



ARHU 360/ Liberal Arts/ 01

CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY IN LITERATURE, ART, AND MUSIC | Spring 2021

Dr. James McAdams | [jmcadams@c.ringling.edu](mailto:jmcadams@c.ringling.edu) | Appts: 302-290-0037 or by Zoom

W: 3:30-6:15 | Credit Hours: 3.0 | Prerequisites: None.

*Note: Italics indicate my (James') additions.*

**Course Description:** Survey of the representation of Greek and Roman mythology in Western arts (*literature, painting, music, TV, video games, radio, mobile apps, etc.*). Examines use of mythological tropes in literature, painting, sculpture, and music. *Additionally, we will survey mythology both across space—meaning more mythology from Native American, North European, Hindu, Eastern Asian, and South American cultures—and across time, meaning that myths don't need to be old. American culture's relationship to the MCU, certain athletic superstars, and video game heroes can be understood as existing in a "mythic" relation to us. In other words, we are going to pretty exhaustive and plural with our definitions of myth—not just Greek & Roman stuff.*

*We'll also be looking a lot about how cultures receive, appropriate, and make mythologies their own. Once you start to see the "signs and trails" of these old myths, you never stop seeing them. From Shakespeare to fairy tales to Disney to MCU, they are everywhere, and it's simply fun to see how they change through time or from culture to culture. We all bring our own cultures and experiences to the table, so I welcome you and expect you to help us out if you know of traditions outside of mainstream 21<sup>st</sup>-century America. I'm a novelist, not an anthropologist, so I can use your help in making this class as global and diverse as possible...and then it gets really cool to see the same kinds of basic myth stories appearing in Japan, in Bangladesh, in Botswana, in Finland, in Canada, before a time when these parts of their world were connected. Are myths, then, more "real" than we think? Would that make them religions? What is the difference between myth and religion? Lots of questions....*

**Other Course Information:** *We'll be making us of a lot of multimedia in addition to books. Movies will be pulled primarily from open source (YouTube or Ringling's subscription library) or Netflix. If you don't have a Netflix subscription, try to watch with a friend or borrow their login credentials. I can share my screen with you but obviously that would be onerous and awkward for an entire movie. For the books, I'd prefer you buy the actual paper version and edition I specify 1) so we're all (literally) on the same page; and 2) I'm older and I don't think you can really experience a book by downloading some garbled .pdf and reading it on your phone. However, if you really want to save money and get a .pdf, that's ok, just make sure you create a "concordance," which is a fancy word for "this page here equals this page here in the other version of the book."*

**Zoom Etiquette:** *Pretty much just behave normally. Feel free to use chat as a way to socialize in class. We'll be using breakout rooms a lot. I'd prefer to see your face, just because it's easier to talk to people's face, but if you're shy or socially anxious and feel more comfortable blacking out your screen, that's of course your call. Also for shy or social anxious students, you can use the chat button to participate if that's easier than talking.*

**Course Goals:** By the end of this course you will have a better grasp of the history of the people who believed in myths and the use of classical mythology in ancient Greece and Rome, as well as myths used throughout history, and in our current culture. In addition, you should be able to identify classical myth in literature, painting and art and have an understanding of their context and background in the different eras.

**Objectives for Classical Mythology in Literature, Art and Music:**

- to be able to recognize common mythological motifs in literature, art, music, and popular culture,
- to define and identify myths and symbols in literature, music, and art,
- to identify master works of literature and authors originating and using myths and their respective historical eras,
- to identify master works of art and artists using myths and their respective historical eras,
- to identify master works of music and composers using myths and their respective historical eras
- to use this knowledge of myths and historical trends in literature, art and music in making interesting visual images, performance art, or writing designs of your own

**Student Learning Outcomes:** The course addresses the following RCAD and NASAD learning outcomes:

### RCAD Competencies

- Increased awareness of how artistic representations of myth changes in historical and cultural context.
- Increased proficiency in analysis of works, developing and communicating ideas, and critical writing skills through regular written homework.
- Increased proficiency of visual design and visual organization through student created maps, family trees, and drawings.
- Application of mythological narratives to student's area of study.

