

**CL CV 1550-001**  
**CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY**  
**SPRING 2022**

**This course is designed as an on-line, asynchronous course for Spring 2022. There will be weekly reading assignments and lecture videos. You are strongly encouraged to stay on track with these, so that the work does not pile up.**

**Course Description:** This course is designed to introduce you to some of the major myths from the Graeco-Roman tradition and the theories that have been developed to study them. Our focus will be on the relationship between gods and humans, in particular how and why were humans created? How did people view and propitiate their gods? How and why do the gods reward and punish humans? Throughout the course we will discuss various theoretical approaches to myth and attempt to determine which of them, if any, provide a means of understanding the larger questions of mythology such as: What are myths? Why do people create them? Are myths still a force in our lives today? How do we adopt and adapt Graeco-Roman myths? This will require you to think critically, which involves the ability to analyze texts and other kinds of aesthetic objects with an eye to their multi-level complexity.

**Content Heads-Up:** **This course will include material that may be distressing to some students.** What we call classical mythology was created by ancient cultures that are in fact quite foreign to our own, despite repeated claims that our own modern, American culture is built on the foundations of ancient Greece and Rome. The Greeks and Romans had different beliefs and values systems. They enslaved people, they limited the rights and autonomy of women, they sacrificed animals; they behaved in ways that we find problematic and even contemptible. And their mythical narratives do not avoid such topics, in fact we see that they frequently address very difficult topics such as sexual assault, violence, and death. We will encounter these narratives in texts and images from the ancient world, but we will also consider how our own modern cultures are re-using and re-imagining these myths, and why this might be a positive or a problematic development.

**Learning Outcomes:** Through the successful completion of this course you should have acquired:

- a familiarity with the Greco-Roman gods and heroes, and the ability to recognize them and major narrative patterns in art and literature;
- a familiarity with primary myth sources (literature, art, and architecture) and the ability to analyze them;
- an understanding of theoretical approaches to mythology and the ability to apply them to new material;
- the ability to analyze modern interpretations and retellings of myths in relation to their ancient and modern contexts; and
- the ability to synthesize and present mythological narrative and theory effectively in your own words.

**Required texts/materials:** All lectures, handouts, and supplementary readings will be available via Canvas. We will have only one textbook that you need to purchase:

*Classical Mythology*, 11th edition by M.P.O. Morford, R.J. Lenardon, & M. Sham. Oxford University Press, 2019.

An ebook version of this text will be available through our course Canvas website via the Inclusive Access program provided by the U of U Bookstore on the first day of classes. This Inclusive Access text will be billed along with your tuition (see your Student Tuition Account for a breakdown by course). If you wish to opt out of Inclusive access and purchase a copy of the text on your own, you are welcome to do so. Please just be sure that you purchase the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the textbook. For more information about Inclusive Access textbooks please visit: <https://www.campusstore.utah.edu/utah/InclusiveAccess>.

**Questions:** Contact Professor Christensen at [alexis.christensen@utah.edu](mailto:alexis.christensen@utah.edu).

