

# **The Fundamentals of Anglophone Culture: Greek Mythology, The Bible, and English Literature – Fall 2012**

Instructor: Gord Sellar

## **Course Overview:**

This is a brand-new course designed to provide students with some basis in the two textual traditions that have had the most profound influence on narratives in Anglophone (and Western) civilization: the Judeo-Christian Biblical tradition, and the largely earlier Greco-Roman, pagan tradition. While some fundamentals will be covered regarding the history of the reception of these traditions and their texts in the Anglophone world (and some of the basic contents of major texts will be highlighted) a greater focus will be paid to analyzing subsequent works using these narratives, and discussing their metamorphosis through time and cultural change.

## **Teaching Method**

We will use large and small group discussions, lectures, presentations, and panel discussions. Readings and other media will be provided online, or in class; in general, when films are assigned, they will be watched outside of class, rather than in the classroom, to save time for discussion.

## **Homework**

Homework will include occasional written assignments, viewings of films or TV programs, and preparation for individual presentations of midterm and final essay arguments, as well as a midterm and final essay (in lieu of midterm and final exams).

## **Textbook**

I am currently compiling a readings package; our department will notify the class when it is ready. If you would like recommendations for further reading, please feel free to ask and I will provide you with recommendations.

## **Assessment**

As you can see below, course assessment is not heavily focused on examinations.

- General Class Participation/Attitude – 20%
- Midterm Exam – 20%
- Final Exam – 20%
- Presentations (1 or 2) – 20%
- Homework – 15%
- Department Events Attendance: 5%

However, a 0% in any of the above marks will result in an incomplete grade. Students must at least attempt all areas of the course in order to receive a passing grade.

While attendance is not a graded component of this course, if you do not regularly attend, you cannot participate in class discussions, and will be at a disadvantage when it comes to other in-class activities: therefore, attendance is strongly recommended.

## **My contact information:**

Office: IH322                      Office Phone: 02-2164-4459                      Email: mistergord@gmail.com  
Class Website: classes.gordsellar.com                      Dept. Office (where my mailbox is): IH341

## Course Outline:

**Week 1:** Intro & Paperwork | Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro": Literature, Culture, and the Ancient World

**Week 2:** "Reading" Ancient Texts: An Overview and History of Textuality and How Oral Texts Work (With Notes from Occitan Song)

**Week 3:** A Tale of Two Traditions, Part 1: Homer, Plato, Sophocles, and Ovid – Readings, Viewings, & Major Archetypes, Plus A Little Theory

**Week 4:** A Tale of Two Traditions, Part 2: The Bible: History and Reception – from Constantine to Hong Xiuquan – and the Formation of the Early Church (Elaine Pagels, The Taiping Rebellion, The Wycliffites and their Uprising, and the Gutenberg Revolution)

**Week 5:** Biblical Narrative and the African-Diasporic Experience (Langston Hughes, Mahalia Jackson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Bob Marley)

**Week 6:** Apocrypha and Fanfic: Paul Park's *The Gospel of Corax* (selections), Thomas King's *One Good Story, That One*, and other "neo-apocrypha" / **Presentations**

**Week 7: Presentations**

**Week 8: MIDTERM ESSAY DUE**

**Week 9:** Hunting the Ancient World in Cyber/Space: *The Matrix* and *Aliens*

**Week 10:** Arthur Machen's "The Great God Pan"

**Week 11:** Pagan Poetics: Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

**Week 12:** Myth and Anti-Myth: H.P. Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness*

**Week 13:** Sidebar – Nordic Myths and Modernity: Odin, Wagner, Hitler, and *The Avengers*

**Week 14:** Ezra Pound's *The Cantos* (Selected Cantos) / **Presentations**

**Week 15: Presentations**

**Week 16: FINAL ESSAY DUE**