

**Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Razi University**  
**A Course Syllabus for Greek and Roman Mythology, Spring Semester, February-June 2020**

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**Class Time: ...**

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*Odysseus and Polyphemus, Arnold Böcklin*

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this course is to provide, for the students of English literature, an introductory yet comprehensive body of knowledge in Greek and Roman mythology. By introducing Greek and Roman mythology it is hoped that the student will be able to identify the significance of ancient myths in literary texts. Thus, through a narrative based approach, the tradition of Greek and Roman myths will be elaborated.

## **Classroom Rules**

- All electronic gadgets must be off or set to silent mode. If you use them for reading PDFs and other class related files, make sure they will not distract you or others so as to prevent the class from digressions.
- Punctuality is a non-negotiable must.
- 3 sessions of absence mean reducing your chance of passing the course greatly not to mention increasing the possibility of being dropped out of the course. Don't try it, ever!
- Class activities are expected of the students.

- Last but not least, respect the class. Do not leave the class in groups during the breaks. You absolutely must not extend breaks' duration on your own authority. For each session, a 10 minute break is already scheduled.
- Should the students have any questions, concerns, or requests for meetings and materials, they will contact me **only and solely** via **my email address**. Other forms of communications are absolutely not recommended. Further, emailing me is like texting me; I will respond as soon as possible.

## Objectives and Strategies

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1. To increase the students' terminology and knowledge in mythology by introducing narrative readings of Hamilton's volume accompanied by lecturer's additional elaborations.
2. To reinforce or develop comprehension skills of students so as to boost their understanding of mythological allusions.
3. To encourage students to become more observant and appreciative of the world of Greek and Roman myths; and possibly the influence of mythology in the world today.
4. To help students gain further understanding of the ancient ways of theology and philosophy by utilizing Greek and Roman mythology.
5. To encourage the students to read even more on the subjects introduced during the course.

This course will include poetical or textual analyses because of the highly motivational and important content of Greek and Roman mythology in English literature. Therefore, some samples of poetry or prose will be read and analyzed in the class.

It should be made clear that in mythology, including Greek and Roman mythology, the myths were expressions of the fears, problems, and aspirations that men have had for generations that gradually in human history took on external reality in the form of myths; and that oral tradition had the responsibility to preserve them long before written tradition. Moreover, these myths were compiled and written by poets who did not hesitate to make changes in the stories whenever they desired or deemed it fit. Last but not least, throughout this course myths of Orpheus, Venus and Adonis and Pygmalion will be read in a few masterpieces of English literature so as to help us understand how myths are transformed, used and appropriated in works of literature.

In achieving the aforementioned objectives the following hints might be helpful:

1. Read and discuss myths.
2. Rewrite myths in your own words.
3. Explain the message of the myth being discussed.
4. Interpret symbols or expressions in myths.
5. Read different versions of the same myth.

Due to time limitation we may not be able to cover all names, stories, and traditions, but we will do our best.

## Schedule

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### 1<sup>st</sup> Session:

- Introduction to Classical Mythology. Sources of Greco-Roman mythologies.
- Covering the Introduction to Hamilton's volume.
- Text: 'Leda and the Swan' by W. B. Yeats, p. 788, *Perrine's Literature*.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Session:

- Part one: The Gods, the Creation, and the Earliest Heroes, Chapter I.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Session:

- Significance of Creation Myths in Literature.
- Part one: The Gods, the Creation, and the Earliest Heroes, Chapters II-III.
- Text: 'The Shield of Achilles' by W. H. Auden.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Session:

- Creation of Mankind
- Part One: The Gods, the Creation, and the Earliest Heroes, Chapter III.
- Part Two: Chapter I; Cupid and Psyche.
- Text: 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' by John Keats.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Session:

- Part Two: Chapter II; Orpheus and Eurydice and Pygmalion and Galatea.
- Orpheus and His Representations in English Literature I.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Session:

- Part Two: Chapter III; the Quest of the Golden Fleece.
- Orpheus and His Representations in English Literature II.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Session:

- Part Two: Chapter IV; Four Great Adventures: Pegasus and Bellerophon and Daedalus.
- The Myth of Pygmalion and Its Representation in English Literature I.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Session:

- Part Three: the Great Heroes before the Trojan War; Perseus and Hercules.
- The Myth of Pygmalion and Its Representation in English Literature II.

### 9<sup>th</sup> Session:

- Part Four: the Heroes of the Trojan War; Chapter I; the Trojan War.
- Chapter II; the Fall of Troy

### 10<sup>th</sup> Session:

- Part Four: the Heroes of the Trojan War; Chapter III; the Adventures of Odysseus.
- Text: 'Ulysses' by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. pp. 746-748, *Perrine's Literature*.

### 11<sup>th</sup> Session:

- Part Four: the Heroes of the Trojan War; Chapter IV; the Adventures of Aeneas.
- The Myth of Venus and Adonis I.

### 12<sup>th</sup> Session:

- The Myth of Venus and Adonis II.
- The Myth of Venus and Adonis and Its Representation in English Literature I.

### 13<sup>th</sup> Session:

- The Myth of Venus and Adonis and Its Representation in English Literature II.
- Review I.

### 14<sup>th</sup> Session:

- The Mythology of the Norsemen.

- Contemporary Literature and Classical Mythology.
- Review II.

## Resources

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### Required Text:

Hamilton, E. (1998). *Mythology*. New York: Little, Brown and Company. (Primary)

### Secondary:

Bolton, L. (2002). *The Everything Classical Mythology Book: Greek and Roman Gods, Goddesses, Heroes, and Monsters from Ares to Zeus*. Avon, MA: Adams Media. (Secondary).

Lurker, M. (2004). *The Routledge Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons*. London: Routledge.

## Grading and Evaluation

### Your final grade will be decided based on:

Attendance→ 15 per cent

Class Participation→ 20 per cent

Final exam\* → 65 per cent

\*Your final exam will be composed of 30 multiple choice questions, 5 essay questions and 2 bonus questions which are also essay questions.

Every fruitful suggestion or reasonable criticism is appreciated.



*The Burning of Troy, Johann Georg Trautmann*