

Department: Modern and Classical Languages (CAMS section)

Course No: 103

Credits: 3

Title: Classical Mythology

Contact: Roger Travis

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Catalog Copy: CAMS 103. Classical Mythology (Formerly offered as CLAS 103.) Either semester. Three credits. A knowledge of Greek or Latin is not required. Travis Origin, nature, and function of myth in the literature and art of Greece and Rome and the re-interpretation of classical myth in modern art forms.

Course Information: a. This course provides students with a working knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology, and with the religions that produced it. At the end of the course, students know the principle gods and heroes, and their stories; more importantly, however, they have a sense of the cultures to which those stories were important, and the enormous diversity of those cultures.

b. Tests are multiple choice. Readings are from primary sources in Greek and Roman literature (some compiled in a textbook).

c. The course proceeds through the texts of the Homeric "Odyssey" and Ovid's "Metamorphoses," with lectures on segments of classical mythology as they affect the shapes of those stories. High points include a unit on the nature of myth at the start, on the nature of epic, on the relation of myth to ritual, and on the transformation of Greek myth in the Roman context.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: 2. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility; The study of mythology involves putting oneself in the mindset of the ancient people who needed their myths to understand their world. To take on another mindset, especially an ancient one, is necessarily also to broaden one's mind.

3. Acquire critical judgement;

The study of mythology involves analyzing many myths to discern the ways in which they developed over time, and to perceive in that development the corresponding development of the cultures that produced them. Critical thinking is the foundation of this process.

4. Acquire moral sensitivity;

To encounter the diversity of the cultures of the Ancient Mediterranean is to recognize that our own moralities are contingent upon our own cultural contexts. To recognize that contingency is necessarily to experience the claim of others to their own moral integrity, which is the foundation also of diversity.

5. Acquire awareness of their era and society;

One of the hallmarks of CAMS 103 is its contextualization of ancient material in a modern framework, especially through the use of film, which is the hegemonic ideological discourse of our own age. The course has been hailed by its students for helping them appreciate the presence

of myth, transformed, in modern culture.

6. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience;

Nothing could be further from the truth than the prevailing wisdom that Classical culture was a culture of "dead white men." More than anything else, perhaps, Classical mythology reveals the extraordinary diversity of the cultures of the ancient mediterranean, by giving us a record of the imaginary struggles of those cultures with the other, the forces that were both threatening and indispensable: women, slaves, foreigners of different races.

CA1 Criteria: Myth is a mode of symbolic representation.

Role of Grad Students: Three graduate student assistants help in the composition and scoring of quizzes and tests, and in answering student questions and concerns.