

## 1. Course Description

### *Course Title*

Art and Myth in the Greco-Roman World

### *Course Description:*

The course focuses on the mythological stories, characters and plots of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, and explores how these are fashioned in relation to their artistic depiction. The major Greek and Roman myths are examined and the formation of myth in interaction with artistic preferences and trends is analysed. At the same time, the course examines the employment and manipulation of art, and of mythology in relation to art, by political and civic institutions. Narratives of ancient literature and works of art are analysed in their interrelationship, and through the assistance of theories of anthropology, art history and politics. An introduction to the history of art and to the basic methods of analysing art and studying its reception politics across the centuries is provided.

The instruction will be based on lectures (lecture course), while the students will be encouraged to participate actively in the class discussions.

The assessment of the course will be based on two written examinations (a midterm and a final exam) and two short quizzes.

### *Course Language*

The course will be taught in English.

*Level of students:* Freshmen & Sophomore, or Junior & Above

Open to all levels of students; no previous knowledge of Greek / Roman Myth or Art is required

## 2. Course Syllabus

### *Name of the instructor*

Professor Sophia PAPAIOANNOU

### *Type of Class Arrangement (Time of the course)*

|   |                                      |             |               |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| 8 | Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday | 08:30-12:00 | July 15 to 26 |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|

### *Course description including objectives*

The course explores the contribution of Art to the formation of Greek and Roman Myth, as well as the employment of Myth as source of inspiration for artistic creativity. The course will focus on the three great epic cycles of Ancient Greek Myth,

namely, the Trojan, the Theban and the Argonautic Cycle, and also on the great heroes Hercules and Theseus, and on selective Olympian gods, and explore their depiction in art, in a variety of monuments and artefacts. Lectures will examine how the predilection of artists for specific myths and narratives of myths contributed towards their standardization; what myths were particularly popular in certain historical periods and why; how politics employed mythology via art for the projection of political agendas, etc. The objectives of the course also include: the introduction of textual and visual sources for ancient mythology; the induction of the students to the fundamental principles of art historical analysis; and the understanding of Greco-Roman mythology, but also mythology in general, in relation to other cultural phenomena (i.e. religion, civic ideology, ritual).

*Topic or topics for each session*

The course will be taught during a two-week, four-day per week intensive schedule (28 contact hours), according to the following outline:

Lecture 1

The definition of myth; Historical and topographical overview of the Greek and Roman Antiquity. Creation Myths: Prometheus and Pandora

Lecture 2

Demeter and Persephone, and the Eleusinian Mysteries; Apollo in Greece vs. Rome

Lecture 3

Hercules, the great civilizer; nature vs. culture

Lecture 4

Myth and Politics: Theseus, the hero of Athens; Athena and the civic ideology of divine patronage

Lecture 5

Jason, Perseus and the conquest of the world. The artistic politics of exploration

Lecture 6

Oedipus and the Theban Saga. The ideological projection of Thebes as anti-Athens on Athenian art, and the denigration of Thebes in Western Culture

Lecture 7

The Trojan War: the contribution of art to the creation / deconstruction of the myth.

Lecture 8

Roman art and the Romanization of Greek myth; the reception politics of myth in European art and ideology.

*Teaching methods*

Lectures, Discussion

### *Assessment*

1 mid-term exam (30% of the total grade)

1 final exam (60% of the total grade)

2 short quizzes (10% of the total grade)

Both the mid-term and the final exam will be close-book exams. Both will be a combination of short-answer passages and short essays.

The two quizzes will ask the students to answer a set of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blanks questions.

### *Required and/or recommended readings*

#### **Required Textbooks**

- 1) Barry Powell, *Classical Myth*. Publisher: Pearson; ISBN 978-0321967046. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2014
- 2) T.H. Carpenter, *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece*. Publisher: Thames and Hudson. ISBN: 0-500-20236-2. Date: 1991.

#### **Digital course-materials**

These will be provided by the instructor. A platform will be formed for the course and all digital material will be uploaded there, for use by the students throughout the course.