AHIS3550 - Greek and Roman Mythology
Course Outline

Semester
Semester 2 - 2008

Unit Weighting
10

Teaching Methods
Lecture
Tutorial

Brief Course Description
Aims to provide students with an understanding of the myths and legends of the Greek and Roman civilisations. The course focuses on definitions of myth, at its most simple level as a story, as well as what it reveals of Greek and Roman society, religion, beliefs and values and the relevance of Greco-Roman myth for modern thought.

Contact Hours
Lecture for 2 Hours per Week for the Full Term
Tutorial for 1 Hour per Week for 13 Weeks

Learning Materials/Texts

Course Objectives
As a result of participating in this course, students should develop:

1. A sound knowledge and understanding of both Greek and Roman mythology and its context

2. Recognition of common themes and patterns in various myths and legends

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 2 - 2008

CTS Download Date: 16.7.08
3. A critical understanding of similarities and differences in myth cycles from various cultures, and of the main modern theories of the nature of myth.

4. Skills in using and evaluating ancient source material for gaining information, as well as using modern studies in conjunction with the ancient sources to establish, develop and support interpretations of myth.

5. The accurate and effective communication of the knowledge and understanding acquired.

**Course Content**
Definitions of myth: creation myths (comparisons)

The Pre-Olympians

The Greek Pantheon

The myth of Prometheus and Pandora

Dionysus

The concept of the hero: Heracles

The concept of the warrior-woman: the Amazons and Athena

The Underworld

Roman Foundation Mythology: Aeneas and Romulus

Modern approaches to myth

**Assessment Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>One tutorial paper or equivalent task, 30% ca. 1,000 words. The tutorial paper is a research and writing task which examines a set question, using ancient literary sources where appropriate and comparative examples. Class discussion is another important aspect, which encourages students to share findings and ideas and improve oral communication.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays / Written Assignments</td>
<td>One major essay project or equivalent task, 40% ca. 2,000 words. This is an individual research and writing assignment on a choice of topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examination: Take Home</td>
<td>One Take-home test, 30% ca. 1,000 words. The test will consist of short answer questions and passages from ancient sources for discussion.</td>
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**Assumed Knowledge**
20 units at any level in Ancient History or History

**Callaghan Campus Timetable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AHIS3550</th>
<th>GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semester 2 - 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture and Tutorial</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
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School of Humanities and Social Science
Plagiarism
University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one’s own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another’s ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs.

Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -


The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

Written Assessment Items
Students may be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

Marks and Grades Released During Term
All marks and grades released during the term, are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School on the recommendation of the School Assessment body.

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations
Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:
1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;

must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641.

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- Requests for Special Consideration must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due
date of submission or examination.

∑ **Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items** must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.

∑ **Requests for Rescheduling Exams** must be received no later than ten working days prior the first date of the examination period

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. In the first instance, students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

**Changing your Enrolment**

The census dates below are the last dates to withdraw without academic penalty. For onshore students, withdrawal on or before the census date means no financial penalty.

For semester 1 courses: 31 March 2008
For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2008
For Trimester 1 courses: 18 February 2008
For Trimester 2 courses: 9 June 2008
For Trimester 3 courses: 22 September 2008
For Trimester 1 Singapore courses: 3 February 2008
For Trimester 2 Singapore courses: 25 May 2008

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online, please refer to myHub - Self Service for Students

[https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au](https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au)

**Faculty Information**

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia.

The four Student Hubs are located at:

**Callaghan campus**

• Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Union Building
• Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre, Hunter side of campus

**City Precinct**

• City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor in combination with an Information Common for the City Precinct

**Ourimbah campus**

• Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

For Port Macquarie students, contact your program officer or [EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au), phone 4921 5000

For Singapore students, your first point of contact is your PSB Program Executive
Faculty websites
Faculty of Business and Law
Faculty of Education and Arts
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/
Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/
Faculty of Health
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/
Faculty of Science and Information Technology
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/science-it/

Contact details
Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie
Phone: 02 4921 5000
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

Ourimbah
Phone: 02 4348 4030
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

The Dean of Students
Resolution Precinct
Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Deputy Dean of Students (Ourimbah)
Phone: 02 4348 4123
Fax: 02 4348 4145
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:

Alteration of this Course Outline

No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Professional Doctorate Awards

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness.
If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.

