GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHS OF HEROES

Classics 3307
University of Houston, Fall 2006

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Required Reading:

"Heroes and the Homeric Iliad," by G. Nagy; Homer, Iliad; Proclus’ summaries of the Epic Cycle; selections from Sappho; Sophocles, Ajax; Aeschylus, the Oresteia trilogy (Agamemnon, Libation-Bearers, Eumenides); Euripides, Iphigeneia at Aulis and Hecuba

These readings may be found in the Sourcebook, an approximately 500 page MS Word file which you can download from the course WebCT site (FOR FREE) or purchase from the UH Copy Center (approximately $50) beginning the first week of classes. Some of the individual works are also accessible on the web as HTML pages; these are linked from the on-line syllabus.

The readings in the sourcebook are older copyright free translations of the ancient works discussed in this class. Recent translations of these poems may, however, be more appealing to newcomers to classical literature. I have ordered some more modern translations with helpful introductions which you may purchase from the UH bookstore. These are not required if you choose to read the sourcebook instead. In general, you may substitute other translations for anything contained in the sourcebook. Note, however, that quotations in lectures and test passages will come from the sourcebook translations.


Virgil, Aeneid Book 2; Ovid, Heroides 3; Catullus 64 These readings are on-line and linked from the on-line syllabus.
Components of Course Grade:

**Discussion Boards** (10 postings required) 15%. You may contribute an original posting, or you may respond to another student’s posting. You must post at least 3 times per unit - and ten times total. In order to count, postings must be completed at least 72 hours before each test.

**Exams** (3) The three exams consist entirely of essays and passages for analysis. Exam 1 (15%) will not be timed, but will be posted on-line and is due by 9/24. This exam will be returned to you with a detailed critique. Exams 2 and 3 (35% each) will take place on-line on scheduled Saturdays from 9-11am:

Second exam 10/21; Third exam 12/2

An alternative test time of Monday at either 7am or 9am may be arranged. No other alternative exam arrangements will be offered.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you will be able to read and interpret works of classical Greek and Roman literature. You will be able to analyze imagery and metaphors and show how they fit into overarching themes within the work. You will be able to write about these themes in both short and long essays and relate them to the ancient Greek concept of the hero. Most importantly, you will be able to apply these reading, writing, and analysis skills to other works of literature or film, regardless of culture or time period.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS**

Lectures 1 and 2 will introduce the *Iliad*. Beginning with the second week, you should complete the assigned reading BEFORE the first lecture of the week.

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Week 1

Reading: “Heroes and the Homeric *Iliad*” by Gregory Nagy;
Lecture 1 The Concept of the Hero in Greek Civilization

Week 2
Reading: Homer, *Iliad*, scrolls I, III, VI
Lecture 2 The Anger of Achilles
Lecture 3 Oral Poetry and Performance

Week 3

Reading: Homer, *Iliad*, scroll IX, XVI, XVIII
Lecture 4 The Shield of Achilles, Part I; The Story of Meleager
Lecture 5 The Death of Patroklos

Week 4

Reading: Reading: Homer, *Iliad*, scrolls XIX, XXII-XXIII
Lecture 6 The Shield of Achilles, Part II
Lecture 7 The Tomb of the Hero

Week 5

Reading: Homer, *Iliad*, XXIV; Proclus, summaries of the Epic Cycle; Selections from Sappho
Lecture 8 The End of the *Iliad*
Lecture 9 After the *Iliad*: Oral Poetry and Performance II; Women’s Song and Dance Traditions
* Hour Exam 1 on the *Iliad*, Epic Cycle, and Sappho *

Week 6

Reading: Sophocles, *Ajax*
Lecture 10 Introduction to Greek Tragedy and the Tragic Hero

Week 7

Reading: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*
Lecture 11 Atê and the Curse of the House of Atreus
Lecture 12 Aeschylean Metaphors and Riddles, Part I

Week 8

Reading: Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers, Eumenides*
Lecture 13 The Return of Orestes
Lecture 14 Aeschylean Metaphors and Riddles, Part II
Week 9

Reading: Aeschylus, *Eumenides*
Lecture 15 Justice Transformed
Lecture 16 A Brief Review and Overview of the *Oresteia*
* Hour Exam 2 on *Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers*, and *Eumenides* *

Week 10

Reading: Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Aulis*
Lecture 17 Sacrificial Virgins, Part I
Lecture 18 History and Tragedy

Week 11

Reading: Euripides, *Hecuba*
Lecture 19 Sacrificial Virgins, Part II

Week 12

Reading: Philostratus, *On Heroes* (first half)
Lecture 20 The Mysterious World of Heroes: Continuity and Change
Lecture 21 The Power of the Cult-Hero in Death

Week 13

Reading: Philostratus, *On Heroes* (second half);
Lecture 22 The Immortalized Achilles

Week 14

Reading: Virgil, *Aeneid* Book 2; Ovid, *Heroides* 3; Catullus 64
Lecture 23 Virgil's *Aeneid* and the Fall of Troy
Lecture 24 Epic, Lament, and Love Song

Week 15

* Hour exam 3 *

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