

LEGACY OF CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY

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Course: English 475
Term: Spring 2012
Class location: HH 348
Class meets: MWF 9:00 a.m.
Class website: <http://cnweb.cn.edu/kwheeler>
C-N Online: <https://cnonline.cn.edu>

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*. Trans. Robert Fagles.
- Homer, *The Iliad*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald.
- Plato, *The Symposium*. Trans. Christopher Gill. (Penguin Classics).
- Virgil, *The Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald.
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. Trans. David Raeburn. (Penguin Classics).
- Internet Access for C-N Online: the latest version of Firefox with Javascript and Adobe Flash Player enabled in your settings. Various extra readings will be available on C-N Online as PDF files.

ALSO USEFUL (but not required):

- *Writing at Carson-Newman*, most recent edition OR Joseph Gibaldi's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th edition.
- Notebook to serve as a journal for free-writing assignments and notes.
- A collegiate dictionary for personal reference.
- Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* (find a cheap used paperback)
- J. E. Zimmerman's *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (find a cheap paperback)

GRADE DETERMINATION:	500 points total
Ten WebCT Chatroom Postings of 250+ words (5 pts. each)	50 points
Participation	50 points
Research Day Presentation	50 points
Pop Quizzes (averaged together)	50 points
Research Essay (10-12 pages)	100 points
Midterm Examination	100 points
Final Examination	100 points

TOTAL POINTS FOR TERM:

500-450 points: A
 449-400 points: B
 399-350 points: C
 349-300 points: D
 299 or fewer points: F

TANGIBLE OBJECTIVES: Students in English 475 should master the following knowledge and skills: (1) they should understand the basic historical and cultural background of literary works and authors from the Greco-Roman era, (2) they should gain the ability to recognize a wide variety of mythological allusions, (3) they should learn the etymological influence of mythology on modern

English vocabulary and a number of technical terms for discussing mythology, (3) they should become familiar with a variety of interpretative strategies for interpreting mythological literature including structuralist, comparative, anthropological, psychological, and historical approaches, (4) they should gain an understanding about how later cultures have "recycled" and modified earlier myths from century to century, (5) they should be able to write an original, well-reasoned, accurately documented argument synthesizing a Greco-Roman text with a text from later centuries (6) they should continue to perfect the skills taught in English 101 and 201.

INTANGIBLE OBJECTIVES: Myth is a participatory event. Talking about it isn't the entire point. Experiencing it is the ultimate goal. We will walk with gods and heroes in this class. We will ride the Pegasus with Bellerophon. We will dance in ecstatic frenzy with the Maenads. We will climb lofty Olympus and descend into the Stygian underworld. We will listen to the Muses, lust for Aphrodite or Adonis, weep with Orpheus and Demeter, skin the Nemean lion with Hercules, and hurl boulders alongside the Hecatoncheires. The goal is not to convert you to paganism, but rather to help you appreciate and understand radically different cultures and eras and their later influence.

ESSAYS: Students will submit a major research paper conforming to MLA format in response to specific prompts. In this paper, the student will examine how a later version of a myth modifies the concerns in the Greco-Roman original works. More information will be forthcoming. I will not accept papers that do not address assigned readings or assigned topics. I will not accept unstapled essays or ones lacking paperclips. I will throw away student work lacking identifiable names. I require papers to be submitted in Times or Times New Roman font (12-point size or smaller) with one-inch margins on all papers. Essays that do not meet the minimum page length will be docked a letter grade if they are somewhat short of the goal (say a couple of inches from fulfilling the full text)--or given a zero if they are a half-page or more short of the length. Note that a few lines of text or brief paragraphs spilling over onto the next page do not constitute a significant page of text.

PARTICIPATION AND RESEARCH DAY: I determine part of your participation grade by how frequently you speak up in class. A good rule of thumb to earn maximum points is to make one pertinent comment during each class period or ask one pertinent question. Students will also earn 50 points for a group presentation on Carson-Newman Research day, which Dr. Wheeler's English 201 students will attend. More details will be forthcoming.

