

# ARTH 102: Stories and Symbols in Greek Myth

Professor Christopher Gregg

cgregg@gmu.edu

Office: Robinson B, 373A

Office Hours: 1:00-2:00 Tuesdays or by appointment

## Course Description:

This course examines the iconography and major narratives of ancient Greek mythology using both primary texts in translation and ancient representations of these myths. By examining the literary tradition and the extant visual material, we will explore the function of myth in ancient Greek society, the types of sources available to modern students of mythography, and the continued presence of mythological themes in Western culture. Students will learn stories of the gods and heroes, and we will analyze these stories using a variety of methods at our disposal: in addition to considering the ancient context, we will bring in modern critical approaches, literary theories, and art historical or anthropological methodologies to expand our understanding and interpretation of the myths. Students will also learn how to visually analyze works of art, both for their style and content. This course fulfills the University's Fine Arts requirement.

## Objectives Specific to this Course:

To learn the major deities and mythic narratives of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations

To recognize the visual iconography associated with Classical myth

To interpret visual narratives with a mythic theme

To become familiar with basic principles of art historical analysis

To perform individual visual analysis on a work of art, both for its iconographic content and for its broader art historical significance

These course goals are specifically designed for this course and fall under the broader headings of the Learning Outcomes for the Arts (<http://masoncore.gmu.edu/arts-2/>)

**Texts:** My expectation is that students will do the assigned readings for the class in the following textbooks. You may want to bring Carpenter to class every day.

1. Thomas H. Carpenter. *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece*. London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991.

2. Mark P.O. Morford, Robert J. Lenardon, and Michael Sham. *Classical Mythology*. Tenth Edition. Oxford, 2014.

**Note:** you are free to use earlier editions of this text, but the course readings and images in the syllabus are keyed to the most recent edition. If you choose to use any other edition, you are still responsible for keeping up with the readings and all the information in the most recent edition. [www.classicalmythology.org](http://www.classicalmythology.org) is the website associated with this textbook and is worth exploring for potential exam review assistance (flashcards, practice questions, etc.)

3. Susan Woodford. *The Trojan War in Ancient Art*. Cornell University Press, 1993.

## Grade Percentages:

Exam 1	Wednesday, February 20 <sup>th</sup>	25%
Exam 2	Wednesday, April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	30%
Exam 3	Monday, May 6 <sup>th</sup>	30%
Iconography Assignment	Wednesday, March 20 <sup>th</sup>	15%

**Note: there are no extra credit options available in the class.**

## Grading Scale:

A+ (100-97) A (96-93) A- (92-90) B+ (89-87) B (86-83) B- (82-80) C+ (79-77)  
C (76-73) C- (72-70) D (69-60) F (59 and below)

### **Exams:**

Exams will include visual analysis material. This means that slides viewed in class and images from the textbooks will comprise a significant portion of each test. When preparing for class and studying for exams, treat the visual components of each assignment with the necessary attention. The format of the exams will include identifying subjects, styles, and techniques. A review guide will be uploaded to Blackboard one week prior to each exam. Neither notes nor textbooks will be allowed for the exams themselves.

### **Note-taking:**

Although the readings in your textbooks are critical for the course, class lectures will bring the material together, and it is from the class lecture that substantial portions of each exam will be drawn. You must take thorough notes in order to be prepared for the exams. If there are terms on a slide, include the term, its definition and application in your notes. This is a class based on close reading of images and that means attention to details: most people are not able to retain all of the specific details without studying copious notes taken during lecture. Do not assume that showing up to class and simply "listening" will be sufficient to prepare you for exams.

**Schedule for the Semester:** Assignments should be read for the date indicated, *carefully* and *completely before class*. My lectures will assume that you are familiar with the assigned material and will often cover additional topics: on exams, you will be responsible for information from the texts as well as lecture. Note that Carpenter functions as a visual counterpart to the literature. Pay equal attention to the images; study them; be able to recognize important elements such as attributes or iconography. Images will appear on exams. Finally, keep up with the reading: most of the assignments are relatively short, but not all, and they will accumulate quickly. Remember that most of this material will be unfamiliar--plan to read the assignments at least twice in order to reach the necessary level of understanding. If it becomes necessary to change our schedule due to weather or other factors, I will upload a revised syllabus to Blackboard. There will always be a current syllabus on Blackboard and it is your responsibility to keep up with the latest version.

