Greek Mythology: An Introduction
Continuing Studies, Winter Quarter 2016
Barbara Clayton

Course Goals:

• To learn about the important myths of the ancient Greeks through the reading of primary texts (i.e., texts composed by the ancient Greeks themselves)

• To explore the way in which Greek myths offer a window into the complexities of ancient Greek culture, especially with regard to ritual and cult practice

• To experience the role played by Greek mythology in the Western intellectual tradition

Schedule of Weekly Topics:

Week 1: Introduction to myth; overview of approaches to myth

Week 2: Creation of the cosmos: the first gods and humans

Week 3: Goddess of the Grain: Demeter and her cults

Week 4: Two Olympian brothers: Hermes and Apollo

Week 5: Opposing spheres of influence: Aphrodite and Artemis

Week 6: Madness and music: Dionysus and Orpheus

Week 7: Athena: a goddess and her city

Week 8: Three heroes: Perseus, Theseus and Heracles

Week 9: The Hero’s Wife: Medea

Week 10: Philosophy and Myth: from the Sublime to the Ridiculous

Grading:

No Grade Requested: This is the default option.

Credit/ No Credit (CR/NC): You must provide evidence that you have attended class (to the best of your ability) and read the assigned material. My suggestion is that you submit a brief reader’s response a/o question or two on a weekly basis, either via email or handed to me in class. Choose a passage that resonates with you—one that you find particularly beautiful, or intriguing, or perplexing—and tell me why. All students are encouraged to do this, whether or not you are taking the course for credit.

Letter Grade: A 5-6 page paper on a topic of your choosing.