DISCUSSION POSTINGS: Students will need to have access to their C-N Online accounts to access the discussion. Over the course of the term, students will post ten brief responses to the readings (250-350 words each) and an additional ten brief responses to other students' earlier responses (about 100 words each). If you rely upon spell-check, you might want to type up your posting in Microsoft Word, proofread it and word-count it, then cut and paste it into the appropriate C-N online discussion. This will also provide you with records of your work in case C-N Online explodes and erases your work.

CLASS WEBSITE: At <http://cnweb.cn.edu/kwheeler/> I will regularly post vocabulary lists and study questions as time permits. These are resources for taking examinations and writing papers. Consult the site regularly. If you lose a copy of your syllabus, the course policies, or a handout, you can download another copy from the website at any time. (Thus, you don't need to ask me to print out another copy for you; you can do that yourself.) Wise students will write down the web address in their textbooks or their organizers in case they lose this sheet containing the URL.

PDF READINGS ON C-N ONLINE: When you see material marked "CNO" in the syllabus, that material is available as PDF files under the "resources" button on C-N online, organized by week. You can download these files by clicking on them. If the PDF appears as a blank page, you might need to download the most recent version of *Adobe Acrobat Reader* to view it successfully on your computer. You should either print out copies or bring a laptop with you so you can refer to the materials in class.

CONFERENCES: All students are strongly encouraged to discuss their papers in progress before the essays are due. I am willing to schedule appointments if my normal office hours are inconvenient. In addition, students must set up an appointment for at least one mandatory conference. Skipping the conference counts as an absence. Students may use this conference to discuss a rough draft, a graded paper, a grammatical or literary question, or an upcoming examination.

OMINOUS WARNING SECTION!

RISQUÉ MATERIALS: Be warned that these readings and this subject predate Christianity. A few of our assigned readings will involve violence, sexuality, and paganism on a significant scale that can shock some Carson-Newman students simply because they are used to encountering their myths in watered-down versions such as those created by Edith Hamilton, Walt Disney, Victorian summaries, and pop culture. Ancient Greek and Roman attitudes toward sexuality, violence, and religion differ radically from those of the post-Puritan world. If this will be problematic for you, this class may not be the right one for you at this point in your intellectual and spiritual maturation. We will encounter the original authors in translation rather than relying on bowdlerized retellings.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is required. It is impossible for absent students to earn participation points. A written warning may be sent to students in **Monday/Wednesday/Friday** courses who miss six classes. Students who miss more than twelve classes automatically fail the course. Students may make up assignments and participation credit when they are absent for documented illnesses, family emergencies, and certain college-sponsored events. To retain participation credit, students who miss class are required to submit an extra discussion posting—in this case, a one-to-two page typed essay summarizing and explaining the material covered that day in class and providing original commentary upon it. (Consult with other students who *did* attend to get notes from class discussion or lecture.) This essay should be submitted within one week of the absence. If the student misses multiple days of class, one such essay is required for each assigned reading during the period of missed class. **I will not record grades for other assignments or allow students to take examinations until this material is submitted.** These make-up essays will serve as part of the participation points.

Two important notes: (1) missing a mandatory conference is an absence; (2) if you are not present when I take roll, you will be counted absent. Be virtuous and attend classes on time! Students who have perfect attendance will receive a bonus point added to the final percentage of their grades, which could be the difference between a B+ and an A-, or a pass/fail grade if the students' work is borderline in quality.

POP QUIZZES: I will give irregularly spaced pop quizzes every week or two. Usually, these questions will involve identifying characters, answering basic questions about the work's plot, or explaining vocabulary terms listed for the week.

YOU LOST A HANDOUT?: I expect you to track down missing materials on your own time rather than asking me to print out a second or third copy. Copies of assignments will be available under the "syllabus" link of the class website and on C-N Online for you to download, as will most other handouts in class. If you temporarily have no computer access, you should contact one of your fellow students and photocopy any handouts or directions you are missing.

