

San José State University  
Department of English and Comparative Literature  
English 125, Homer to Dante, Fall 2018

**Course and Contact Information**

**Instructor:** Dr. Linda C. Mitchell

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**Office Hours:** Monday/Wednesday, 1:30-2:30

**Class Days/Time:** Mondays/Wednesdays, 10:30-11:45

**Classroom:** Sweeney Hall 238

**Prerequisites:** Upper-division standing

**Course Description:**

This course offers an introduction to some of the major literary works of the first 2,000 years of Western Culture—works of great genius and superb craft. They are as much a part of our heritage as that which we receive from our parents. Our goal this semester is to take possession of that heritage—like heirs who have come of age—by understanding how these works are connected to each other and to us via a series of parallel and contrasting patterns of ideas and experiences that form a path of human continuity across time and place. Students will engage and explore the texts from a variety of contexts and viewpoints: textual, literary, political, social, and cultural; become familiar with a range of critical approaches to the texts; and demonstrate a working knowledge of the texts' influences within the Western literary tradition.

**Required Work Hours for the Course**

Because this is a 4-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of twelve hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. This course will have integrated into the syllabus the following 1-unit enhancement:

- Increased course content and/or collateral readings:

Read Edith Hamilton's *Greek Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*. Write a couple of sentences about each myth. Know the characters and stories of Greek myths. Daily reading assignments will go faster if you have read Hamilton's book before the course begins and know the characters and myths. Greek myths will be on the midterm and final exams.

- Higher Level Critical Thinking Exercises. These exercises will count as participation points.

Four exercises with critical thinking skills:

- Apply the stasis theory to *Antigone* and have a court trial. Handout is in the course reader. Performance credit.
- Contrast female perspective from a character in a Greek play to the same one in Ovid's *Heroides*, e.g., Medea, Dido, Penelope. Present in class for participation credit. The material will also be on the final exam.
- Be an expert on a panel and discuss a prepared question from your perspective, e.g., Socrates, Ovid, or Medea. Question example: How would you define a good marriage? Or How would you deal with a cheating husband? The panel could even be all female for these questions. Participation points. This material will also be part of the midterm and final exams.
- Do a reading from Mark Twain's *Letters to Earth* that concludes our themes of the semester, e.g., the afterlife. Participation points.

### **University's Credit Hour Requirement:**

"Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

### **Department of English and Comparative Literature Student Learning Objectives (SLOs): Students will demonstrate the ability to**

1. read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric;
2. show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature;
3. write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;
4. develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;
5. articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

### **Course Requirements:**

Daily reading responses (approximately one full page, double spaced, one-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt.), engaged class participation, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

### **Required Texts:**

- *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Vols. A, B, & C, 3rd edition
- Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, trans. Fagles. Penguin Publishers.
- Course Reader from Maple Press
- Edith Hamilton's *Greek Mythology*. Read these myths before the course begins. Make sure you have a working knowledge of Greek myths.

### **Class Policies:**

#### **Saturday Emails**

I send out an email each Saturday that reviews work for the coming week. Be sure to read the Saturday emails because you are responsible for the information.

#### **Reading:**

Assignments (including all introductory information) are to be read before the class session for which they are assigned. Close, careful reading takes time, so plan accordingly. Be prepared to discuss the readings in class.

### **Reader Responses: Guidelines and Policies. 25%**

- Twenty-one response papers are assigned.
- You can eliminate one paper grade, which might be a bye for a day when you do not get the paper written or for a day when you are on a trip. Plan carefully on how you will use this bye. For any extenuating circumstances, talk to me in advance. Do not email response paper to me or the GA without an agreement in advance.
- Response papers are due at the **beginning** of class. Place them on the table when you arrive. Plan your printing the paper in advance.
- You must attend the class for which the assigned work is turned in. You cannot simply drop it off and leave.
- Reader responses are one page. They must be typed and double-spaced. Use Times New Roman, 12 pt, and standard margins.
- State a title of your paper and the number. "Reader Response 7" is not a title.
- Reader responses must demonstrate a critical engagement with the language and/or content of the assigned texts—no summaries.
- Papers must have standard grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- No late work will be accepted unless you (1) make arrangements with me in advance, or (2) provide written verification that circumstances completely beyond your control prevented your getting the work in on time, e.g., a mandatory SJSU event, a signed and stamped doctor's slip verifying an illness, a court order, a documented hospital emergency, a natural disaster, or proof of attendance at a

funeral. I make a huge effort to be fair about due dates and extenuating circumstances.

