

**ENG 2040-01: Great Books**  
**Fall 2021, Hybrid/Partially Online**  
**Set Meet-time: MW 12:20-1:15**  
**401 Millett (Weeks 9-13)**



**Professor:** Dr. Hope Jennings (she/her)  
**Office Hours:** MW 1:15-2:30 (online/in-person)  
**Office:** 451 Millett Hall  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION: Greek Myth in Contemporary Fiction**

*Great Books* introduces students to interpreting literature, using works from various periods and cultures, viewed in their social and historical contexts, and read for their enduring interest. In this section of the course, we will read contemporary novels that rewrite classical Greek texts by Aeschylus and Homer. Aeschylus's *Oresteia* (458 BCE) is the only intact trilogy surviving from the tradition of Greek tragedy, and it tells a story of family revenge to illustrate a shift from tribal feudalism and retaliation in ancient Greece to a social order where justice is enacted through the law. Homer's *Odyssey* (8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE) follows the adventures of the Greek hero Odysseus during his journey home after the Trojan War; it is one of the oldest Greek epic poems alongside Homer's *Iliad*, which tells the story of the Trojan War, and both are considered foundational texts for western literary traditions.

In the first half of the semester, we will focus on the *Oresteia* and two contemporary novels that revision the Trojan War and its aftermath from the perspectives of Cassandra, Clytemnestra, and Clytemnestra's children, Orestes and Electra. The second half of the semester focuses on reimagined versions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the first a retelling of Odysseus's experiences during and after the Trojan War, and the second two novels from the perspectives of Circe and Penelope. Although each of the novels stay true to the world of the original texts—in setting, time, characters, and plot—we will explore how contemporary authors adapt, revitalize, and transform our understanding of Greek myth. We will think about how they reshape classical literature to reflect experiences and concerns of contemporary readers. We will also question how contemporary rewritings of myth link us to the past to tell stories that are both universal and specific to the cultures in which they are produced. Lastly, we will think about how contemporary writers utilize classical myth to decenter the traditional focus on the male hero by providing space for marginalized, oppressed, or silenced voices, such as women and slaves.

This course is scheduled as hybrid. The first half of the semester will be online with Mon/Wed classes on Zoom and Fridays dedicated to working on your website assignments. During Weeks 9-13, we will plan to meet in-person every Mon/Wed (Covid-pending). Assignment guidelines, recorded lectures, and Zoom link available on the course website.

### **COURSE OUTCOMES**

*This course is part of Wright State's Common Core and is designed to help you learn to:*

1. critically analyze significant creative, literary, philosophical or religious works
2. understand and discuss the complex blend of imaginative vision, socio-cultural context, ethical values, and aesthetic judgment in creative, philosophical or religious works
3. recognize, evaluate and respond to creative, philosophical or religious works
4. develop appropriate and ethical applications of knowledge in the humanities or the arts

## WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

This is also an **Integrated Writing** course for the WSU Core. Writing assignments will be evaluated for content, form, style, and writing proficiency. Students are expected to produce writing that:

- Demonstrates their understanding of course content,
- Is appropriate for the audience and purpose of a particular writing task,
- Demonstrates the degree of mastery of disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course (including documentation conventions), and
- Shows competency in standard edited American English.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (selections provided in Pilot)
- Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, trans. Robert Fagles
- Christa Wolf, *Cassandra* (1983)
- Colm Tóibín, *House of Names* (2017)
- Zachary Mason, *The Lost Books of the Odyssey* (2007)
- Madeline Miller, *Circe* (2018)
- Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad* (2005)

## COURSE EVALUATION: Grades are based on the following points (1,000 total)

<b>Attendance &amp; Participation</b>	200	Grading Scale: 90-100%      A 80-89%        B 70-79%        C 60-69%        D 0-59%          F
<b>Blogs (6x50 pts each)</b>	300	
<b>Resources</b>	200	
<b>Final Project &amp; Proposal</b>	300	