LATE PAPERS: Unless otherwise stated, homework is due at the beginning of class on the listed days. If you know you will miss a class in advance, arrange to submit the assignment early or have a classmate submit it for you. In the case of an emergency, I will accept temporarily an electronic copy of your paper as an e-mail attachment provided that it arrives *before* the scheduled due date, but I will want a hardcopy printout of the material *before* the next class meeting. If students do not turn in the essays during class, they must give them directly to me **before the due date** in my office (Henderson 309) or submit them in my drop-box in the main English office (Henderson 311). Early papers will be blessed. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC HONESTY: All work submitted in this class must be your own work, generated exclusively for this class. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) should be properly documented. Please consult *Writing at Carson-Newman* and pages 52-61 of *The MLA Handbook*, 7th edition, for information regarding plagiarism. In cases where plagiarism or academic dishonesty has been clearly established, the award of an F for the project is the standard policy with the possibility of failure in the course or additional disciplinary action such as expulsion from Carson-Newman. Please see me if you have any questions about using sources.

CELL PHONES: Only the teacher is allowed to answer cell phones in this class. If your cell phone goes off during class time, hand the phone over to me so I can take the call. If the message is an actual emergency, I will allow you to take the phone call outside the class. Otherwise, I will discuss with the caller the etiquette of bringing cell phones to a public area. Assume I do not want to see a single cell-phone out during class. If you normally carry a cell-phone with you for roadside emergencies, leave it locked in the dashboard of your car while on campus.

SOME USEFUL ACADEMIC SERVICES:

COMPUTER LABS: There are several computer labs on campus. They include the Dougherty Science Building (Rooms 121, 122, and 126), the Henderson Humanities Building (Room 353), the Stokely Memorial Building (Room 12), a Macintosh lab in the Warren Art Building, and the Stephens-Burnett Library Computer Lab. Become familiar with them and their locations. If the computer eats your homework, or if you have trouble getting your e-mail to work, these are good places to begin the quest for a cure.

WRITING HELP: The Academic Support Center contains other resources in addition to the standard dungeons including the free assistance with (or comments on) your writing. You can arrange for tutoring by calling extension 3590 or showing up for peer tutoring sessions at the Baker Building (typically Monday through Thursday, 12:00-3:00 p.m.) or the Henderson Humanities Building (check with English Department secretary for current scheduling/availability). Though the writing tutors do not proofread papers, they can provide help with a specific problem area if you ask them.

DISABILITY SERVICES: Carson-Newman makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To request accommodation, contact David Humphrey in Academic Support Services (x-3268, dhumphrey@cn.edu).

SURVIVAL TIPS FOR THE WISE AND THE VIRTUOUS

(1) In the paraphrased words of Ben Franklin, "We must hang together, or assuredly we will hang separately." Fellow classmates are a student's greatest resource. Trade phone numbers with at least three other students in the class each week. If you miss a class, make arrangements with one of them to get copies of assignments or handouts you may have missed. If you know you will miss a class, have them turn in assignments for you, or else finish the work early so you can submit it to me during the previous class.

(2) Make backup copies of everything and do it frequently. I do not want to hear that the computer ate your essay. Assume that one of your regular assignments is to duplicate your essay on a separate computer disk or make a Xerox copy of the paper before you submit it to me.

(3) Don't assume your printer will function normally in the thirty minutes before a final paper is due. Assume that you should have a version printed out and ready to submit to the teacher twenty-four hours before the due-date arrives—even if that's only a rough draft.

(4) Check your Carson-Newman e-mail account regularly—at least every other day—even if you normally use a yahoo, gmail, or other non-college e-mail address. Note that messages your teachers post to the class on C-N Online will be automatically forwarded to your designated e-mail address and/or cell phone text messages—but if you try to reply directly to that message, your response might not go through unless you log onto an actual campus e-mail account.

(5) Set up appointments with me *early* in the term to discuss your papers. If you do not understand one of my comments, come see me. While there is little time to deal with each essay's content or grammar in the classroom itself, I am more than happy to discuss these in my office. Besides the one mandatory conference early in the term, it is also a good idea to stop by for suggestions on the other papers as well.

(6) Bring a pen, paper, and the day's assigned readings with you to class. We won't use these materials every day, but times may come when I refer you to a specific passage or ask you to write something in class. In particular, be sure to have printouts of materials from C-N Online marked "print me" in their titles.

(7) Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the class website at <http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/>. I will occasionally assign a reading from this website, and most of the handouts I pass out in class will also be available here—in case you lose a copy or C-N Online crashes.