- Please Note: “having to work” or “writing a paper for another class” is not completely beyond your control; it is a choice and is therefore not an acceptable reason for not getting assignments turned in on time.
- Pages should be stapled in the upper-left corner (no paper clips, please!). Always title your work appropriately. Always keep a copy of everything you turn in. I do not accept work via email unless there is an extenuating circumstance.

### **Midterm Exam and Final Exam 2 x 25% = 50%**

Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade.

### **Participation, 20%**

- On-time class attendance is recorded.
- Active participation in class discussion is extremely important.
- Each student must be prepared to contribute to the classroom exchange of ideas and information. You should have at least one oral response per class. This is where you can double dip with the argument you made in your response paper. Present a thread of your argument during the discussion, or propose a new idea that has occurred to you during class. Make a few notes on what you might contribute to discussion before you come to class.
- Approximately 5% of the participation grade will come from several performance activities in class (court trial, a performance reading of a play, a debate)
- Another way to earn participation points is by 3-minute reports on outside resources, e.g., art, music, film, literature, articles/books.
- **Please Note:** (1) You have to be here to contribute; (2) Your presence, in and of itself, does not constitute participation.

### **Specified Assigned Work, 5%**

- Pre-reading assignment: Edith Hamilton’s *Greek Mythology*
- Submission of one well-constructed essay question for the midterm exam
- Submission of one well-constructed essay question for the final exam
- Venn diagram for ancient and medieval (final exam prep)

**Grading: Your written work will be evaluated according to the following criteria.**

### **Qualities of “A” Writing**

**Content:** complies with all parts of the assignment; displays original, provocative thought in one or more of the following ways:

- finds a general significance in the specific instance,
- identifies and resolves a contradiction,
- disproves or qualifies a common misconception,
- achieves a fresh insight into a frequently discussed topic,
- places the known in a novel context,
- supports an arguable assertion;
- develops its thought by explanation, example, illustration, or analysis, as appropriate;
- displays flawless logic;
- has the voice of a real person speaking to a real audience;

is interesting and detailed.

**Organization:** has a recognizable thesis, stated or implied, that conforms to our definition of a thesis; has an effective and appropriate overall pattern of organization; has unified, coherent paragraphs organized around recognizable topic sentences that are verbally or logically related to the thesis; has effective and appropriate transitions between paragraphs; has an effective introduction and conclusion.

**Style:** frequently chooses grammatical options that mirror the content portrayed; shows a variety of sentence lengths and openers; frequently and appropriately uses emphatic sentence patterns such as long cumulative and periodic sentences, various strong parallel structures, and compound sentences using semicolons and conjunctive adverbs to control rhythm, pace, and emphasis.

**Conventions:** has NO diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; demonstrates a sophisticated knowledge of English grammar, syntax, punctuation, and usage.

### **Qualities of “B” Writing**

**Content:** complies with all parts of the assignment; displays original, provocative thought in one or more of the ways listed above; attempts to develop its thoughts in the ways listed above; contains no overt logical fallacies; has the voice of a real person; is detailed.

**Organization:** has a recognizable thesis, stated or implied, that conforms to our definition of a thesis; has an overall pattern of organization; has unified, coherent paragraphs organized around recognizable topic sentences related to the thesis; has appropriate transitions between paragraphs; has an introduction and conclusion.

**Style:** shows a variety of sentence lengths and openers; frequently and appropriately uses emphatic sentence patterns such as long cumulative and periodic sentences, various strong parallel structures, and compound sentences using semicolons and conjunctive adverbs.

**Conventions:** has no more than ONE diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling error; the error does not prevent comprehension; does not repeat an error marked on a previous paper; demonstrates a sound knowledge of English grammar, syntax, punctuation, and usage.

### **Qualities of “C” Writing**

**Content:** complies with the main parts of the assignment; finds significance beyond the subjective response; goes beyond mere description of the topic and response (analysis, generalization, etc.); is detailed.

**Organization:** has a recognizable thesis, stated or implied, that conforms to our definition of a thesis; has coherent paragraphs organized around topic sentences, most of which relate to the thesis; has a recognizable beginning, middle, and end.

