Texas A&M University

Core Curriculum Course Recertification and Assessment

Cover Sheet

1. Course prefix and number: CLAS 251/RELS 251
2. Complete course title: Classical Mythology
3. This request is submitted by (department name): International Studies
4. Person submitting this information (name): Hilary Bouxsein
5. E-mail: bouxsein@tamu.edu
6. Faculty member from whom class sets were collected (name): Hilary Bouxsein
7. E-mail: bouxsein@tamu.edu
8. Indicate the Foundational Component Area this course is in:
   - Communication
   - Mathematics
   - Life and Physical Sciences
   - Language, Philosophy and Culture
   - Creative Arts
   - American History
   - Government/Political Science
   - Social and Behavioral Sciences

9. Indicate the semesters this course has been taught and the total enrollment (all sections) each semester taught:
   - ☐ Fall 2014 ________  ☐ Fall 2015 ________  ☒ Fall 2016  133
   - ☐ Spring 2015 ________  ☐ Spring 2016 ________  ☐ Spring 2017 ________
   - ☐ Summer 2015 ________  ☐ Summer 2016 ________

10. Attach the Foundational Component Area form and the course syllabus.

11. Submitted by: ___________________________ Date: 5/30/2017

12. Department Head: ___________________________ Date: 5/30/2017

13. Submit this page, the Foundational Component Area form, and the course syllabus according to the Instructions for the Core Curriculum Recertification and Assessment Cover Sheet.

14. Submit complete course sets (one section) of student work aligned to the required State Core Objectives using the submission portal at http://corerecertification.tamu.edu.

2016/17 Cycle
Foundational Component Area: Language, Philosophy, and Culture

Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

Describe below how this course met the Foundational Component Area description for Language, Philosophy, and Culture.

The study of Classical Mythology (CLAS 251/RELS 251) engages with the narratives, beliefs, and cultural expressions of Greco-Roman antiquity. Students become familiar with the narratives of classical mythology and the evidence, both written and visual, for these narratives; the course also touches on ways of evaluating this evidence, thus strengthening students’ critical thinking skills. The course also examines ways in which the narratives of classical mythology both form and are formed by the cultures that originated them, and considers ways in which these narratives are cross-culturally relevant. Finally, students are asked to reflect on how classical myths reflect ethical problems or facets of the human condition—the results of war, the role of women, the duty one owes to the state or to one’s family—that could be relevant to their lives today.

Core objectives for the Language, Philosophy, and Culture Foundational Component Area:

1. Critical Thinking: creative thinking; innovation; inquiry; and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
2. Communication: effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
3. Social Responsibility: intercultural competence; knowledge of civic responsibility; and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
4. Personal Responsibility: ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

For one representative course section (open to all majors, including a general population of students, not an Honors Section) taught in the year prior to this recertification request:

1. Describe how students were informed of the core objectives being addressed in this core curriculum course.
   Students were made aware of these objectives in the first week of classes, as a part of going over the course syllabus. Additionally, class review before examinations emphasized critical thinking and communications skills, while two reflective journal entry assignments asked students to relate the myths about which they had been learning to issues of social and personal responsibility.

2. Describe how the course fostered student development related to each of the four core objectives.
   Studying mythology not only gives students a background in narratives that are fundamental to much of Western literary and art history, but it also fosters reflection on students’ own narratives, values, and beliefs. This course develops skills in critical thinking by asking students to learn the core narratives of classical mythology and to compare and contrast them with more familiar narratives. Throughout the course, students consider what constitutes a myth, what myths say about the cultures that originate them, and what their value might be for modern culture. Oral communication skills are developed through in-class discussions; also in class, students engage in visual communication by considering visual evidence for myths, both static (e.g. Greek vase paintings) and performative (e.g. clips from recent performances of Greek tragedy). Skills in written communication are developed through reading assignments and literary analysis of the readings during class, and are reflected in the written portions of examinations. Concerns of social and personal responsibility are fundamental to the course, as the study of mythology broadens students’ cultural horizons by exposing them to narratives that are foreign to them in time and space, yet which are also fundamental to modern ethical dilemmas. For example, students read Euripides’ Medea, which contains what some have considered an early statement
of the rights of both immigrants and women, as well as Sophocles' Antigone, which asks its audience to reflect on what happens when one's personal moral code and the duty one owes to one's state come into conflict.

3. Describe how student learning of each objective was evaluated. Include explanation of materials used in lecture or assigned as required reading along with an evaluative summary of student learning related to each core objective. Critical thinking skills were evaluated primarily through three examinations, which consisted of multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and a section wherein students identified and discussed the significance of passages taken from the primary sources that they had been assigned to read. These examinations also required significant communications skills, not only in written communication but also oral communication, as they drew upon class discussions, and visual communication, as students had to be familiar with, for example, ways the Greco-Roman pantheon is depicted in art. Written, visual, and oral communication also played a part in two short reflective writing assignments ("journal entries") that students were asked to do. The first of these asked students to watch a clip of actors in a recent performance of the Antigone and then to respond to this, reflecting on what they might do if they were put into the position of the play's heroine and asked to choose between loyalty to their country and doing what they believe to be morally and religiously right. The second journal entry drew on a class discussion about Vergil's Aeneid and the possibility that the Aeneid was intended to be a subversive poem undermining the regime of the emperor Augustus; students were asked to evaluate this possibility, and to consider what it would be like to attempt to produce art under an authoritarian regime. Both journal entries, therefore, asked students to engage in reflection on issues of social and personal responsibility.