### Attendance & Participation (20%)

We will have class discussion of the assigned readings every Monday and Wednesday (either online or in-person). Students are expected to attend class fully prepared to contribute to discussion, which includes completing all reading assigned for that day, responding to questions, and engaging respectfully with peers. If you meet all these expectations then you will receive full credit (FC/fully present); if you are clearly unprepared or unwilling to participate, arrive late or leave early, you will receive partial credit (PC/non-participatory); if you are absent or engage in any disruptive behaviors (see general conduct rules below), you will receive no credit (NC/absent). Simply showing up to class does not mean you are fully present, and absences are factored into your final participation grade, which is based on the average of points that you have earned for the semester. You can keep track of your participation points in Pilot by clicking on the Attendance tab and selecting "Participation."

**Attendance Policy:** *Missing more than 6 classes, including partially missed classes, will lead to at least a full letter grade deduction (100 points) from your overall final grade for the course. I am flexible with the need for excused absences due to illness, personal or family emergency, or occasional scheduling conflicts, as long as you communicate with me before class (if possible) and/or do not repeatedly ask for excused absences throughout the semester.*

### GENERAL EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR ALL WRITTEN WORK

- A = Demonstrates advanced critical thinking skills and outstanding knowledge of the readings and other course content. Ideas are original and depth of analysis is excellent. Writing is clear, concise, free of basic errors, easy to follow **and** shows excellent command of language and disciplinary style.
- B = Demonstrates solid critical thinking skills and familiarity with readings and other course content; provides interesting illustrations and examples. Writing is coherent, concise, easy to follow, and **nearly** free of basic errors.
- C = Demonstrates basic understanding of the readings and other course content and can provide a good summary of material but only provides superficial analysis and support for issues raised. Writing is coherent and easy to follow but wordy, repetitious and/or marred by numerous errors.
- D = Demonstrates minimal understanding of readings and course content; ideas are vague or not supported by any analysis and shows overall lack of effort. Writing lacks general coherence and shows little to no command of the English language.
- F = Demonstrates serious lack of understanding of readings and other course content; serious lack of analysis and/or effort. Writing is incoherent and impossible to follow
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### ACADEMIC HONESTY GUIDELINES & POLICY

Penalties for academic dishonesty and student procedure in academic dishonesty prosecution are clarified in the *Wright State University Student Handbook* and on the Office of Community Standards & Student Conduct website at: <http://www.wright.edu/students/judicial/integrity.html>. Plagiarism is using other people's ideas and/or words without crediting them, and is considered intellectual theft; paraphrasing also requires citations and page numbers. For further information about plagiarism, refer to: <http://www.wright.edu/academics/writingctr/resources/plagiarism.html>.

**INSTRUCTOR POLICY ON PLAGIARISM: If any portion of submitted work is plagiarized, you will receive a "0" on that assignment; if you commit a second offense, regardless of circumstances, you will receive an F for the entire course and may be subject to disciplinary action.**

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### GENERAL CONDUCT & COURSE POLICIES

***NB:** Failure to follow these guidelines may lead to dismissal from the class.*

- You are expected to compose yourself as if in a professional environment. This includes attending class regularly and on time, being prepared for each class session, and contributing to course requirements as if you were in a workplace. Unprofessional behavior will imperil your ability to get a good grade, but also your ability to receive a letter of recommendation from me should the need arise. I request that you address me as Dr. Jennings and not by first name. For some of the contexts and reasons behind this general preference and standard of professional etiquette, I recommend reading this [New York Times essay](#).
- Electronic devices such as laptops and tablets may only be used for taking notes and/or referring to assigned readings. Cell phones must be on silent and recording of class are not permitted.
- Respect toward peers and the instructor includes active listening and refraining from bigotry and intolerance toward others. Although your individual opinions about the texts and issues explored in this class are encouraged, you must be able to present your interpretations or stance through an informed lens, using critical thinking and/or verifiable evidence beyond personal beliefs or

anecdotal experiences (such as reference to textual examples, reliable secondary sources, or socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts).