For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Important Additional Information

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students
### Grading guide

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<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail (FF)</td>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass (P)</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit (C)</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction (D)</td>
<td>Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction (HD)</td>
<td>All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based or substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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### Lecture Topic, Lecturer & Assessment at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic, Lecturer &amp; Assessment at a Glance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Introduction: Definitions of myth (EJB)</td>
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<td><em>No tutorial</em></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>July 31</td>
<td>Creation Myths: the pre-Olympians (HAST)</td>
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<td><em>Introductory tutorial: what is Myth?</em></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>The pantheon (HAST)</td>
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<td><em>Tutorial: Creation Myths</em></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>August 14</td>
<td>Prometheus and Pandora (HAST)</td>
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<td><em>No tutorial</em></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>August 21</td>
<td>Dionysus: an unusual deity (EJB)</td>
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<td><em>Tutorial: Prometheus</em></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>August 28</td>
<td>The warrior-woman: the Amazon (EJB)</td>
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<td><em>No tutorial</em></td>
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<td><em>Research and source analysis task due</em></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>September 4</td>
<td>The warrior-goddess: Athena (EJB)</td>
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<td><em>Tutorial: Dionysus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>The concept of the hero: Heracles (EJB)</td>
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School of Humanities and Social Science
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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</table>
| 9 September 11 | Tutorial: the Amazons  
The Heraclids (EJB) |
| 10 September 18 | Tutorial: Heracles  
The Underworld (HAST)  
No tutorial |
| **SEMESTER RECESS: MONDAY SEPTEMBER 29-FRIDAY OCTOBER 10** |
| 11 October 16 | Roman Foundation Mythology: Aeneas (HML) |
| 12 October 23 | Roman Foundation Mythology: Romulus (HML)  
Tutorial: Demeter and the Eleusinian Mysteries |
| 13 October 30 | Modern Approaches to Myth (HAST) |

**EJB** – Dr Elizabeth Baynham, **HAST** – Professor Harold Tarrant, **HML** – Mr Hugh Lindsay

- **Note**: The Take-home Test assignment is due in Wk 6 at 5pm
- **The Major Essay is due in Wk 15 at 5pm**

**TUTORIALS**

There are no formal marks given for tutorial attendance or performance, BUT rolls will be kept and a student’s good record of attendance will count in his/her favour in cases where a final result is borderline; ie, regular tutorial participation might make a difference in going up a grade. A tutorial is not meant to be a mini-lecture from the tutor and it is important that all students do some preparatory reading. You will not be expected to read all the material listed (although obviously, the more you read, the more you will know); however, it is particularly important that everybody reads the relevant ancient sources. A lively and interesting tutorial discussion depends very much upon the people who make up the group, and every individual’s contribution helps.

You may write a paper on any one of the tutorial topics discussed. Whatever topic you choose, you must submit the assignment ONE WEEK (Tuesday 5pm) after the tutorial discussion; eg., if you wish to write on Topic 1, Creation Myth (tutorial in Wk3), the assignment will be due in Week 4.

As a general rule, since the assignment is only 1,000 words, do not feel that you have to cover all the points listed for discussion; instead focus on particular issue(s) which interest you, state your intentions clearly in your introduction, use evidence from the listed readings to support your case, and try to draw some firm conclusions. We do not insist that you present your work in a particular academic convention (eg Harvard, Chicago etc), but whatever format you choose, please be consistent. Please keep to the set word limit, although a margin of 10% over or under is acceptable. Footnotes and quotations from ancient material or modern scholars do not count in the overall total, but use the latter (especially quotes from modern writers) sparingly; “lots of quotes” do not make a good essay. Try to be critical, rather than derivative in your approach to research.