### **Iconography Assignment**

*Specific instructions for the assignment will be provided in a separate document.*

Each student in the course will be required to produce an annotated image using the online platform ThingLink (<https://www.thinglink.com/>). ThingLink is fairly intuitive to use if you explore the site, and tutorials are available online if you need assistance on the basics: <http://www.thinglink.com/tutorial/Tutorials> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STDjifkmTVU>

There will be two parts to the assignment: one due in class, the other due digitally. The due date for both portions of the assignment is **Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>**. The assignment will be graded on a 15-point scale, each point corresponding to 1% of your final course grade. For each day that the assignment is late, 2 points will be deducted from your (final) grade (e.g. one day late, the highest score that you can get is 13%). Before you begin the assignment, read the myths of The Mycenaean Saga (Morford, Lenardon and Sham, pp. 445-474).

### **Important Notes**

- **Attendance at exams is MANDATORY: no make-up exams will be offered without a doctor's excuse or other official documentation. If you miss an exam, you must contact me within 24 hours to schedule the re-take with valid documentation. Make up exams must be taken within ten academic days unless cleared with me in advance.**
- **I encourage questions and open discussion in class. Please, however, refrain from "quiet" talking to one another during lectures. It is distracting both to your classmates and to me. If you persist in talking during lectures, I will ask you to leave the classroom.**
- **Do not wear earbuds or other headphones during lecture.**
- **Please turn off cell phones when class begins. Texting during class will be treated the same as talking during lectures.**
- **Use of electronic devices (including cell phones) during exams will be treated as an honor code violation. At the very least, you will receive a "0" on the exam.**
- **Arrive on time for class. Coming in late is disruptive for everyone. If you have a class prior to ours which causes a problem with arriving on time, please discuss it with me.**
- **Discuss any special academic needs with me at the start of the term. Do not wait until after the first exam or later!**
- **Since the material in this course is based on the art and literature of other cultures, some topics of violence, gender, and sexuality may be outside of individual comfort zones, but we will deal with these subjects in an academic and intellectual manner.**
- **All reading assignments should be completed before class each day. The lengths of these assignments vary so keep pace with the syllabus.**
- **No extra credit assignments are offered in the course.**
- **The schedule and pace of the course may be adjusted as necessary. If the need arises, a revised syllabus will be announced and uploaded to Blackboard. It is your responsibility to keep up with the most recent version of the syllabus**

**Please realize that these policies are designed to create the most positive academic environment possible. As long as you are respectful towards these policies, your performance in the class, your classmates, and myself, you will undoubtedly receive that same consideration.**

**Finally, all GMU policies on academic honesty will be applicable in this class. If you are unfamiliar with these policies, please visit <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/> and acquaint yourself with them.**

#### **Abbreviations on the Syllabus**

MLS: Morford, Lenardon and Sham textbook page numbers

C: Carpenter textbook (**image numbers**, not page numbers)

W: Woodford textbook page numbers

(Note: readings for a particular date should be read before class on that date)

*January*

Week 1

Wednesday, 23

**Introduction: Stories, Symbols and Greek Myth**

MLS 3-7; 19-30 [See text Abbreviations at the end of the previous page]

Week 2

**Monday, 28 Greek Art: Painting and Architecture**

Blackboard pdf: from *The Art of Greece and Rome*, excerpts pp. 23-37; 43-49; 95-96

**Note:** the scan of the text includes some scrambled word-forms. Most of these are understandable through context. Any term that you would be held responsible for will be covered in lecture.