**Style:** shows a variety of sentence lengths and openers; occasionally uses emphatic sentence patterns such as cumulative and periodic sentences, parallel structures, and compound sentences using semicolons and conjunctive adverbs.

**Conventions:** has no more than TWO diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; errors do not prevent comprehension; does not repeat an error marked on a previous paper; demonstrates the ability to write correct simple, compound, and complex sentences.

### **Qualities of “D” Writing**

**Content:** complies with the main parts of the assignment; makes a definite statement about the topic; attempts to support that statement.

**Organization:** has a recognizable thesis; attempts to support that thesis; has paragraphs organized around topic sentences; has enough coherence to be recognized as a unit.

**Style:** varies sentence types frequently enough to avoid monotony; attempts the occasional stylistic emphasis of an important point.

**Conventions:** has no more than THREE diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; errors do not prevent comprehension; does not repeat errors marked on a previous paper; demonstrates a basic understanding of the conventions of written English.

**Written Work Note 1:**

Reading Responses, I will drop your lowest grade. If you complete all of them, the “extra” one will count as a bonus added to this portion of your grade.

**Written Work Note 2:**

Any assigned writing that earns less than a “D” in any of the four grading categories will be considered unacceptable and will receive a failing grade.

Your class participation will be assessed as follows:

A = Regular, pertinent questions and comments; fully engaged

B = Occasional, pertinent questions and responses; good listening

C = Infrequent, tangential questions or comments; attentiveness questionable

D = Rare interaction; disengaged from discussion; not prepared for class

F = Regularly absent, physically or mentally

**Grading overview**

You can earn up to 1,000 points in this course.

Activities	Percentage	Points
Reader’s Responses, 21, daily	25%	250
Midterm Exam (SLO 1-3, 5)	25%	250
Final Exams (SLO 1-3, 5)	25%	250
Class participation (SLO 1-2-3, 5)	20%	200
Specified assigned work (SLO 1-2-3,5)	5%	50

**Grading scale**

930-1,000 points = A (93%-100%)

900-929 points = A- (90%-92.9%)

870-899 points = B+ (87%-89.9%)

830-869 points = B (83%-86.9%)

800-829 points = B- (80%-82.9%)

770-799 points = C+ (77%-79.9%)

730-769 points = C (73%-76.9%)

700-729 points = C- (70%-72.9%)

670-699 points = D+ (67%-69.9%)

**Departmental Grading Policy**

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined by the SJSU Catalog (Grades-Letter Grading). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A+/A/A- = excellent; B+/B/B- = above average; C+/C/C- = average; D+/D/D- = below

average; F = failure. Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a + or - grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Courses graded according to the A,B,C,NoCredit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for NoCredit, shall replace D or F. In A,B,C,NoCredit courses NC shall also substitute for W (for Withdraw) because neither NC nor W affects students' grade point averages. In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

### **University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

### **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter): <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.



Library Liaison: Toby Matoush. [Toby.Matoush@sjsu.edu](mailto:Toby.Matoush@sjsu.edu). Fourth floor of MLK Library.

## English 125, Homer to Dante, Fall 2018

### Course Schedule

Assigned Readings are to be completed before the class period designated. Schedule is subject to change by instructor with reasonable notice given in class or by class email.

