

Department MCLL

Course Number CLST 201

AREAS OF INQUIRY

Course Name: The Mythic Imagination
(formerly Classical Mythology and Its Influence)

WESTERN TRADITIONS

This form must be submitted to the Faculty Council on Liberal Learning and Academic Life as part of the submission process.

Please attach a proposed syllabus for this course and the Undergraduate Curriculum Course Proposal Form.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: 11 February 2005

Please answer the following questions:

Check Only One:

✓ This course is an existing course (in the current curriculum) that we are now proposing for this Area of Inquiry.

This is a new course that we are now proposing for this Area of Inquiry.

1. Name and contact information for the department chair administering this course.

Prof. Danielle Cahill Velardi
Dept. of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures
3 Commonwealth Hall
(757) 594-7107 or (757) 594-7020
dcahill@cnu.edu

2. In any given semester, how many sections of this course is your department willing to offer? 2-3

3. Why is this course being offered/what is it designed to achieve (Course purpose/goal)?

In this course students will:

- 1) critically examine the development and subsequent role of mythology in Greco-Roman society;
- 2) analyze both written and visual representations of mythology within their original cultural context;
- 3) understand how and why westerners, from Late Antiquity to the present, have appropriated Classical mythology for their own artistic, literary, and religious purposes;
- 4) learn to recognize mythological allusions in western art and literature.

4. Check the objectives below that the course will address. The first two objectives are required and every proposal must include at least one more objective from the list below.
- √ Critically examine the thought processes that have evolved in Western culture (**required**)
 - √ Analyze primary works within the framework the course provides (**required**)
 - √ Situate (locate and explain) one or more of the historical, artistic, or intellectual traditions of the West in its cultural context
 - √ Describe how the material under study has influenced the development of Western culture
 - √ Connect the historical roots of phenomena with later aspects of the tradition
5. Briefly explain how this class addresses the above objectives. A course may cover more than three objectives.
- a-e.) In this course, students will be required to analyze the ancient literary accounts of the myths under consideration (i.e. primary sources) within their original cultural context. We will also pay particular attention to the ways in which Greco-Roman myth is timeless and universal and how it still offers us, over two millennia later, a context for understanding who we are and our place in the scheme of things. Finally, this course explores the ways in which the artists, writers, and great thinkers of western culture, from ancient times to the modern era, have employed Greco-Roman mythology as a vehicle for expressing universal truths.

Please refer to the syllabus for a more detailed account of how the course addresses these objectives.

6. Course Assessment: **Identify how this course will accomplish the above objectives (choose at least one).**
- √ Participating in class discussion and debate
 - Engaging in teamwork and other collaborative exercises
 - √ Writing analytical or evaluative papers, perhaps incorporating original research
 - Making oral presentations
 - Creating an artistic product or a performance
 - Participating in fieldwork
 - Other means – please identify
7. Attach a proposed syllabus, which includes a statement of purpose, course objectives, and how these objectives will be accomplished.

See syllabus attached.

8. Please identify and explain if this course contributes to the Foundations of Liberal Learning expectations for:

◇ Oral Communication Literacy: Students will participate in regular class discussions of the myths under consideration.

◇ Information Literacy:

◇ Writing Literacy: Students will write six 2-page reaction papers over the course of the semester. In addition, students will compose essays on the midterm and final examination.

8. Explain how this course connects to Vision 2010 – the CNU Strategic Plan.

“The university curriculum values the historical, philosophical, and scientific traditions that have shaped the world. Its across the disciplines structure promotes the transformation of knowledge and belief into action, stimulates the creative process and cultivates imagination.” (Vision 2010)

In this course students will analyze the ways in which the Greco-Roman conception of the world and man’s place in it affected the development of western thought. Students will approach their study of mythology from an interdisciplinary perspective, focusing particularly on how Greco-Roman mythology is represented in western art and literature from antiquity through the Renaissance. Finally, students will have opportunities to engage creatively with the course material in their reaction papers and in class discussions, both of which will emphasize the significance of ancient myth in the western tradition at large and in the modern world.

Submission Checklist:

By the deadline, submit a packet with the following documents to the Assistant Dean for Liberal Learning. Please submit in electronic and hard copy form.

 ✓ Area of Inquiry Course Proposal Form

 ✓ Syllabus for the Course

 Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Course Proposal Form

MEMO

To: Faculty Council on Liberal Learning
From: Jana Adamitis
Re: CLST 201 and CLST 202

Dear Members of the Faculty Council on Liberal Learning,

I am writing in response to your queries concerning the difference between CLST 201 and CLST 202. The following paragraphs constitute a succinct answer to the question at hand. I have also resubmitted the complete course proposals and syllabi electronically to Bobby Bartels.

CLST 201, *The Mythic Imagination*, is a general survey of Greek and Roman mythology in which students examine ancient myth from a variety of analytical perspectives, e.g. anthropological, psychological, socio-historical, etc. The course content, which is quite broad, covers the Greco-Roman worldview as it is expressed in the ancient myths of creation, the concrete and abstract functions of the gods in Greek society, fertility myths and mystery cults, the historicity of the heroic legends, and the main arguments of Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces*. The readings comprise selections drawn from a wide array of texts ranging from epic poetry to drama to religious hymns. Lectures on Greco-Roman religion and on the evidence for cult practice derived from the archaeological record supplement the readings. In addition to studying literary representations of myth, students also learn to analyze visual representations of myth in ancient art, particularly Greek vase paintings. Finally, this course introduces students to the ways in which authors and artists from Late Antiquity to the present appropriated Greco-Roman myths for their own ideological purposes.

