

Module title: Epic Remakes: Ancient Hero(in)es and Modern Society

Module code: COM6212

Credit value: 15

Level: 6

Pre-requisite modules:

Content Description

1. This module will investigate how some key Greek and Roman mythical figures have been adapted, from antiquity to today, to suit new contexts. How have these ancient Western characters been re-purposed to contemporary social debates? Drawing on artistic media, films, operas, children's magazines and even computer games, in addition to literary translations and adaptations, we will focus on characters, mortal and divine, from the Trojan War myths. These may include: Cassandra, Circe, Dido, Penelope, Helen, Briseis; Achilles, Ulysses, Patroclus, Aeneas, Thersites. Analysis will focus on issues of identity and representation, including from intersectional and postcolonial perspectives, and with the intention of raising awareness of how divergences between source and adaptation can perpetuate, or challenge, implicit bias and ideological assumptions.
2. All texts will be studied in English. However, there will be some linguistic support (no prior knowledge assumed) to enable students to engage with some of the choices regarding vocabulary, syntax, and poetic metre, so that translators' choices can be assessed with an eye to the original Latin and ancient Greek.

Module Aims

1. Introduce students to some of the key challenges in reworking Greco-Roman mythology and literature, especially in terms of their political and social implications.
2. Make students aware of the significance of specific strategies and linguistic choices adopted in re-tellings, translation, adaptations and cultural transfer.
3. Explore the relationship between textual re-tellings of Greco-Roman mythology and other areas of cultural production, in antiquity and today (eg. sculpture; opera; comic theatre; film; gaming).

Learning Outcomes

Academic Content:

- A1 Key aspects of adaptation of classical Greco-Roman antiquity and scholarly theories surrounding these 'afterlives' (classical reception).
- A2 The relationship between classical Greco-Roman antiquity and successive adaptations.
- A3 The broader cultural impact of classical Greco-Roman antiquity within and beyond Europe.

Disciplinary Skills – able to:

- B1 Understand selected adaptations of classical myth in relation to their cultural and historical contents.
- B2 Be able to understand and analyse texts from antiquity through to modernity in relation to how they have been translated into English.
- B3 Write clear and well-informed essays on classical reception and the modern significance of ancient myth.

Attributes:

C1 Gain a broader perspective on significance of translator's choices.

C2 Capacity to analyse cultural significance of mythology.

C3 Awareness and capacity to recognise and challenge implicit bias, cultural conditioning, and ideologies as evidenced in the comparison of source texts and translations across geographical and temporal divides.

Activity Hours

Activity Type	Time spent (hours)
Lecture	11
Seminar	11
Guided independent study	128
Total	150

Indicative Reading List

- Kathryn Boshier, Fiona Macintosh, Justine McConnell, and Patricia Rankine (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the Americas* (OUP, 2013)
- Rachel Bryant Davies, *Victorian Epic Burlesque: A critical anthology of 19thC theatrical entertainments after Homer* (Bloomsbury, 2018)
- Anne Carson (trans.), *If not, Winter: fragments of Sappho* (The Folio Society, 2019)
- Vincent Carretta (ed.), *The writings of Phyllis Wheatley* (OUP, 2019)
- Fiona Cox and Elena Theodorakopoulos, *Homer's Daughters: Women's Responses to Homer in the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (OUP, 2019)
- KW Gransden (ed.), *Virgil in English* (Penguin, 1996)
- Marguerite Johnson (ed.) *Antipodean antiquities: classical reception down under* (Bloomsbury, 2019)
- Fiona Macintosh, Justine McConnell, Stephen Harrison and Claire Kenward (eds), *Epic Performances from the Middle Ages into the Twenty-First Century* (OUP, 2018)
- Justine McConnell and Edith Hall (eds), *Ancient Greek Myth in World Fiction since 1989* (Bloomsbury, 2016)
- Alice Oswald, *Memorial: an excavation of the Iliad* (Faber, 2011)
- George Steiner (ed.), *Homer in English* (Penguin, 1996)
- James Tatum, *The Mourner's Song: War and Remembrance from the Iliad to Vietnam* (University of Chicago Press, 2004) Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (Faber, 1990)
- Emily Wilson (trans.), *The Odyssey* (WW Norton & Co., 2018)
- Christa Wolf (trans. Jan van Heurck), *Cassandra* (Daunt, 2013)