Please organise your commitments to allow enough time to research and write up your assignments, and allow some margin for electronic (or other) disasters. If you have any difficulties with approaching your assignment, or with making the due dates, **please contact the Course Co-ordinator**. Finally, we try to mark and return all assignments within a week to a fortnight after submission. However, should any delay occur, we ask that you show a little patience and understanding; your work will be returned as quickly as possible.
SET TEXTS

AHIS3550 Greek and Roman Mythology Course Reader
Either:
Morford, M.P.O & Lenardon, R. Classical Mythology (Longman). Expensive but excellent
Or:
Harris, S.L. & Platzner, G. Classical Mythology: Images and Insights (3rd edit. Mayfield)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Dowden, Ken, The Uses of Greek Mythology (London)

Some Useful Internet Sites

The Web is a helpful research tool, but it does not replace books or academic journals, and you need to be aware that there are no quality controls. In general look for sites which have an institutional or educational (edu) affiliation:

Perseus (one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of digital art, ancient texts in translation, etc)
http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/art&arch.html

Diotima (concerned mainly with women and gender in the ancient world)
http://www.stoa.org/diotima/

Myth Links
http://www.temple.edu/classics/myth_links.html
TUTORIAL TOPICS

There will be an Introductory meeting of all tutorial groups in Week 2. There is no set topic; instead there will be a general discussion based on some of the issues raised in the first lecture (eg definitions of myth, types and purpose of myth, etc). You might find chapters 1 in K. Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology* and Harris and Plazner, Classical Mythology, helpful background. Formal tutorial topics will commence in Wk 4

*Note that the listed readings below are either all on Short Loan or Three Day Loan. If you are having any difficulties finding relevant research material, please consult the Course Co-ordinator.

**Topic 1: Creation Myths: Week 3**


Consider the following questions:

i. What do these accounts have in common and how do they differ?

ii. Are they "myth" or "history"?

iii. Why are such narratives important to their societies and what do they suggest about those societies?

**Further Reading**

S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, esp. pp.218-228 (Babylonian texts)
H. G. Gütterbock, Hittite Mythology in *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, ed. S. N. Kramer, pp141-143, 154-175 (Hittite texts)
P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East*, pp1-54
M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony*, Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary. (Oxford, 1966). Note this is the Greek text but the commentary (in English) is helpful
**Topic 2 Prometheus: Week 5.**

Prometheus is regarded by some as an archetypal "Trickster" and also as a kindly benefactor to mankind. How do these characteristics fit in with the way in which Prometheus is presented in Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*? Why is he an important figure in Greek mythology? Is Prometheus’ immortality significant in his myth cycle?

**Ancient Sources**

Class Reader: Prometheus


Note that Aeschylus presents a different portrayal of Prometheus’ defiance of Zeus

Apollodorus, *Library of History* (see Robin Hard trans)


**Modern Studies**


S. Harris and G. Platzner, *Classical Mythology*. Chapter 4


Topic 3: Dionysus Week 7.

Explore the ambivalent nature of Dionysus in Greek mythology. How is he different from other gods? Do you think the Greeks considered him to be more of a dangerous and destructive force than a benign one?

Ancient Sources

Class Reader: Dionysus
Apollodorus, *Library of History* (see Robin Hard trans. p263 for references)

Modern Studies
S. Harris and G. Platzner, *Classical Mythology*. Chapters 8 and 18 (on Euripides’ play)
M. Détienne, *Dionysos at Large*
M. Détienne, *Dionysos Slain*
C. Kerenyi, *Dionysos*
T. H. Carpenter and C. Faraone (eds.) *Masks of Dionysos*
E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*

Topic 4: Amazons: Adulation or Execration? Week 8.

With reference to specific myths about Greek heroes and Amazon women (eg. Theseus’ Amazon, Heracles’ Amazon queen, Achilles and Penthesilea etc.) outline the main features of the legends and the way the ‘warrior-woman’ is portrayed. Do you think the myths are predominantly concerned with enforcing Greek patriarchy, or are they essentially an expression of fear of the Other?

Ancient Sources

Class Reader: Amazons; for Achilles and Penthesilea, see the extracts from the poem by Quintus of Smyrna
Theseus’ Amazon; see Apollodorus, *Library of History* (Hard trans. p141ff)
Heracles and the Amazon queen; see Apollodorus, p78ff

Modern Studies
P. du Bois, *Centaurs and Amazons* (Ann Arbor, 1982)
J. Blok, *The Early Amazons* (Leiden, 1995)
**Topic 5: Herakles: Week 9**

Analyse Herakles' links in Greek myth with the environment and particularly with animals, humanity and the divine. Why is he such a durable and popular hero for the Greeks?