- You are expected to follow the class calendar and assignment guidelines. If you are confused about any of these it is your responsibility to ask for clarification, and NOT the night before something is due. Submission deadlines are posted in the class calendar below as well as in Pilot.
- Extensions are granted ONLY in extreme cases of illness or emergency, which must be documented and, if possible, communicated to me *before* the due date and not after the missed deadline. Regardless of circumstances, I reserve the right to deny any requests for extensions and will only grant incompletes to students who have consistently attended class and are missing no more than 1-2 assignments. I do not offer individual extra credit opportunities; extra credit assignments are rarely provided and only as an option available to the entire class.
- Raider Mail is the best way to communicate with me. You can expect to receive a reply within a 24-hour period on weekdays; I normally do not respond to e-mail on weekends. Check the newsfeed on the course homepage in Pilot for any class updates or info. If I make changes to the syllabus or class calendar, I explain these in class and post them in Pilot.

### USEFUL CAMPUS & ONLINE RESOURCES

**University Writing Center:** The Writing Center (031 Library) provides individualized writing consultation at no cost to students. If you meet with a writing tutor, be sure to bring a copy of your assignment with you. For more information, call 775-4186. Or visit the Writing Center's Web page: <http://www.wright.edu/uc/success/services/writing-center.html>

**University Libraries:** The University Libraries are the scholarly information center for the University. In support of the University's mission of educational excellence, the Libraries collect, organize, preserve, and facilitate access to scholarly resources in all formats; support teaching, learning, and research in an intellectually open environment; and provide instruction in the use of traditional and new information resources and technologies. The libraries' online catalog, databases, and interlibrary loan service is essential for conducting research. Web page: <https://www.libraries.wright.edu/>

**CATS:** Faculty are not experts in trouble shooting Pilot or computer programs of any type. The quickest way to resolve technical issues is by using the resources at the HELP Desk: 937-775-4827 or 1-888-775-4827.

**Counseling and Wellness Services:** If you are suffering from depression or have any other mental health concerns, please be aware that counseling services are available on campus. Counseling and Wellness offers a wide range of services to the Wright State University community, including the following: group, individual, couples, and family counseling, crisis intervention, and outreach. They offer specialized services on a variety of mental health, multicultural, diversity, and wellness issues. Location: the bottom level of the Student Union off the Atrium and below the Admissions Office in suite 053. Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call 775-3407 or stop by to set an appointment. Web page: <http://www.wright-counseling.com/>

**Disability Services:** If you require course accommodations due to a disability, please inform me so we can make arrangements early in the quarter. For more information about support services offered by Disability Services (E186 Student Union), call 775-5680; TTY: 775-5844. Or visit their Web page: [http://www.wright.edu/students/dis\\_services/](http://www.wright.edu/students/dis_services/)

## Class Calendar

**NB:** This schedule is subject to changes. Class discussions are every Mon/Wed, either on **Zoom** (Weeks 1-8) or in-person (Weeks 9-13). Fridays are dedicated to working on **website** assignments, due by 11:59 that day.

