CLAS 167B Classical Myths Told and Retold
Course Syllabus (draft 10-23-17)

Brandeis University, Spring 2018
Class Meets: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:20 p.m., Block K
Location: TBA
Instructor: Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow
Professor and Chair, Department of Classical Studies and Co-Director of M.A. Graduate Program in Ancient Greek and Roman Studies
Office: Mandel Center for the Humanities, room 213 (second floor)
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., and by appointment in my office, MCH 213.
Email: aoko@brandeis.edu
Phone: 718-736-2183 (with voice mail)

Teaching Assistants (TAs): TBA, M.A. candidates, graduate students in Ancient Greek and Roman Studies
Emails:
TA Office Hours: Posted in LATTE, in Rabb 359

This course satisfies distribution requirement for the School of Humanities (HUM) and is writing intensive (WI).
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately with your documentation.

Required Texts on sale in the bookstore:

Other Texts to be posted as a whole or in part in LATTE:
1. Homer, Iliad, selections translated by Stanley Lombardo or Robert FitzGerald
3. Other readings will be posted in LATTE from time to time and announced in advance.
Course Description and Learning Goals:
Achilles’ slaughter of Hector, Odysseus’ clever defeat of the one-eyed Cyclops, the destructive beauty of Helen of Troy… no one can deny the continuing fascination of classical mythology, ancient Greek stories of heroes, gods, and their adventures, into our own times. These stories continue to exert amazing power over modern imagination as has well been expressed in films, novels, poems, and art.

This course, while not a survey of Greek mythology, does explore several major Greek and Roman original mythological texts (read in English) in order to understand fundamental questions about myths: Who told myths to whom and in what settings? What purpose did mythology serve in ancient Greece and Rome? Why are there so many variants of any one myth? This course is for those who want to know the how and why of classical mythology and its enduring influence on the literature of later periods and modern film. It is also a course for those who love to read, analyze text, and write. The course is writing intensive.

In the course of the semester we consider relationships between humans and their gods, between society and its individuals, and between the known and the unknown in antiquity, but also in our world today. Students in the course will have ample opportunity in writing assignments and in-class oral discussions and presentations to learn how to analyze ancient myths expressed in different genres and formats. You will learn their meanings and messages through a new lens of understanding so that you can write compellingly about them and their enduring qualities. The course promises to enhance writing skills and critical thinking if you take it seriously.

Course Requirements with (Approximate) Grade Determinations:
1. Regular attendance in class (and you should be awake and alert); participation in class discussions; readings completed for class; and completion of written work. 20%
2. Two short papers: Paper #1, due Wed., Feb. 7, is ungraded. Paper #2, due, Wed., Feb. 28, is graded. You may rewrite Paper #2, due Wed., March 14, for a new grade and for writing practice. Completion of all assignments must be timely. 20%
3. Paper #3: Two short, take-home midterm essay(s) (due, Wed., March 21) Graduate Students must complete three essays. 20%
4. Paper #4: Prospectus for final paper (due, Wed., March 28); rewrites due Mon., April 9. 10%
5. Paper #5: Final paper, 7-8 pages on analysis of a myth (due, Mon., April 23) Graduate Students must write an 8-10 page paper. 30%

Total: 100%

NB: Graduate students in the class will be expected to complete more readings and somewhat longer writing assignments. Details will be forthcoming. Be sure you identify yourselves to your professor, ASAP.

Academic Honesty (last, but hardly least!):
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Brandeis University policy on academic honesty is contained in your Student Handbook in section 5 under “Rights
and Responsibilities.” Instances of cheating, plagiarism, or other alleged dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. The adjudication process is also outlined in your Handbook. Potential consequences of academic dishonesty include (in addition to an “E” on the assignment in question) failure in the course, disciplinary probation, and suspension from the University. A record of any offense will remain in a student’s disciplinary file in the Office of Student Affairs throughout his or her career at Brandeis. Please know that I take this code very seriously. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask me. Lecture topics for the entire semester are listed by date below, along with due dates for assignments, special events, and special lectures (although mostly these will be announced as the term begins). Assigned and recommended readings are included. Please contact me or the TA if you have questions about the readings.