**Ancient Sources**

Class Reader: Heracles
Apollodorus, *Library of History* (see Robin Hard trans. use Index)

**Modern Studies**

*A. Blanshard, Hercules: Scenes From a Heroic Life* (Granta, 2005)
G. K. Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme*
S. Harris and G. Platzner, *Classical Mythology*, pp213-220
L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, chs. 5-7
R. J. Lenardon and M. Morford, *Classical Mythology*, pp.457-484
W. Burkett, *The Structure and History of Greek Mythology and Ritual* (use with caution)

*Not available in Auchmuty Library as yet.*

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**Topic 6: Demeter, Persephone and the Eleusinian Mysteries: Week 12**

Discuss the narrative of the myth of Demeter and Persephone in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. What is the nature and purpose of the Hymn? How does it relate to the Eleusinian Mysteries? What relation between death and fertility is suggested by the Hymn?

**Ancient Sources**

Apollodorus, *Library of History* (see Robin Hard trans., p263)

**Modern Studies**

G. S. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths*, p.249ff
W. Burkett, *The Structure and History of Greek Mythology and Ritual*, chapter 6 (use with caution)
W. Burkett, *Homo Necans*, chapter 5. 292.08/23B
G.E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (New Jersey, 1961) 292.65/1
R. Parker, 'The Homeric Hymn to Demeter', *Greece and Rome* 36 (1991) 1-17
M. Arthur, 'Politics and Pomegranates', *Arethusa* 10 (1977) 7-47
N. J. Richardson, 'Early Greek Views about Death' in P. E. Easterling and J. V. Minor (eds.) *Greek Religion and Society* (Cambridge, 1985)
TAKE-HOME TEST

Date due: Week 6
Length: ca. 1,000 words
Assessment weighting 30%

SECTION A: SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (15 marks)

i. Briefly define the following terms:

a. anthropomorphism (in relation to the portrayal of the Greek gods)

b. etiology

c. archetype

d. tall tale

e. heros/theos

ii. Identify or describe the following:

a. Tartarus

b. Gaia

c. Pholos

d. Metis

e. Clio

f. Tiamat

g. Silenus

h. Ouranos

iii. Give two other names of Dionysus

iv. Who are the parents of Heracles?

v. Who are the Pleiades?

vi. What animals and/or plants are associated with:

(a). Zeus

(b). Athena

c. Apollo

d. Persephone

(vi). Name at least FOUR rivers of the Underworld

This is as much a research exercise as a trivia quiz, so you can make use of a range of information. Some of these terms and characters will be covered in lectures; you can also obtain information from the set text books (Morford and Lenardon or Harris and Platzner), or the Web. In addition to your lecture notes, you might also find standard references like the Oxford Classical Dictionary (Simon Hornblower et al. eds.) or the Penguin Dictionary of Classical Mythology (Pierre Grimal) helpful.
SECTION B: GOBBETS (15 marks)

Write critical notes on TWO of the following passages. You can comment on aspects like the passage’s context and the historical context of the author and particular literary genre (if relevant to the content), what the passage reveals about myth in general or a particular myth. Also refer to supporting or contradictory ancient versions (where you can find them), and modern thought (where relevant). Be sure to keep your focus on the passage’s content - don’t go off on tangents! It will strengthen your commentary to include references to other ancient sources. We are primarily interested in your critical opinions, but if you do use modern scholars, make sure that you include formal references.

(1). The Amazons

EITHER:

a. Now in the country along the Thermodon river, as the account goes, the sovereignty was in the hands of a people along whom the women held supreme power, and its women performed the services of war just as did the men. Of these women one, who possessed the royal authority, was remarkable for her prowess in war and her bodily strength, and gathering together an army of women she drilled it in the use of arms and subdued in war some of the neighbouring peoples. And since her valour and fame increased, she made war upon people after people of neighbouring lands, and as the tide of her fortune continued favourable, she was so filled with pride that she gave herself the appellation of Daughter of Ares: but to the men she assigned the spinning of wool and such other domestic duties as belong to women. Laws also were established by her, by virtue of which she led forth the women to the contests of war, but upon the men she fastened humiliation and slavery. And as for their children, they mutilated both the legs and arms of the males, incapacitating them in this way for the demands of war, and in the case of the females they seared the right breast that it might not project when their bodies matured and be in the way; and it is for this reason that the nation of the Amazons received the appellation it bears.

