

# ARTH 102: Stories and Symbols in Greek Myth

Professor Christopher Gregg

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Office: Robinson B, 373A

Office Hours: Mondays 12:15-1:15pm 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:

- 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 explore the different qualities of a visual versus a literary work
- To perform individual visual analysis on a work of art, both for its iconographic content and for its broader art historical significance

**Texts:** Students should buy the following books. Please bring Carpenter to class every day.

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

Mark P.O. Morford, Robert J. Lenardon, and Michael Sham. *Classical Mythology*. Ninth Edition. Oxford, 2010.

**Note:** you are free to use earlier editions of this text, but the course readings and images are keyed to the most recent edition. If you choose to use any other edition, you are still responsible for all the information in the 9<sup>th</sup> ED.

[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.)

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

## Grade Percentages:

Exam 1	Monday, Feb. 25 <sup>th</sup>	25%
Exam 2	Monday, April 8 <sup>th</sup>	30%
Exam 3	Final Exam period	30%
Written Assignment	Monday, April 1 <sup>st</sup>	15%

**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 focus on visual analysis of images. 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. As a preparation for the first exam, a timed, in-class quiz will be given: you will be able to use your notebooks (not textbooks) for this quiz as a check on your note-taking in the class. 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.

**Written Assignment**

1 to 2 page out of class writing assignment: details will be distributed later.

**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.**
- **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 myself. If you persist in this during lectures, I will ask you to leave the classroom.**
- **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 contrary to individual beliefs, but we will deal with them 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 needed. If the need arises, a revised syllabus will be placed on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to keep up with the most recent version of the syllabus.**

**All university policies of academic integrity and honesty will be enforced in this class: make sure that you are familiar with these policies.**

**If you have not already signed up for the Mason Alert system, which will send texts concerning weather cancellations, etc. please do so at: <https://alert.gmu.edu>**

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

MLS: Morford, Lenardon and Sham textbook page numbers

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

W: Woodford textbook page numbers

#### January

W 23 **Introduction: Stories, Symbols and Greek Myth**

MLS 3-12; 17-26

M 28 **Greek Art: Painting and Architecture**

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

W 30 **Greek Sculpture and Greek Religion**

Blackboard: Cartledge on Greek Religion

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

#### February

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

MLS:	C: 116, 117, 118	Woodford: “Images of Myth”
Oedipus, 413-418	95a/b, 262-264	pdf on Blackboard
Titanomachy, 80-82		
Prometheus, 85-98		

W 6 **Pandora and the Gigantomachy**

MLS 82-85	C 96, 97, 99,	Henle: “The Giants are Coming!”
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113-115, 119

pdf on Blackboard

M 11 **Zeus and his paramours**

MLS 114-118 C 54-60, 69, 233  
Ganymede 121-123  
Muses 131-132  
Cadmus and Thebes 407-412

W 13 **Hera and her children**

MLS 121-130 C 1, 2, 12,13, 14, 100, 132, 234  
**Read in Carpenter pp. 13-17**

M 18 **Athena and Poseidon**

MLS 165-187 C 61-63, 88, 98, 100, 101, 81-85

W 20 **Apollo**

MLS 246-269 C 70-73, 102, 104

M 25 **Exam 1**

W 27 **Artemis and Aphrodite**

MLS 220-226; 229-231; C 136-138, 71, 75, 130, 133, 67, 68, 90  
189-191

March

M 4

**The Lesser Nature Gods**

MLS C 93, 67, 5-9, 195-198, 135  
Pygmalion 192-194  
Eros 205-212  
Priapus 191-192  
Pan, Echo and Narcissus 325-332  
Hermaphroditus 294-299

W 6 **Dionysus and Hermes**

MLS 301-319; 281-294 C 9, 48,49, 50-53, 77-80, 106-109, 134

**March 11 and 13: Spring Break, No classes**

M 18 **Demeter, Persephone and Hades**

MLS 336-347; 378-381 ("Traditional Elements...") C 41-44, 129, 121, 131

W 20 **The Greek Hero: Perseus**

MLS 546-556 C 144, 146, 148-162

M 25 **Bellerophon and Classical Monsters**

MLS C 163-166, 345, 132, 254-257  
Bellerophon 558-561

Skylla 171  
Ixion 375

- W 27 **A boar, women with spears, and a Golden Fleece**  
MLS C 284-285, 196-198, 125, 271-273, 276-283  
Caledonian Boar Hunt 515-518  
Jason and the Argonauts 617-630

April

- M 1 **Herakles, part 1**  
MLS 563-568 C 167-192  
**Written Assignment due in class: digital submission not accepted, late penalties will apply**
- W 3 **Herakles, part 2**  
MLS 568-574; 576-584 C 193-199, 200-218, 224-229, 234
- M 8 **Exam 2**
- W 10 **To Be Announced**
- M 15 **Theseus**  
MLS 599-613 C 235, 237-239, 244-252, 258-259, 125
- W 17 **Troy, part 1**  
W 7-28 (through Achilles and Chiron) For Woodford textbook readings, all images
- M 22 **Troy, part 2**  
W 28-64
- W 24 **Troy, part 3**  
W 65-87
- M 29 **Troy, part 4**  
W 88-108 (through the Trojan Horse)
- May
- W 1 **Troy, part 5 and Nostoi (the Returns)**  
W 108-119  
MLS 523-524; 442-449 C 350-356
- M 6 **Nostoi, part 2**  
MLS 524-543 (Odysseus) C 339-349

**Final Exams are from May 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>**  
**Consult the GMU exam schedule for date and time.**  
**No early exams will be given, so make your travel plans accordingly.**