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.

Herodotus* 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:

The following required readings will be found on Moodle:
- Hesiod: *The Theogony* and *The Works and Days*
- The Homeric Hymns
- Charitinidou, “Epidaurus: 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)

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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:


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


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

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*


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


And for short articles on various topics:  

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 be 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

(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

15 Thurs Prometheus, the Institution of Sacrifice, and the Creation of Woman
Aeschylus *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*)

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**MARCH**

27 Feb-03 Mar Field trip to the Peloponnesos
Epidauros: Burkert 214-15 (Asklepios)
Charitonidou “Epidauros: 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)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>29 Thurs</td>
<td>Aphrodite (and Artemis)</td>
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<td>Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite</td>
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<td>Burkert 152-56</td>
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<td>Artemis and Aphrodite</td>
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<td>Euripides <em>The Hippolytos</em></td>
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<td><strong>APRIL</strong></td>
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<td>02-09</td>
<td>Spring Recess and Orthodox Easter</td>
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<td>10 Tues.</td>
<td>Rites of Transition, general; Artemis Brauronia and Female Rites</td>
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<td>Burkert 143-52; 260-64</td>
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<td>Euripides, <em>Iphigeneia in Tauris</em></td>
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<td>12 Thurs.</td>
<td>Artemis Orth[e]ia and Spartan Initiation Rituals</td>
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<td>See Burkert above.</td>
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<td>17-21</td>
<td>Field trip to Northern Greece</td>
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<td>Sophokles <em>Antigone</em></td>
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<td>26 Thurs.</td>
<td>Video – wait and see!</td>
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<td><strong>MAY</strong></td>
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<td>01 Tues.</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; of May – National Holiday</td>
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<td>03 Thurs.</td>
<td>Oaths and Curses</td>
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<td>Burkert 250-54</td>
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<td>08 Tues.</td>
<td>Legends of Thebes: Fate, Curses and the house of Labdakos</td>
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<td>Sophokles <em>Oidipous Tyrannos</em> (aka <em>Oedipus Rex, Oidipous the King</em>)</td>
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<td>10 Thurs</td>
<td>Agamemnon and the Curse of the House of Atreus</td>
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<td>Aischylos <em>Agamemnon</em></td>
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<td>TBA</td>
<td>Final Examination</td>
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