(8) Grammar counts. Spelling counts. So do mechanical details like format, professional appearance, and solid thinking in your writing. If you have questions about such details, ask me.

(9) "Dew knot trussed yore spell-chequere, ass u ken sea hear." Instead, arrange to proofread each other's papers before submitting them to the cruel, cruel hands of your teacher.

(10) Many students think they "know" material if they have read through it and if they recognize a name, word, or concept they have read about. Alas, they sometimes learn to their chagrin that they do not have the material nailed down when examinations roll around. To test whether you have really done a thorough job of reading the assigned materials, here's a good trick. See if you can write a one- to two-sentence summary of what happened in the poem, play, or story on each page as you read. After finishing a work, see if you can list the major characters, ideas, and themes. In the case of characters, describe who they are, what their relation is to each other, and why they are important. Identify recurrent themes that appear in more than one poem, story, or play. At the end of each week, see if you can write out a definition for each vocabulary term we

discussed and apply it to the readings for that week. If you can't do these tasks, you do not yet know the material sufficiently well to perform adequately on an examination.

(11) Falling behind on the readings is deadly. Don't do it.

(12) Don't cram the night before an examination. Instead, spend an hour each day studying. Take your notes from class discussion and re-write them in an organized manner the evening or afternoon immediately after a class—it will help the material stick in your mind. Review your notes each class period just before the class begins to help keep it fresh in your mind, or review your marginal notes on the day's assigned readings to prepare you for any upcoming pop quizzes.

(13) Summaries and filmed versions of literary narratives are never adequate substitutes for complete and careful reading of the plays, poems, and stories. Edith Hamilton, Cliff's Notes, and similar tools may be a helpful way to review and preview material, but they are only a supplement (not a replacement) for the original material.

(14) Don't rely on random websites from Google for your research. Webpages are not peer-reviewed for accuracy and are often written by amateurs rather than serious scholars. They are not acceptable in college papers. Likewise, do not use Sparknotes.com, Wikipedia, or other non-peer reviewed sources. Instead, make use of scholarly databases online. Various scholarly databases--such as InfoTrack, JSTOR, and whatnot--are just as easy to use as a webpage, nearly as fast, and much, much better in quality. If you did not master these databases in English 101, speak with me or with librarians such as Ms. Jones or Ms. Williams for additional help.

(15) Internet access for C-N Online (a source of several readings and assignments) works best with the Firefox browser if you have Javascript enabled and Adobe Flash Player available. Other browsers may present difficulties. Don't assume that internet access (or electrical power) will be available shortly before class. Plan ahead, and download/print copies of upcoming materials well in advance of their due date I do not want to hear that you were unable to access the assignments when you waited until the last minute to try and download them.

(16) Good students take notes each day. Good students even write notes in the margins of their textbooks. Good students highlight significant passages and write down questions and comments beside these passages as they read. Good students also make lists of the characters, authors, and texts, and they can identify them in class discussion or on tests. Good students learn how to spell the names of authors, characters, and literary titles correctly in advance of essay examinations. Good students ask questions when they are confused, but they also try to figure out the answers on their own first.

(17) As you do research, note that Greek and Latin transliterations into English can vary. *Achilles* may be *Akhileus*; *Hercules* may be *Heraklos* or *Heracles*; *Virgil* may be *Vergil* or *Vergilius*; *Uranus* may be *Ouranos*. Especially common are shifts from the *-os* Greek suffix to the *-us* Latin ending. This can make using databases tricky if the computer is finicky about spelling.

(18) Note that a syllabus is "a tentative schedule of potential material to be covered over the course of the term," not a legal contract or holy law carved in stone tablets by the finger of God. The syllabus may, can and should change according to the instructor's discretion. Keep track of such changes if they occur.

(19) In the case of a campus-wide emergency alert such as a tornado, fire, flashflood, or shooting, follow the professor's instructions. If it is necessary to evacuate, we will move the class as a group with a "buddy" system to maintain a headcount and evacuate to a pre-specified location of the teacher's choice at least 500 feet from the Henderson Building and remain in a group in order to help rescue personnel account for evacuated staff and students.