### NASAD competencies

- Understanding of and experience in art forms other than the visual arts and design
- Ability to address culture and history from a variety of perspectives
- Ability to respect, understand and evaluate work in a variety of disciplines
- Increase understanding across a broad range of culture and history
- Awareness of differences and commonalities regarding work in artistic and humanistic realms
- Understand and evaluate contemporary thinking about art and design
- Ability to think, speak and write clearly and effectively

### Grading Policies:

Under no circumstances will you be permitted to make up a quiz unless you have a very serious reason for missing it. *Yes, you can make up a quiz if you're sick. I know there's a lot going on in the world now, so just stay in contact with me about what's going on and I can give you a few extra days or let you re-submit something you failed the first time. As always, the lesson is to keep in contact with me and keep revising your work.*

### Amended Grading Policy: Fall 2020 & Spring 2021

Upon consultation with the department heads and program director/coordinators, the College has decided that given the unprecedented COVID-19 situation, students should have the benefit of No Credit should their final grade be "F." Letter grading (A to D-) will be the default practice for students that earn a passing grade. Under this amended grading system, a letter grade of A through D- will remain; a letter grade of F will be entered No Credit. Grades of No Credit are not passing grades and will not affect GPA calculations. Students with additional questions, and how it may affect probation and dismissal status, may also consult with their academic advisor.

### Grading Scale:

Grade		Numerical Equivalent	Percentage Scores*
A	Superior Performance	4.00	94--100
A--		3.67	91--93
B+		3.33	88--90
B	Above Average	3.00	84--87
B--		2.67	81--83
C+		2.33	78--80
C	Average Performance	2.00	74--77
C--		1.67	71--73
D+		1.33	68--70
D	Below Average	1.00	64--67
D--	Lowest Passing Grade	0.67	61--63
F	Failing	0.00	0--60
WF	Withdrew Failing	0.00	

\*Scores above .5 will be rounded up to the next full point

Grades not computed into the GPA
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W	Withdrew Passing	It is the student's responsibility to adhere to the withdrawal deadline listed in the academic calendar.
I	Incomplete	Incompletes are only granted at the discretion of the instructor. See student handbook for more information.

**BOOKS:** James here! Since most of these “books” (more like oral tales told written down over the course of centuries) are incredibly old, they’re out of copyright and we can find them all over the place and you don’t need to purchase. Examples include: Ovid’s *The Metamorphoses*, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Neil Gaiman’s *Norse Mythology*, *The Old Testament (the Jewish Bible)* and *The New Testament (the Christian Bible)*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Bhagavat-Gita*, etc. These are all out of copyright and so you can find them online or in an open-source e-book. My advice would be to create a bookmark folder on your browser and through all the URLs into that. We’ll deal with them in passing.

~~*The Odyssey*. Gareth Hinds. Graphic Novel/Paperback.~~

~~*The Iliad*. Gareth Hinds. Graphic Novel/Paperback.~~

^^I used these^^ in Spring because they are graphic novel adaptations of the books. Unfortunately, they were so dumbed down I didn’t feel we were really getting a taste for Homer. They might be interesting to flip through though, Hinds has his own website. Anyway, so we’ll just focus on *The Odyssey* and its myriad incarnations (The Coen Brother’s *O Brother Where Art Thou*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Cream’s “The Legend of Brave Ulysses,” and so forth. Q: What am I forgetting?)

Required Books:

[\*The Odyssey\*, translated by Emily Watson \(Norton Critical Edition\)](#)

NB\*: This is now ~\$20 on Amazon. It looks like a paperback is getting released on Feb 7 for ~\$10. You can wait until then to buy if you want.

[\*American Gods: 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition\*, by Neil Gaiman.](#)

NB\*: This will say **Book 1 of 2** because the publishers are trying to trick us into buying a related novel, *Anansi Boys*. Don’t fall for it☺

**PROJECTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:** Your final grade will be based upon tri-weekly quizzes (20%), weekly response posts (20%), two projects (50%), and class participation/attendance (10%).