**Assessment of Core Objectives:**

For assessment of core objectives, from the same representative course section used above, provide a complete set of student work for the section being used that demonstrates the required core objectives from each student enrolled in that section. Single assignments can align with multiple core objectives. Appropriate examples of student work and course materials include, but are not limited to:

1. Student work on graded assignments related to the core objectives (please include a complete course set)
2. Ungraded student work (reflectors, etc.)
3. Written responses to questions embedded in tests

Submit course sets of student work aligned to the required State Core Objectives using the submission portal at [http://corerecertification.tamu.edu](http://corerecertification.tamu.edu). Submitted artifacts should not contain grades or instructor comments.

**Note:** Course sets must be submitted before the course is considered for recertification, but are used for assessment purposes only, not in the recertification review.
Course Description and Prerequisites
(No prerequisites.)
This course aims to familiarize you with the canonical stories of the Greek and Roman mythological tradition—gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines, mortals and monsters—and with the culture and history that gave rise to these myths. In addition, we will consider the influence that these myths have had on the Western literary and artistic tradition and the impact that they continue to have on our own culture today.

Learning and Core Curriculum Objectives
In addition to being able to identify and discuss the major figures of Greco-Roman myth and the works in which these figures are found, students will acquire and improve skills in:

- Critical Thinking: students enhance their critical thinking skills by reading ancient myths within the cultural context of the societies that produced them and analyzing myths to better consider themes and story-patterns.
- Communication: students develop their communications skills through class discussion of assigned readings and written work on exams. To develop visual communications skills students consider how literary and iconographic evidence for Greek and Roman myth and religion complement one another and enhance our understanding of these traditions.
- Social Responsibility: students learn to cultivate an appreciation for the different belief systems of ancient societies and to consider why ways of thinking that are alien (and sometimes offensive) to us were so prevalent in antiquity.
- Personal Responsibility: students cultivate personal responsibility by reflecting on topics conducive to personal growth, including (but not limited to): religious pluralism and the conditions in which it can exist, the role of orthopraxy and orthodoxy in society, and the ways in which the study of ancient cultures and their belief systems helps to throw our own beliefs into sharper relief.

Textbooks (Required)
Grading and Classroom Policies

Although attendance will not be taken in this class, regular attendance is a necessity if you wish to do well, as a significant portion of the material for the exams will be taken from lectures as well as from the assigned readings. Your grade for the course is made up of your grades on the three exams, weighted as follows:

- Journal Entries: 10%
- Exam I: 25%
- Exam II: 25%
- Final Exam: 40%

(Grade Scale: 100-90% A, 89-80 B, 79-70 C, 69-60 D, 59-0 F)

In the case of absences on exam days, a make-up will only be allowed if there is a university-excused absence. If you plan to miss an exam due to an excused absence, you must arrange to make it up before the date it is given. If you are absent due to illness, e-mail me on or before the day of the exam and bring the required documentation to the next class. You will be expected to make up the exam on or before the next available class day.

You may use a laptop or tablet in class to take notes only. Phones are never allowed out in the classroom. Use of a phone, or of another electronic device for a purpose other than note-taking, is discourteous to your classmates and disrespectful to your teacher.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit [http://disability.tamu.edu](http://disability.tamu.edu).

Academic Integrity

*For additional information, please visit [http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu](http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu)*

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do."

Important Dates

- Friday, Sept 2: last day to add/drop
- Tuesday, Sept 27: Exam I
- Thursday, Nov 3: Exam II
- Friday, Nov 18: last day to drop without penalty
- Friday, Dec 9, 3-5 PM: Final Exam

Schedule of Assignments (subject to change if necessary)

- Week 1: In the Beginning...
- T 8/30: Intro
- Th 9/1: Hesiod, *Theogony* Part I: ACM 129-146
Week 2: The Olympian Triumph
T 9/6: Hesiod, *Theogony* II and *Works and Days: ACM* 146-167
Th 9/8: *Hymns to Dionysus, Demeter: ACM* 168-178

Week 3: The Younger Gods
T 9/13: *Hymns to Apollo, Hermes: ACM* 178-197
Th 9/15: *Hymn to Aphrodite: ACM* 197-202

Week 4: Dionysus and Thebes
T 9/20: *Bacchae*
Th 9/22: *Bacchae*

Week 5: The Theban Tragedy
T 9/27: EXAM I
Th 9/29: *Oedipus Rex*

Week 6: Oedipus' Legacy
T 10/4: *Oedipus Rex*
Th 10/6: *Antigone*

Week 7: Heroines?
T 10/11: Journal Entry 1 due; *Antigone*
Th 10/13: *Medea*

Week 8: Heroes?
T 10/18: Heracles: *ACM* pp. 33-45
Th 10/20: Theseus: *Hippolytus*

Week 9: The Trojan War
T 10/25: EXAM II
Th 10/27: *Iliad* 1, 2.1-470, 6, 9

Week 10: Achilles
T 11/1: *Iliad* 16-18.546
Th 11/3: *Iliad* 22, 24

Week 11: Returns I: Odysseus
T 11/8: *Odyssey* 1, 3-6
Th 11/10: *Odyssey* 9-14

Week 12: Returns II: Vengeance
T 11/15: *Odyssey* 16, 19-24
Th 11/17: *Agamemnon*
Week 13: Returns III: What Comes Next?
T 11/22: Eumenides
Th 11/24: NO CLASS

Week 14: Rome Rising
T 11/29: Journal Entry 2 due; Aeneid 1-2, 4, 6
Th 12/1: Aeneid 7-9, 11-12

T 12/6: review

F 12/9, 3-5 PM: FINAL EXAM