

College year in Athens

Ancient Greek Myth and Religion

Spring 2018

Professor: Anne Stewart

But whence each of the gods came into being, or whether they had all existed for ever, and what outward forms they had, the Greeks did not know until a very little while ago. For I suppose that the time of Hesiod and Homer was not more than four hundred years before my own time. These two poets taught the descent of the gods to the Greeks, and gave them their several names and epithets, honours, and arts, and declared their outward forms.

Herodotos* II.53. 1-2 (5th c. B.C.)

Aim:

This course is an introduction to the religion and myths of the ancient Greeks, largely based upon the written words of the ancient Greeks themselves. We shall begin by reading selections from the earliest extant Greek literature: Homer, Hesiod, and the Homeric Hymns. From these readings we shall attempt to understand the Greek cosmogony and the place of gods and humans within it. We shall then expand our understanding of the complex relationship between gods and humans through the working out of myths (again, gods and humans) within the frame of Attic tragic drama. Lectures, and selected readings from Burkert and Easterling, while placing Greek religion and ritual solidly within the ancient Greek *polis*, will address Greek religion as an integral part of a wider realm of ancient religious phenomena.

Required Texts:

Burkert, Walter, *Greek Religion* 1985.

Easterling, P.E. and J.V. Muir, *Greek Religion and Society* 1985.

The following required readings will be found on Moodle:

Hesiod: *The Theogony* and *The Works and Days*

The Homeric Hymns

Charitinidou, "Epidauros: The Sanctuary of Asklepios"

We will read the following Attic Tragedies both for the mythic content and religious elements contained within:

Aischylos:

----- *The Oresteia* (House of Atreus)

----- *Prometheus Bound*

Sophokles:

----- *Antigone* (House of Labdakos)

----- *Oidipous Tyrannos*

Euripides:

----- *Bacchai*

----- *Iphigeneia in Aulis*

----- *Iphigeneia in Tauris*

----- *Hippolytos*

The Univ. Chicago editions of these tragedies are available in the library.

You will also be assigned short readings from:
Homer *The Iliad* (R. Merrill translation highly recommended)
---- *The Odyssey*

Greek Tragedies recommended as background and/or variations to the dramatized myths that we will be reading:

The House of Labdakos (grandfather of Oidipous)

Aischylos:

Seven Against Thebes

Sophokles:

Oidipous at Kolonos

Euripides:

The Phoenician Women

The Trojan War/House of Atreus

Sophokles:

Elektra

Euripides:

Helen

Orestes

Elektra

Hekuba

Andromache

The Trojan Women

Other books you may wish to consult:

Apollodoros, *The Library of Greek Mythology* (Oxford 1997, translated by Robin Hard)

Burkert, Walter, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (U. California 1979)

Calasso, Roberto, *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* (Vintage, 1993)

Caldwell, Richard, *The Origin of the Gods: A Psychoanalytic Study of Greek Theogonic Myth* (Oxford, 1989)

Connelly, Joan Breton, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Princeton, 2007)

Graf, Fritz, *Greek Mythology: An Introduction* (Johns Hopkins, 1987, translated by Thomas Marier)

Graves, Robert, *The Greek Myths* (Penguin, 1955)

Kirk, G.S. *The Nature of Greek Myths* (Penguin 1974)

Lee, M. Owen, *Athena Sings: Wagner and the Greeks* (U. Toronto, 2003)

Lefkowitz, M.R. *Greek Gods, Human Lives* (New Haven, 2003)

Mikalson, Jon D. *Ancient Greek Religion* (Blackwell, 2005)

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Parisinou, Eva, *The Light of the Gods: The Rôle of Light in Archaic and Classical Greek Cult* (Duckworth, 2000)

Parke, H.W., *Festivals of the Athenians* (Thames and Hudson, 1977)

Price, Simon, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge UP, 1999)

Vernant, Jean-Pierre and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (Zone Books 1990, trans. by Janet Lloyd)

Zaidman, Louise Bruit and Pauline Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge, 1989, translated by Paul Cartledge)

And for short articles on various topics:

The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford 1996). You will find it in the reserve section of the library.

You will also find books related to the course on my reserve shelf, and numerous articles on *JSTOR*.

Requirements:

Attendance at all scheduled meetings is required. In the event of an absence, you are responsible for all material covered during the class. Please note – travel is not an excuse for missing classes – the administration gives ample time off from classes during the semester for personal travel.

Reading assignments are to be completed before each class session.

Examinations:

There will be two examinations, a midterm and a final. They will consist of long and short ID questions and an essay. They will deal with the identification of characters, situations, symbols, ritual practices, festivals and the like. They are designed to examine your comprehension of the lectures and readings.

Paper:

There will be one paper on a topic of your choice. There is a list of possible topics on Moodle from which to choose. If you wish to write on another topic relevant to, but not discussed in, class, please discuss it with me first. The paper should be between 6-8 pages, space and one-half

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is literary theft. As such, it is a serious offence which will not be tolerated either at your home institution or at CYA. Plagiarism on an examination or in a paper will result in an F for the course and the notification of the Dean and the Department Chair at your home institution.

You must cite the author of any idea that you use that is neither common knowledge nor your own idea. If you are in doubt, it is safest to cite the source.