WEEK	DATE	Class Topics, Activities, Assigned Readings & Assignment Due Dates
<b>UNIT ONE: Aeschylus's Oresteia</b>		
ONE	8/23	<b>Zoom:</b> Overview of Syllabus & Writing Assignments
	8/25	<b>Zoom:</b> Overview of Classical Greek Myth and Sagas
	8/27	<b>Recorded Lecture:</b> Intro to Aeschylus's <i>Oresteia</i>
TWO	8/30	<b>Zoom:</b> Aeschylus, <i>Agamemnon</i>
	9/1	<b>Zoom:</b> Aeschylus, <i>The Libation Bearers</i>
	9/3	<b>Website:</b> Set-up Home Page and Sections
THREE	9/6	<b>NO CLASS:</b> Labor Day Holiday
	9/8	<b>Zoom:</b> Aeschylus, <i>The Eumenides</i>
	9/10	<b>Website:</b> Blog 1 Due, <i>Oresteia</i>
FOUR	9/13	<b>Recorded Lecture:</b> Intro to Christa Wolf's <i>Cassandra</i>
	9/15	<b>Zoom:</b> <i>Cassandra</i> , pp. 1-71 (end of second full paragraph)
	9/17	<b>Website:</b> Resources for <i>Cassandra</i>
FIVE	9/20	<b>Zoom:</b> <i>Cassandra</i> , pp. 71-138 ("And then, on the very first day" to end of narrative)
	9/22	<b>Zoom:</b> <i>Cassandra</i> , Conditions of A Narrative, pp. 141-181 (Intro & Essay 1)
	9/24	<b>Website:</b> Blog 2 Due, <i>Cassandra</i>
SIX	9/27	<b>Recorded Lecture:</b> Intro to Colm Tóibín's <i>House of Names</i>
	9/29	<b>Zoom:</b> <i>House of Names</i> , pp. 3-69 (Clytemnestra)
	10/1	<b>Website:</b> Resources for <i>House of Names</i>
SEVEN	10/4	<b>Zoom:</b> <i>House of Names</i> , pp. 73-181 (Orestes/Electra)
	10/6	<b>Zoom:</b> <i>House of Names</i> , pp. 187-275 (Orestes/Clytemnestra/Orestes)
	10/8	<b>Website:</b> Blog 3 Due, <i>House of Names</i>
<b>UNIT TWO: Contemporary Odysseys</b>		
EIGHT	10/11	<b>Zoom:</b> Overview of the <i>Odyssey</i> (read <i>Classical Mythology</i> , Ch. 20 in Pilot)
	10/13	<b>Recorded Lecture:</b> Contemporary Odysseys by Mason, Miller, and Atwood
	10/15	<b>Website:</b> <a href="#">Nothing Due—catch-up on late work, begin brainstorming project ideas</a>
NINE	10/18	Zachary Mason, <i>The Lost Books of the Odyssey</i> , pp. 3-54 (Ch. 1-10)
	10/20	<i>Lost Books</i> , pp. 55-108 (Ch. 11-19)
	10/22	<b>Website:</b> Resources for <i>The Lost Books of the Odyssey</i>
TEN	10/25	<i>Lost Books</i> , pp. 109-166 (Ch. 20-30)
	10/27	<i>Lost Books</i> , pp. 167-228 (Ch. 31-44)
	10-29	<b>Website:</b> Blog 4 Due, <i>Lost Books</i>
ELEVEN	11/1	Madeline Miller, <i>Circe</i> , pp. 3-100 (Ch. 1-8)
	11/3	<i>Circe</i> , pp. 101-189 (Ch. 9-14)
	11/5	<b>Website:</b> Resources for <i>Circe</i>
TWELVE	11/8	<i>Circe</i> , pp. 190-284 (Ch. 15-20)
	11/10	<i>Circe</i> , pp. 285-385 (Ch. 21-27)
	11/12	<b>Website:</b> Blog 4 Due, <i>Circe</i>

<b>THIRTEEN</b>	<b>11/15</b>	Margaret Atwood, <i>The Penelopiad</i> , pp. 1-98
	<b>11/17</b>	<i>Penelopiad</i> , pp. 99-198
	<b>11/19</b>	<b>Website:</b> Blog 6 Due, <i>The Penelopiad</i>
<b>FOURTEEN</b>	<b>11/22</b>	<b>Zoom:</b> Class Wrap-up and Discussion of Final Projects
	<b>11/24</b>	<b>NO CLASS:</b> Thanksgiving Holiday
	<b>11/26</b>	<b>NO CLASS:</b> Thanksgiving Holiday
<b>FIFTEEN</b>	<b>11/29</b>	<b>Website:</b> Project Proposal Due
	<b>12/1</b>	<b>Website:</b> Final Project
	<b>12/3</b>	<b>Website:</b> Final Project
<b>EXAM WK</b>	<b>12/8</b>	<b>Final Project Due</b> (Wed 11:59 pm)