

**Course Code:** CLA 53 W

**Title:** Greek Mythology: Gods and Heroes in Texts and Contexts

**Spring 2016**

**Instructor:** Dr. Donna Zuckerberg

### **Course Structure:**

In this course, we will study the unruly mass of stories that make up the corpus of Greek mythology and analyze what these tales can tell us about the cultural and historical contexts in which they were created and flourished. This seven-week course is not intended as a comprehensive exploration of all of Greek myth; instead, we will focus on understanding how mythology works in social, political, literary, and religious settings to help people understand the world around them.

The course will have three major components: filmed lectures, an online discussion board, and weekly videoconferences.

- The lectures will be brief overviews of the major themes and concerns of each week's readings. The lectures are not live, so they can be viewed at any time. They are intended to be viewed after the student completes the readings.
- The online discussion board is the primary mode of participation in the course. Those taking the course for credit are required to make substantial contributions to the discussion board, but students can and should also post thoughts, questions, and ideas in a less structured manner throughout the course.
- Videoconferences will be held each week on the Zoom platform. These chats will be recorded, so if you are unable to participate because of scheduling conflicts or time differences you will be able to view them later.

*Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

### **Grade Options and Requirements:**

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required and no credit will be received.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - To receive credit for this course, for at least five of the seven weeks you must post a response on the online discussion board. Questions will be provided every week as prompts for these responses, but you may also choose to post a response about anything you found interesting from that week's readings or lecture.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions  
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- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - Students taking the course for a letter grade must fulfill the requirements for credit described above; these five online discussion board posts will count for 60% of the final grade. Additionally, students will write two 2-3 page papers, one due on the fourth week of class and one due on the seventh week. These papers will each count for 20% of the final grade.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

## Tentative Weekly Outline:

### Week 1: “But how did it all begin?”: Writing and Re-Writing Myth

- Approaches to the study of Greek myth
- The uses of myth: literature, religion, politics

### Week 2: Myths of Creation and Foundation

- The creation of the cosmos
- Polis foundation myths
- Readings: Hesiod, *Theogony*; selections from Apollodorus and Xenophanes

### Week 3: The Olympian Gods

- Greek religion and mystery cults
- Readings: Homeric Hymns; Euripides’s *Bacchae*

### Week 4: The Age of Heroes

- The monster slayers: Heracles, Theseus, Perseus, and Oedipus
- Readings: Apollodorus (selections); Sophocles, *Women of Trachis*

### Week 5: The Trojan War

- Fate, free will, and human responsibility
- Readings: Homer, *Iliad* (selections)

### Week 6: Odysseus and the Odysseys

- The *nostoi*: the struggle to return home from the war
- Greeks vs. “the other”
- Readings: Homer, *Odyssey* (selections); selections from later adaptations of the Odysseus story

### Week 7: Greek Myth after the Greeks

- The long afterlife of Greek mythology
- Relevance of myth today