

## ANT2800 “Classical Mythology”, Spring Semester 2019 FINAL EVALUATION (*periodisk evalueringsrapport*)

### Type of course and target audience

This course was freshly designed and taught for the first time in Spring 2018. In spring 2019 I taught it for the first time and completely redesigned its syllabus, structure, and teaching method (but the goals of the course remained the same). The course was open to students from all disciplines and faculties (incl. *enkeltemnestuder*). It is also on the list of elective courses in the one-year study programme *Antikkens Kultur*.

### Goals of the course

ANT2800 offers an introduction to the mythology of the Graeco-Roman world through an examination of its divinities and heroes as they are presented in the numerous textual and iconographic sources of Greek and Roman culture. The course looks at the role of mythology in the cultural and religious milieu of antiquity, the relationship between humanity and the supernatural/divine, the moral questions posed by these stories, and the reception of classical mythology in post-ancient media (literature, art, film, etc.). It also looks into the historical development of the study of mythology and gives an overview of the most influential theories of myth.

### Syllabus

The following two books constituted the main syllabus:

- Jenny March, *The Penguin Book of Classical Myths*, London 2009.
- Fritz Graf, *Greek Mythology: An Introduction*, Baltimore 1996.

This principal reading was supplemented by several pieces of primary and secondary reading (e.g. excerpts from texts such as the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, Livy's *Ab urbe condita*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; and some research articles and chapters from introductory volumes such as *A Companion to Greek Mythology*, ed. by Ken Dowden and Niall Livingstone, Malden 2011).

For all lessons, a PPP was produced, and all lectures (but not the seminars) were podcasted (audio recording). All lecture material was made available on Canvas and was relevant to the examination (except for some extra further reading that was explicitly marked as optional).

### Structure and content of the course

- Lesson 1 (lecture) Organisation · Sources and nature of ancient myth
- Lesson 2 (lecture) The Greek and Roman gods
- Lesson 3 (lecture) Cosmogonies and theogonies
- Lesson 4 (lecture) Herakles/Hercules
- Lesson 5 (seminar) Quiz · Indo-European Mythology · Essay Writing
- Lesson 6 (lecture) The Theban saga
- Lesson 7 (lecture) The Trojan saga
- Lesson 8 (seminar) Quiz · The character of Helen
- Lesson 9 (lecture) Odysseus/Ulysses
- Lesson 10 (lecture) Roman foundation myths
- Lesson 11 (lecture) Guest lecture Jens Braarvig: Epic of Gilgamesh and Enûma Eliš
- Lesson 12 (lecture) Dangerous women · Metamorphoses

- Lesson 13 (lecture) Theories of myth
- Lesson 14 (seminar) Exam preparation quiz

### **Teaching format**

The major part of the course was taught in lecture format; all lectures were podcasted (audio recording) and made available on Canvas (the PPP was normally put on Canvas in advance of the lecture). In addition to this, I taught three seminars which were used for revision (quizzes) and plenary discussion of selected aspects of classical mythology. The seminars were not podcasted. The teaching language was English (but students could write their papers and the exam in Norwegian if they preferred).

### **Compulsory activities and final examination**

The compulsory activity during the semester was divided into two parts. At the beginning of the semester, the students had to write a brief reflection (1 page) on why they had signed up for this course and what they were expecting to learn from it. The responses to this reflection were used in order to fine-tune the course programme and to set up the topics for the seminar sessions. In the middle of the semester, a short mid-term paper (2–3 pages) had to be written in which the students were to briefly review one of the lectures or seminars along with a discussion of some further aspects that they thought would have been interesting or relevant to add.

The final examination consisted of a written exam (4 hours) and was divided into three parts: a knowledge test (multiple choice, 15 questions) and two essays. (The exam as well as the *sensorveiledning* can be found online.)

### **Student numbers**

According to Canvas, approximately 235 students were enrolled in the course at the beginning. However, only 142 of them submitted the first part of the compulsory assignment (reflection, 1 page, see above). In view of the fact that this was due very early in the semester, it can be concluded that those students who did not submit their reflection did not have any serious intention to take the course at all (“ghost students”). 102 students then submitted the second part of the compulsory assignment. 81 students took, and 80 of them passed, the final examination. I note with pleasure that the number of course participants as well as the number of students who took and passed the final exam has increased considerably compared to last year.

### **Results of the course evaluation**

For the anonymous final course evaluation, I used HF’s *Student evaluation questionnaire* and modified it. The evaluation was conducted online. 31 students participated in the evaluation. The full results of the evaluation are attached to this report in an appendix.