CLST 202, *Ancient Epic*, on the other hand, is not a general survey but rather a seminar-style literature course that focuses exclusively on ancient epic poetry, including (but not necessarily limited to) Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. This course examines in detail the universal issues at stake in the epic poems under consideration—heroism, patriotism, family, love, friendship—and asks students to consider these issues with respect to the world in which they live. Whereas in CLST 201 students devote only a few weeks of the semester to an examination of the Trojan War and its aftermath and take into consideration a variety of both literary and artistic representations of the story, in CLST 202 students devote an entire semester to careful analysis of Homer's and Vergil's literary accounts of the war; in addition the 201 students read only short excerpts of the epic poems, but the 202 students read the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* in their entirety. Finally, in contrast to CLST 201, CLST 202 does not trace the influence of ancient epic in the post-Classical literary or artistic traditions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions:

Email: jadam@cnu.edu
Office Phone: 594-7057
Office Address: Commonwealth Hall #4

Respectfully,

Jana Adamitis

CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY AND ITS INFLUENCE (CLST 201)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This course explores the ways in which the artists, writers, and great thinkers of western culture, from ancient times to the modern era, have employed Greco-Roman mythology as a vehicle for expressing universal truths. The course begins with a thorough examination of the principal myths of Greco-Roman antiquity, in which students analyze the significance of ancient myth from anthropological, historical, philosophical, psychological, and sociological perspectives. We then turn to an examination of the influence of Greco-Roman culture upon western civilization as a whole, paying particular attention to the role of mythology in the development of early Christianity, the revival of Classical culture during the Renaissance, and the use of mythic themes in modern art, literature, and cinema.

OBJECTIVES

In this course you will:

- 1) critically examine the development and subsequent role of mythology in Greco-Roman society;
- 2) analyze both written and visual representations of mythology within their original cultural context;
- 3) understand how and why westerners, from Late Antiquity to the present, have appropriated Classical mythology for their own artistic, literary, and religious purposes;
- 4) learn to recognize mythological allusions in western art and literature.

ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Reaction Papers and Discussion (Objectives 1, 2, 3)

Students will be responsible for writing 6 two-page reaction papers throughout the semester. Approximately every other week I will provide a list of questions for discussion from which students can choose a topic for their papers. These questions will ask the students to analyze on or more of the following: (a) the relevance of a particular myth within its original cultural context, taking into account both the literary and visual representations of the myth; (b) the universal relevance of myth; (c) and the ways in which the modern world has appropriated, either consciously or unconsciously, Greco-Roman mythology. There will be six sets of questions in all. Students will be given the opportunity to discuss their ideas in class after they have had the chance to work through their ideas individually in the reaction papers.

Exams 1 and 2 (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4)

Exam 1 will cover the material considered in Chapters 1-11, and Exam 2 will cover the material considered in Chapters 12-23. The format will be: slide identifications, matching, multiple choice, and short essays. The short answer questions will be based on the questions posed for the reaction papers and on class discussions.

The **Final Exam (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4)** will be comprehensive and will take the following format: slide identifications, short essays, and longer essays.

REQUIRED TEXTS

(available at the CNU Bookstore)

Powell, B. *Classical Myth*, 4th ed.

Website with Chapter Commentaries, Maps, Glossaries, Links, and Bibliography:

<http://www.prenhall.com/powell>

NB: Powell's text is a compilation of the ancient sources in translation, with notes on the cultural context for the myths.

Athanassakis, A.N. (trans.) *Hesiod: Theogony*, 2nd ed.

Innes, M. (trans.) Ovid: *Metamorphoses*

See also the WebCT page for this course, which contains the Powerpoint presentations shown in class, copies of handouts, and Image Databases (for the slide identifications on the exams).

GRADING

Reaction Papers	20%
Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Final	30%

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Week 1	Course Overview The Cultural Context of Greek Myth Introduction to the Myths of Creation Chapters 1-2 Hesiod, <i>Theogony</i>
Week 2	Myths of Creation Chapters 4-5 Hesiod, <i>Theogony</i> <i>Genesis</i>
Week 3	Myths of Creation (cont.) The Olympian Gods, Part I Chapters 6-7
Week 4	The Olympian Gods, Part I (cont.) The Olympian Gods, Part II Chapter 8
Week 5	Fertility Myths Chapters 9-10
Week 6	Myths of Death Chapter 11
Week 7	EXAM 1 (Chapters 1-11) Introduction to Hero Myths Perseus and the Myths of the Argive Plain Chapters 12-13
Week 8	Heracles Theseus and the Myths of Crete Chapters 14-16

Week 9	<p>Theseus and the Myths of Crete (cont.)</p> <p>Oedipus and the Myths of Thebes</p> <p>Chapter 17</p>
Week 10	<p>Jason and the Myths of Iolcus and Calydon</p> <p>The Trojan War</p> <p>Chapters 18-19</p>
Week 11	<p>The Trojan War and The Return of Odysseus</p> <p>Chapters 19-21</p> <p>screening and discussion of the documentary <i>Achilles in Vietnam</i></p>
Week 12	<p>Roman Mythology</p> <p>Chapter 22</p> <p>Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> (selections)</p>
Week 13	<p>Greco-Roman Mythology in Early Christianity</p> <p>Medieval Literature</p> <p>The Italian Renaissance</p> <p>(readings TBA)</p>
Week 14	<p>The Use of Myth in Modern Literature and Cinema</p> <p>(readings TBA)</p> <p>EXAM 2 (Chapters 12-23)</p>
TBA	COMPREHENSIVE FINAL