Diodorus Siculus. 2. 45.

OR:

b. When Alexander returned to Hyrcania, there came to him the queen of the Amazons named Thalestris, who ruled all the country between the rivers Phasis and Thermodon. She was remarkable for beauty and for bodily strength, and was admired by her countrywomen for bravery. She had left the bulk of her army on the frontier of Hyrcania and had arrived with an escort of three hundred Amazons in full armour. The king marvelled at the unexpected arrival and dignity of the women. When he asked Thalestris why she had come, she replied it was for the purpose of getting a child. He had shown himself the greatest of all men in his achievements, and she was superior to all women in strength and courage, so that presumably the offspring of such outstanding parents would surpass all other mortals in excellence. At this the king was delighted and granted her request and consorted with her for thirteen days, after which he honoured her with fine gifts and sent her home.

Diodorus Siculus. 17. 77. 1-3.

OR:

c. It was for that reason that the Amazons marched against Athens and after they had pitched camp by the Areiopagus, they were defeated by Theseus and the Athenians. Although he had a son, Hippolytus, by the Amazon, he afterwards accepted Phaedra, daughter of Minos, as a wife from Deucalion, putting an end to their previous hostility. During the wedding celebrations, the Amazon who had been formerly married to him arrived fully armed with her fellow Amazons, and was on the point of killing the guests; but they closed the doors with all speed, and killed her. Or, according to some, she was killed in battle by Theseus.

(2). The Birth of Athena

Zeus had intercourse with Metis, although she changed into many different forms in the hope of escaping it. While she was pregnant, Zeus forestalled future developments by swallowing her; for Ge declared that after having the girl who was due to be born to her, Metis would give birth to a son who would become the ruler of heaven. It was for fear of this that he swallowed her down. When the time arrived for the child to be born, Prometheus, or according to others, Hephaistos, struck the head of Zeus with an axe and from the top of his head, near the river Triton, leapt Athene, fully armed.

Apollodorus 1. 3. 6.

(3). Pandora’s Jar (pithos)

The deep and total trap was now complete;
The Father sent the gods’ fast messenger
To bring the gift to Epimetheus.
And Epimetheus forgot the words
His brother said, to take no gift from Zeus,
But send it back, lest it should injure men.
He took the gift, and understood, too late.

Before this time men lived upon the earth
Apart from sorrow and from painful work,
Free from disease, which brings the Death-gods in.
But now the woman opened up the cask,
And scattered pains and evils among men.
Inside the cask’s hard walls remained one thing,
Hope, only, which did not fly through the door.

Hesiod, Works and Days, 83-96

(4). Socrates discusses the Gods

b EUTHYPHRO: These and still more wonderful things, Socrates, of which the ordinary people do not know.

SOCRATES: Then do you think there is really civil war among the gods, and fearful hostility and battles, and many other such things as are both related by the poets and depicted by fine artists upon various holy artefacts:

not least upon the Robe at the Great Panathenae which is brought up to the Acropolis full of such embroidery? Are we to say that it’s all true, Euthyphro?

EUTHYPHRO: Not merely that, Socrates, but it’s as I said just now; there’s much more besides that I shall relate to you about things divine if you like; I know that you’ll be stunned by it.

SOCRATES: I shouldn’t be surprised. But you shall tell me that another time when we have leisure

Plato: Euthyphro 6b-c.