Note regarding Wikipedia:

Caveat: This site ought **NOT** to be used for this course – or, if used, it should be used **ONLY** with utmost caution!!

This site is essentially un-moderated, and hence un-usable as a valid reference tool. While it does contain some well-written and scholarly contributions, and has improved greatly in the last few years, as long as it remains un-moderated, any amateur can - and often does - post articles to it. This applies especially to the field of religion.

Grading

Grading will be based upon attendance, participation, a paper, and two examinations (midterm and final).

Scale:

Paper	30%
Midterm	20%
Final Examination	40%
Participation & Attendance	10%

Office hours: immediately before or after class, or at any other time, by appointment. I can always be contacted by e-mail at: morgannelear@gmail.com

Telephone: land line: 210-72-42-460.
(evenings only, until midnight; no mornings, please!)

Caveat: Turn your mobile phone OFF (*i.e.*, NOT on ‘Vibrator’) before entering the classroom building, and please store it in your purse, book-bag, or backpack – not in your pocket or on your lap.

*Note that I generally use Greek rather than Latin spellings of Greek names and terms. More will be said about this in the first class meeting.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

JANUARY

30 Tues. Introduction to the Course; The Olympian Deities; On the fluidity of Greek Religion and Myth

FEBRUARY

01 Thurs. The Olympian Deities II; on the fluidity of Greek religion and myth; some general principles

06 Tues. The Cultural Context of Greek Myths and Religion; The Greeks and their Gods; the importance of Homer
Homer *Iliad* Books 1 and 2 to line 579
Burkert 119-125 “The Spell of Homer”

08 Thurs. The Realm of the Sacred: Greek sanctuaries as places of worship; Miasma
Burkert 84-92
Coldstream “Greek Temples: Why and Where?” in Easterling 67-98

13 Tues On Greek Religion and Myth: a polytheistic “belief system”
Burkert 216-219
John Gould “ On Making Sense of Greek Religion” in Easterling: 1-33

15 Thurs Prometheus, the Institution of Sacrifice, and the Creation of Woman

Aeschylos *Prometheus Bound*
Hesiod *Theogony* lines 535-615
-----*Works and Days*, lines 01-212
Recommended: Burkert 54-59

- 20 Tues. The Genesis of the Cosmos
 Hesiod *Theogony*
Recommended: *Genesis*, chpts. 1-4, 6-9
- 22 Thurs. The Supremacy of Zeus; his cults
 Aischylos *Agamemnon* lines 160-82 (“The Hymn to Zeus”)
 Hesiod *Works and Days*, lines 106-285
 Burkert 125-31
- 26 Monday Hera (Sister and Wife of Zeus) and her cults (Samos and Plataia)
 Burkert 131-35
 Homer, *Iliad* Book 14 lines 135-353; Book 15 lines 1-34 (*Hieros gamos*)

MARCH

- 27 Feb-03 Mar Field trip to the Peloponnesos
 Epidaurus: Burkert 214-15 (Asklepios)
 Charitonidou “Epidaurus: The Sanctuary of Asklepios” (Moodle)
- 06 Tues Festivals of Demeter: The Skira and Thesmophoria
 Homeric Hymn to Demeter
 Burkert 159-161; 285-290)
- 08 Thurs Video; The Making of the Oresteia; The use of masks in religious ritual
- 13 Tues. Midterm Examination: Bring pens and/or pencils. Paper will be provided.
- 15 Thurs. Receiving a New God: Dionysos, a “new” god, and his mysteries
 Euripides *The Bacchai*
 Burkert 223-5
- 20 Tues. Dionysos, his followers and his cults: The Ikaria and Anthesteria
 Homeric Hymn to Dionysos
 Burkert 161-167
- 22 Thurs. Apollo
 Burkert 114-118 (Oracles); 143-149 (Apollo)
 Homeric Hymn to Apollo
- 27 Tues. Apollo and Dionysos at Delphi; Hermes

 Hermes
 Homeric Hymn to Hermes
 Burkert 156-159 (Hermes)

29 Thurs Aphrodite (and Artemis)
Assignment:
 Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite
 Burkert 152-56

Artemis and Aphrodite
 Euripides *The Hippolytos*

APRIL

02-09 Spring Recess and Orthodox Easter

10 Tues. Rites of Transition, general; Artemis Brauronia and Female Rites
Assignment:
 Burkert 143-52; 260-64
 Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*

12 Thurs. Artemis Orth[e]gia and Spartan Initiation Rituals
 See Burkert above.

17-21 Field trip to Northern Greece

24 Tues. Antigone: A crisis of Religious Law: *Nomos versus Physis*
Assignment:
 Sophokles *Antigone*

26 Thurs. Video – wait and see!

MAY

01 Tues. 1st of May – National Holiday

03 Thurs. Oaths and Curses
Assignment:
 Burkert 250-54

08 Tues. Legends of Thebes: Fate, Curses and the house of Labdakos
Assignment:
 Sophokles *Oidipous Tyrannos* (*aka Oedipous Rex, Oidipous the King*)

10 Thurs Agamemnon and the Curse of the House of Atreus
Assignment:
 Aischylos *Agamemnon*

TBA Final Examination