### **Conclusion**

The overall conclusion from the course evaluation is that the majority of the students was satisfied – many of them even very satisfied – with the course quality, its outcome, the teaching methods, the learning activities, and the syllabus. I am therefore of the opinion that the course was a success both with regard to its content and its format and that it can be taught again in the same style. I recommend that the examination form (written examination, *skoleeksamen*) be kept because this is the only way sufficient learning/revision (*pugging*) can be guaranteed.

Prof. Silvio Bär  
27.06.2019

## **APPENDIX: Results of the final evaluation**

### **Teaching and course content**

*How well did the teaching cover the course content?*

very well	22
well	9
neither well nor poorly	0
poorly	0
very poorly	0

### **More teaching?**

*Are there parts of the course content that should have been allotted more teaching?*

yes	7
no	24

### **Less teaching?**

*Are there parts of the course content that should have been allotted less teaching?*

yes	2
no	29

### **Teaching language**

*How do you assess the fact that the teaching language was English (and not Norwegian)?*

very positive	15
relatively positive	8
neutral	7
relatively negative	1
very negative	0

### **Assessment (final examination)**

*If you could choose, which form of assessment would you prefer for the final examination of this course?*

written examination	14
home examination	19
oral examination	4
semester paper	13
oral presentation	1
other	1

### **Reasons for course choice**

*What were your main reasons to choose this course?*

It is required in my study programme and/or course group.	2
I was interested in the topic.	31
It was convenient for me to take the course this semester.	7
I wanted to take a course that was going to be podcasted.	3
I wanted to take a course with this professor.	3
other	1

### **Recommendation**

*Would you recommend this course to a friend/colleague?*

yes	26
maybe	5
no	0

### Course satisfaction

*How satisfied are you, all in all, with this course?*

very satisfied	22
satisfied	9
neutral	0
unsatisfied	0
very unsatisfied	0

### Quality of teaching, teaching output, and your effort

*Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about 1) the quality of the teaching, 2) the teaching output, and 3) your own effort you put into the course.*

The teaching was engaging.	I agree 27	I partly agree 4	I disagree 0
The teaching was well structured.	I agree 30	I partly agree 1	I disagree 0
The teaching was clear and comprehensible.	I agree 30	I partly agree 1	I disagree 0
It was useful that the lectures were podcasted.	I agree 26	I partly agree 5	I disagree 0
The course has taught me to analyse problems.	I agree 13	I partly agree 14	I disagree 4
The course has taught me facts, ideas and methods.	I agree 26	I partly agree 5	I disagree 0
The course has taught me practical skills.	I agree 11	I partly agree 11	I disagree 9
I get more out of the teaching when I prepare for class.	I agree 29	I partly agree 1	I disagree 1
I was generally well prepared for class in this course.	I agree 7	I partly agree 24	I disagree 0
I could have put more effort into working with this course at the beginning of the semester.	I agree 15	I partly agree 12	I disagree 4
I could have put more effort into working with this course during the whole semester.	I agree 9	I partly agree 18	I disagree 4
I spent more time working on this course than on other courses.	I agree 6	I partly agree 12	I disagree 13

### Average working hours

*In average, how many hours per week did you spend on this course, including attending classes?*

first part of the semester	0-5 h/week 15	5-10 h/week 13	10-15 h/week 3	15+ h/week 0
second part of the semester	0-5 h/week 13	5-10 h/week 16	10-15 h/week 2	15+ h/week 0

### Learning activities

*How would you evaluate the usefulness of the following learning activities in relation to how much time you spent using them? (options: dbe = demanding but exciting; dtmt = demands too much time; chbmot = could have been more of this)*

reading the main syllabus	dbe 29	dtmt 1	chbmot 1
reading the further reading assignments	dbe 16	dtmt 14	chbmot 1
writing the compulsory assignments	dbe 26	dtmt 0	chbmot 5
attending the lectures	dbe 23	dtmt 2	chbmot 6
listening to the lecture podcasts	dbe 21	dtmt 7	chbmot 3
attending the seminars	dbe 26	dtmt 3	chbmot 2
using/browsing Canvas	dbe 23	dtmt 3	chbmot 5
revision for the exam	dbe 21	dtmt 3	chbmot 7

### Course description

*How would you evaluate the information given in the course description about the following aspects?*

information about time and location of teaching	good 25	sufficient 6	poor 0
information about time & location of final examination	good 24	sufficient 7	poor 0
course content and objectives	good 29	sufficient 2	poor 0
course requirements	good 27	sufficient 4	poor 0
forms of teaching in the course	good 28	sufficient 2	poor 0
forms of assessment in the course	good 25	sufficient 6	poor 0