**Project 1:** Report on obscure, non-Greek/Roman myth. 20%

For this project, I ask you to perform independent research to find a mythological figure and/or story that we have not discussed in class. This will ideally involve immersing yourself in the mythology of a different culture—Nordic, Sumerian, Egyptian, Asian, Native American, etc. Pretty much every culture ever has their own mythology, so make this as interesting or personal as you want.

Write 3 pages describing this character or story and relate it to another character/story from Greek or Roman myth. There will be a presentation element as well, so be sure to include pictures in a slide presentation file.

**Project 2:** Mythological Adaptation. 30%

Take a previously non-adapted mythological figure and write a proposal or query pitch for a contemporary piece of art involving them. This could take the form of a graphic novel, a Netflix series, a short story or poem, a song with lyrics, a motion design video, or anything else you think of. This project will be ½ the stuff you create (the graphics, the lyrics) and ½ a 3-page argument developing why and how this adaptation will work in 21st century America. There will be a presentation element here as well.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY DETERMINED BY FACULTY OF RECORD:**

For courses that meet once a week: One absence may drop a final course grade up to two steps down on the letter grade scale.

Two absences may drop a final course grade up to four steps down on the letter grade scale. Three or more absences will result in a failing grade.

Step refers to the +/- scale. For example, a B+ to B = one step.

Ringling College will make every effort to reasonably accommodate students' disability—related academic needs. However, neither the college nor an individual faculty member is required to waive essential or fundamental academic requirements of a course regardless of the nature of a student's disability.

**TESTING APPOINTMENTS:** If necessary and arranged in advance, you may have a quiz or test proctored at the Student Writing Center. Please make an appointment at:

Appointments: <https://www.timetrade.com/book/HWRSP>

Or for Disabilities Appointments: <https://www.timetrade.com/book/54FJL>

### **ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION:**

Students: Please check on your grades, attendance and performance periodically on Self Service <https://selfservice.ringling.edu/SelfService/Home.aspx> throughout the semester to avoid any misunderstanding at the end of the term.

Plagiarism: It is a form of academic thievery to steal another person's writing or visual work and to claim it as your own. The penalty for plagiarism is automatic failure.

Disabilities Accommodations: Ringling College of Art and Design makes reasonable accommodations for qualified people with documented disabilities. If you have a learning disability, a chronic illness, or a physical or psychiatric disability that may have some impact on your work for this class and for which you may need accommodations, please notify the Director of the Academic Resource Center (Room 227 Ulla Searing Student Center; 359--7627) preferably before the end of the drop/add period so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

Academic Integrity Policy: Academic Integrity is the process of openly acknowledging the sources of your ideas and creations in the building of your personal and public identity as a practitioner in the artistic community Ringling College expects students to acknowledge their sources of ideas and images in a manner consistent with best professional practices in their field. Your instructor will inform you of appropriate ways to document and acknowledge sources for this course.

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

WEEK 1 1/27

Syllabus review/quiz

Cross-Cultural Myth overview

Myth vs. Superheroes.

WEEK 2 2/3

*Gilgamesh and Bhagavat-Gita*

Response post #1 due

WEEK 3 2/10

Japanese and Chinese Myth

Response Post #2 due

WEEK 4 2/17

Roman/Greek Myth (survey)

Quiz #1

WEEK 5 2/24

Ovid...and Shakespeare

Early release: work on Project 1

WEEK 6 3/3

Start *The Odyssey*

Project 1 due & presentations

WEEK 7 3/10  
*The Odyssey*  
Response Post #3

WEEK 8 3/17  
*The Odyssey*  
Response Post #4  
Quiz #2

WEEK 9. 3/24  
Spring Break?  
Start *American Gods*

WEEK 10 3/31  
*American Gods*  
Quiz #3

WEEK 11 4/7  
Unit 1 on Myth Adaptations (Marvel, DC, Netflix, etc.)  
Response Post #4

WEEK 12. 4/14  
Unit 2 on Myth Adaptations (*Ulysses*, Campbell, Jung)  
Quiz #4

Week 13 4/21  
Finish *American Gods*  
Begin work on project 2

Week 14 4/28  
Project 2 and presentations

Week 15 5/5—***probably no class***  
Survey: what have we learned about mythology?  
Quiz #5