Schedule of Lectures, Readings, and Assignments (may be subject to change):

**JANUARY:**

**Jan. 10, Wed.**  
Introduction to the course; Definition and scope of classical mythology; how did it manifest in ancient Greek (and Roman) society?; introduction to our first reading, Hesiod’s *Theogony*.  
Assignment: Buy Books.

**Jan. 15, Mon.**  
No class, Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**Jan. 17, Wed.**  
The Beginning of Things; Mythology in the Iron Age.  
Discussion.  
Reading: Hesiod’s *Theogony* (posted in LATTE).

**Jan. 20, Tues.**  
The Song Culture of Ancient Greece: The Trojan War, Helen of Troy, and an Introduction to the Homeric *Iliad*.  
Reading: Homeric *Iliad*, Bks. 1 and 3 (posted in LATTE)

**Jan. 22, Mon.**  
Achilles and *Kleos*: Who is the “Best of the Achaeans”?  
Reading: Homeric *Iliad*, Bks. 6 and 9 (posted in LATTE)

**Jan. 24, Wed.**  
The Pan-Hellenic Epic Tradition: *Ekphrasis* and Myth.  
Reading: Homeric *Iliad*, Books 16, 18, and 22.

**Jan. 29, Mon.**  
Myth as a path to a civil society: What if Zeus, not Peleus, had fathered Achilles?  
Reading: Homeric *Iliad*, Bks. 22, (23), and 24.

**Jan. 31, Wed.**  
Another Kind of Hero: Odysseus.  
Reading: Homeric *Odyssey*, Bks. 1-4.

**FEBRUARY:**

**Feb. 5, Mon.**  
Land of the Phaeacians, neither here nor there.  
Reading: Homeric *Odyssey*, Bks. 5-8.
*Feb. 7, Wed.  The Epic *Kleos* of Odysseus.*  
*Short Paper #1 (ungraded) on Myth-Making due in class.  
Reading: Homeric *Odyssey*, Bks. 9-12.  

Feb. 12, Mon.  *Nostos*, Fidelity, and the Female Hero, Penelope.  
Reading: Homeric *Odyssey*, Bks. 18-21.  


Feb. 26, Mon.  *Agamemnon and Odysseus.*  
Reading: Finish reading the *Odyssey* and review.  

*Feb. 28, Wed.  The Golden Age of Athens; the development of Athenian tragedy from Greek epic.*  
*Short Paper #2 (graded) due in class: analysis of a “myth” in the *Iliad.*  
Reading: Start reading Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon.*  

MARCH:  
March 5, Mon.  *Characters, Staging, Props, and Choral Song.*  
Reading: Finish Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon.*  

March 7, Wed.  *Mirroring Myths.*  
Reading: Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers.*  

March 12, Mon.  *Mythology and Societal Order: the fidelity of husbands and wives, patricide, sibling bonds, and matricide.*  
Reading: Aeschylus’ *Eumenides.*  

*Rewrites of Short Paper #2 due in class: analysis of a “myth” in the *Iliad.*  

March 19, Mon.  *Jason and the Argonauts: Another voyage to the great unknown.*  
Film and Class Discussion  
Reading: Apollonios Rhodios, *The Argonautika*, Bk. IV (posted in LATTE).  

*Midterm Take-Home Essays--Paper #3 (graded) LATTE upload*
due by class.

March 26, Mon.  Film and Class Discussion

*Prospectus (Paper #4) for Final Paper

Recommended: Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, Heracles and Heraclids; Returns (posted in LATTE).

April:  
Week of April 2-6, 2018, Spring/Pasover Break, no classes.

*April 9, Mon.*  Roman Transformations of Greek Myth
*Rewrites of Prospectus (Paper #4) due in class.


April 11, Wed.  Roman Transformations of Greek Myth and Wall Painting


April 16, Mon.  Back to the Mythic Trojan War through Roman Eyes.


April 18, Wed.  Roman *Ekphrasis* and Myth-History

Reading: Review Homeric *Iliad*, Fitzgerald, Bk.18; Vergil, *Aeneid*, Bks. 6-8.

*April 23, Mon.*  Last Day for our class.

The *Aeneid* or the Homeric songs? The timeless competitions of mythic story telling.
*Final Papers (Paper #5) due in class.

Reading: Vergil, *Aeneid*, Bk. 12.