

Wednesday, October 8th: *Nostoi* and *Nekyia*

Read *Odyssey* 11-12

Friday, October 10th: Yet Another Savage Island: The Paradigms Realized

Read *Odyssey* 13-17

WEEK EIGHT: Returning to Society

Monday, October 13th: Disguise and Recognition: A Human Theoxeny

Read *Odyssey* 18-21

Wednesday, October 15th: Establishing a New Social Order

Read *Odyssey* 22-24

Friday, October 17th: MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK NINE: Myth and Identity

Wednesday, October 22nd: Discovering Oneself

Read Euripides' *Ion*

Friday, October 24th: Athenian Autochthony

Read Euripides' *Ion*

WEEK TEN: Myth and the Disruption of Order

Monday, October 27th: Another Version

Read Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*

Wednesday, October 29th: Deconstructing Gender

Read Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*

Friday, October 31st: The Ethical Problems

Read Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*

WEEK ELEVEN: Myth and the Reconstructed Polis

Monday, November 3rd: Cycles of Vengeance

Read Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*

Wednesday, November 5th: The Wheel Turns Again

Read Aeschylus' *Eumenides*

Friday, November 7th: Justice(?)

Read Aeschylus' *Eumenides*

PROGRESS REPORT ON MAPPING PROJECT DUE

UNIT THREE: MYTH AND THE PURSUIT OF REASON

WEEK TWELVE: Philosophy and Myth

Monday, November 10th: Philosophy Using Myth

Read (Pseudo-)Plato's *Hippias Minor*

Wednesday, November 12th: Theological Problems and the Rationalist Solution

Read Xenophanes

Read in Trzaskoma--Plato's *Republic* II.376d-380c

Read in Trzaskoma--Diodorus of Sicily, Palaephatus

Friday, November 14th: Allegory

Read Theagenes, Metrodorus, Heraclitus, and the Derveni Papyrus

WEEK THIRTEEN: Out into the Wild Within: Reason and Anti-Reason

Monday, November 17th (Course Evaluations): Dionysiac Cult

Read in Trzaskoma--*Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*

Read "Orphic" Gold Lamellae

Wednesday, November 19th: A Mythic Retort

Read Euripides' *Bacchae*

Friday, November 21st: Problematizing the Retort

Read Euripides' *Bacchae*

WEEK FOURTEEN: Platonic Restructuring of Myth

Monday, November 24th: Plato Rejecting Myth

Read Plato's *Republic* X

Wednesday, November 26th: Plato Replacing Myth

Read Plato's *Republic* X

WEEK FIFTEEN: Conclusions

Monday, December 1st: The Power of Mythic Fantasy

Read Aristophanes' *Birds*

Wednesday, December 3rd: The Power of Mythic Fantasy

Read Aristophanes' *Birds*

Friday, December 5th: Concluding Discussion

MAPPING PROJECT DUE