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
<b>Week 0</b> W 8/22	Course Introduction and Overview: The Journey and Archetypes Introduction to <i>Gilgamesh</i> , pp. 89-109
<b>Week 1</b> M 8/27	<i>Gilgamesh</i> , 110-145. <b>Reader Response #1 due</b>
W 8/29	Introduction to Homer Criteria for grading your response paper
<b>Week 2</b> M 9/3	Labor Day
W 9/5	<i>Bible</i> : Old Testament: Genesis; Exodus; Job; Psalms 23, 137, pp. 152-215. <b>Reader Response #2 due</b>
<b>Week 3</b> M 9/10	<i>Iliad</i> , Books 1, 6, 8, 9, pp. 232-271. <b>Reader Response #3 due</b>
W 9/12	<i>Iliad</i> , Books 16, 18, 22, 24, pp. 272-324. <b>Reader Response #4 due</b> Compare Achilles' shield in Homer (photo in CR) to the shield in Auden's poem (CR).
<b>Week 4</b> M 9/17	<i>Odyssey</i> , Books 1-8, pp. 324-414. <b>Reader Response #5 due</b>
W 9/19	<i>Odyssey</i> , Books 9-16, pp. 415-511. <b>Reader Response #6 due</b>
<b>Week 5</b> M 9/24	<i>Odyssey</i> , Books 17-24, pp. 511-602. <b>Reader Response #7 due</b> Read Ulysses poems by Tennyson and by Michael Graves. (CR)
W 9/26	Introduction to Greek Tragedy. Guest speaker Professor Emerita Bonnie Cox. You may use her lecture notes on the midterm and final exams. Point system for notes. I'll explain. Read pages 624-29 in the Norton text for intro to Greek Drama.
<b>Week 6</b> M 10/1	<i>The Oresteia: Agamemnon</i> , <b>Reader Response #8 due</b> For a good introduction to <i>Agamemnon</i> , read pages 630-34 in Norton.
W 10/3	<i>The Eumenides</i> . It's in the Penguin edition I ordered. <b>Reader Response #9 due.</b>
<b>Week 7</b> M 10/8	<i>Oedipus Rex</i> , pp. 687-724. <b>Reader Response #10 due</b>
W 10/10	<i>Antigone</i> , pp. 725-55. <b>Reader Response #11 due.</b> You may base the response on the role you are playing in the court trial.

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	Court trial; stasis theory (CR)
<b>Week 8</b> M 10/15	<i>Medea</i> , pp. 759-90. <b>Reader Response #12 due.</b> You may base your response on the role you play in the people's court today.
W 10/17	<i>Lysistrata</i> , pp. 793-827. Performance credit. See Friday email notes for introduction to Virgil
<b>Week 9</b> M 10/22	<i>Aeneid</i> , 1, 2, 4, pp. 926-89. <b>Reader Response #13 due</b>
W 10/24	<i>Aeneid</i> , 6, 8, 12, pp. 989-1025. <b>Reader Response #14 due</b> Start Venn Diagrams on Greeks and Romans.
<b>Week 10</b> M 10/29	Post Venn Diagrams on white board. Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> : Book I, all; Book II, all; Book V, all; Book IX, Book X, pp. 1029-1068. Read letters from Ovid's <i>The Heroides</i> : letters from Penelope, Dido, and Medea. Extra credit: one-minute oral reading from a letter. How is that point of view different from that of the character in a play we read? Ovid is the first male author to write from a female perspective. <a href="http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/Heroideshome.htm">http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/Heroideshome.htm</a>  <b>Reader Response #15 due</b> Send review questions by Thursday at 10 pm.
W 10/31	Review for Exam.
<b>Week 11</b> M 11/5	<b>Midterm Exam: bring large exam booklet</b>
W 11/7	From Roman Empire to Christian Europe: Polytheism to Monotheism Guest speaker: Professor Emerita Bonnie Cox.
<b>Week 12</b> M 11/12	<i>Bible</i> : New Testament: Luke 2, Matthew 5-7, Luke 15, Matthew 13, 27-28, John 1, pp. 18-34. <b>Reader Response #16 due</b>
W 11/14	<i>The Song of Roland</i> , 1-109, pp. 223-53. <b>Reader Response #17 due.</b>
<b>Week 13</b> M 11/19	<i>The Song of Roland</i> , 110-291, pp. 253-286. <b>Reader Response #18 due</b>
W 11/21	Non-instructional holiday
<b>Week 14</b> M 11/26	Introduction to Dante. Guest speaker: Professor Emerita Bonnie Cox.
W 11/28	<i>Inferno</i> , Cantos I-XI, XII-XVIII, pp. 394-472. <b>Reader Response #19 due</b>
<b>Week 15</b>	<i>Inferno</i> , Cantos XIX-XXXIV, pp. 472-548. <b>Reader Response #20 due</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
M 12/3	What do you consider to be your vice, what circle of hell, and what punishment?
W 12/5	<i>Purgatorio</i> , Cantos I-II, IX, XXI-XXII, XXIV, XXVII, XXX, XXXII, XXXIII, <b>Reader Response #21 due</b>
<b>Week 16</b> M 12/10	Review practice essay questions for the final exam
Final Exam	The final exam will cover all the works on the syllabus and class discussions. (MW, 10:30 class) <b>Tuesday, Dec. 18, 945-1200</b>