(5). Dionysus and the Pirates

Now I swear to you by that god himself- for there is no god greater than he - that what I tell you is as surely true as it seems past belief. The ship stood still in the water, as if held in dry dock. The sailors, in surprise, kept on plying their oars and spread their sails, trying to run on with the help of both; but their oars were hampered with ivy, which twined up the blades in curling tendrils, and adorned the sails with heavy clusters. The god himself wreathed his head with bunches of grapes, while in his hand he flourished a wand draped with vineleaves. Around him lay phantom shapes of wild beasts, tigers and lynxes and panthers with dappled skins. The sailors leaped overboard, whether in madness or fear I cannot tell. Medon’s body was the first to darken in colour, and his spine arched into a well-marked curve. Lycabas began to say to him: “What kind of monster are you turning into?” But even as he spoke, his own mouth widened, his nostrils became hooked, and his skin hardened into scales.

Ovid, Metamorphoses, 3. 660-7
MAJOR ESSAY TOPICS

Date Due: Thursday, November 13
Length: ca. 2,000 words.

Choose any one essay topic from the following sections.

SECTION A: GREEK MYTHOLOGY

(1) Zeus and Myths of Succession
Discuss accounts of the passing of control from Heaven (Uranos), to Kronos, and subsequently to Zeus. Does this myth demonstrate that violent overthrow of fathers by sons was seen as normal in Greece? Why does this sequence of violent revolution end with Zeus?

Suggested Reading

Ancient Sources
M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony*. Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary. (Oxford, 1966). Note this the Greek text but the commentary (in English) is helpful.

Modern Studies
P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East* (Cardiff, 1966) 1-54

(2). Pandora
Examine the myth of Pandora. What does it set out to explain? Is Pandora more “statue” than woman?

Suggested Reading

Ancient Sources

Modern Studies
Note that the bibliography on Pandora is considerable. A selection of the following (perhaps 4-5) readings will be sufficient:

*M. Arthur, “Early Greece: origins of the western attitude towards women”, Arethusa 6 (1973) 7-58
W. Berg, “Pandora: the Pathology of a Creation Myth” *Fabula* 17 (1976) 1-25
F. Brenk, “Hesiod: how Much a Male Chauvanist?” *Classical Bulletin* 49 (1973) 73-76
R. M. Frazer, “Pandora’s Diseases, *Erga* 102-104” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 13 (1972) 235-38
J. Glenn, “Pandora and Eve: Sex as the Root of all Evils” *Classical World* (1977/78) 179-85.


(3). Athena
Examine the role of Athena in Greek Mythology. Can one explain the paradox of her apparent early associations with fertility and “mother” of chthonic figures (like Erectheus), and her identity as a virgin warrior goddess and patron of arts and technology?

Ancient Sources
Homer, *Hymn 28 The Birth of Athena*; see also Hymn 11, *To Athene*
Note that there are several translations available of the Homeric Hymns.

Modern Studies
W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Mass. 1985) 139-143
S. L. Harris and G. Platzner, *Classical Mythology* (California, 1995) 102, 131
W. Brede Kristensen, *Life Out of Death* (Louvain, 1992) 131-161
C. Penglase, *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia* (London, 1994) ch. 10

SECTION B: ROMAN MYTHOLOGY

(4). Romulus and Remus
The foundation myth involving Romulus and Remus seems to have many hostile strands. Account for these and explain whether they provide a suitable backdrop for subsequent Roman history.

Suggested reading:


(5). Aeneas
Trace the development of Aeneas from Trojan hero to Roman founder figure. How different is the Romanised Aeneas, and what factors had shaped the myth by the age of Augustus?

Suggested reading:
Ancient sources

Modern views
 SECTION C: THE FUNCTION, USES AND THEORY OF MYTH

(6). EITHER:

(a) Discuss the breadth of the role that myth would have played in the lives of ordinary citizens of fifth-century Greek states. Are there clear reasons why that role should have narrowed in subsequent centuries?

OR:

(b) Taking any myth or recognisable group of myths of your choosing, show how it can result in radically different interpretations from scholars trained in different disciplines (e.g. comparative religion, anthropology, psychology, ancient history).

Suggested Reading
L. Edmunds, Approaches to Greek Myth (Baltimore, 1990)
S. L. Harris and G. Platzner, Classical Mythology (London, 1995) Ch. 2
G. S. Kirk, Myth: its meaning and functions in ancient and other cultures (Cambridge, 1970)
The Nature of Greek Myths (Harmondsworth, 1970)
Veyne, P. Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths (Chicago, 1988)