**W 30 Greek Sculpture and Greek Religion**

Blackboard reading from *The Art of Greece and Rome*, excerpts, pp. 4-11; 18-22; 55-65  
MLS 155-164

*February*

Week 3

**M 4 Understanding Iconography and the Creation Myths**

MLS:	C: 116, 117, 118	Blackboard pdf:
Oedipus, 420-423	95a/b, 262-264	Woodford "Images of Myth"
Titanomachy, 84-86		
Prometheus, 93-94		

**W 6 Pandora and the Gigantomachy**

MLS 86-88; 90-91;	C 96, 97, 99,	Blackboard pdf:
93-97	113-115, 119	Henle: "The Giants are Coming!"

Week 4

**M 11 Zeus and his paramours**

MLS 117-124	C 54-60, 69, 233
Ganymede 125-126	
Muses 134	
Cadmus and Thebes 414-416	

**W 13 Hera and her children**

MLS 125-134	C 1, 2, 12,13, 14, 100, 132, 234
	<b>Read in Carpenter pp. 13-17</b>

Week 5

**M 18 Athena and Poseidon**

MLS 170-174 (Poseidon); 179-190 (Athena)	C 61-63, 88, 98, 100, 101, 81-85
--	----------------------------------

**W 20 Exam 1**

Week 6

**M 25 To be announced**

**W 27 Apollo**

MLS 251-274	C 70-73, 102, 104
-------------	-------------------

March

Week 7

M 4 **Artemis and Aphrodite**  
MLS 227-235; 193-197; C 136-138, 71, 75, 130, 133, 67, 68, 90, 93  
189-191  
Eros 211  
Pan, Echo and Narcissus 328-334  
Hermaphroditus 298-302

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>: Last day to drop classes**

W 6 **Dionysus and Hermes**  
MLS 304-325; 285-298 C 6, 7, 9, 48,49, 50-53, 77-80, 106-109, 134

Week 8

**March 11-17: Spring Break, no class**

Week 9

M 18 **Demeter, Persephone and Hades**  
MLS 339-349; 359-365 C 41-44, 129, 121, 131

W 20 **The Greek Hero: Perseus**  
MLS 549-555 C 144, 146, 148-162

**Iconography Assignment due; the hard copy portion must be turned in (typed and printed out) in class. The digital portion must be uploaded on this date as well. Late penalties will apply.**

Week 10

M 25 **Bellerophon and Classical Monsters**  
MLS C 163-166, 345, 254-257, 284-285, 132, 196-198  
Bellerophon 557-559  
Ixion 379  
Scylla and Charybdis 802  
Calydonian Boar Hunt 516-519  
Ixion 379

W 27 **Monsters, continued**  
Review readings from previous class

April

Week 11

M 1 **Herakles**  
MLS 562-574; 576-583 C 167-192, 193-199, 200-218, 224-229, 234

W 3 **Exam 2**

Week 12

M 8 **Theseus**  
MLS 596-604; 606-609 (Daedalus and Icarus) C 235, 237-239, 244-252, 258-259, 125

W 10 **To be announced**

Week 13

M 15 **Troy, part 1**  
W 7-28 (through Achilles and Chiron) For Woodford readings, all images

W 17 **Troy, part 2**  
W 28-64

Week 14

M 22 **Troy, part 3**  
W 65-87

W 24 **Troy, part 4**  
W 88-108 (through the Trojan Horse)

Week 15

M 29 **Troy, part 5 and Nostoi (the Returns)**  
W 108-119  
MLS 525-527; 449-455 C 350-356

*May*

W 1 **Nostoi, part 2**  
MLS 527-543 (Odysseus) C 339-349

Week 16

M 6 **Exam 3**

**If we are able to keep to the schedule set in the syllabus, our last exam (exam 3) will be held at our final class meeting. If weather or other issues slow down our progress, the last exam will be held on the date/time established by the GMU Final Exam Schedule.**

**To consult this schedule, see:**

<https://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Final-Exam-Schedule-Spring-2019.pdf>

**A final announcement on the date will be made by late April.**

**Make your travel plans for the end of the semester accordingly: early exams cannot be accommodated.**