

Save Ancient Studies Alliance

Halloween Bash 2022 Master Class

30 October 2022 @ 1:30pm (EDT)

Ghosts in Ancient Greece and Rome



Location: (Provided by SASA)

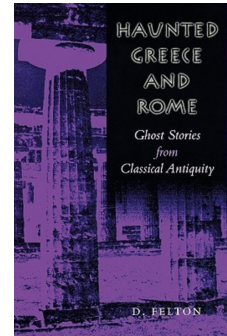
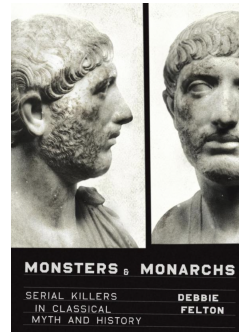
Zoom Meeting Link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84814984971>

Zoom Meeting ID 848 1498 4971

Zoom Meeting Password N/A

Description: What sort of beliefs did the ancient Greeks and Romans have about ghosts and the afterlife? What made the dead restless? Could spirits of the dead be summoned by the living? Could ghosts interact with the living? What did ghosts look like? What kinds of stories did the ancients tell about ghosts? Were there haunted houses in the ancient world? This Master Class will include information, discussion, and activities addressing these and other questions about accounts of ghosts and hauntings from two and three thousand years ago, and from both visual and literary sources. You may be surprised at how similar some of those ancient beliefs and stories are to modern ones!

Your SASA Educational Ambassador: My name is Debbie Felton, and I'm Professor of Classics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I specialize in various aspects of the supernatural in the ancient world, including ghosts, witches, and monsters. I've published several books, including *Haunted Greece and Rome* (UT Press); *A Cultural History of Fairy Tales in Antiquity* (Bloomsbury); and *Monsters and Monarchs: Serial Killers in Classical Myth and History* (UT Press). My current project is *The Oxford Handbook of Monsters in Classical Myth*, which is nearly done and should be out later next year! You can reach me with questions at felton@umass.edu.



Aim and structure of the class: This class aims to introduce students to the restless dead of classical antiquity, and/or, for those of you who might already have some background in the subject, to go more in depth with several ancient ghost stories in terms of their folkloric content and cultural context. Through a combination of class activities, in-class readings, and small group discussions, we will examine why these stories were told, what themes they share, what they tell us about religious beliefs in ancient Greece and Rome, and how they influenced later ghost stories, especially those of the British Victorian period. There are no required readings for this class, only some questions to consider in advance of our meeting.

Questions to Consider:

- What is the first image that comes to mind when you hear the word “ghost”?
- What *is* a “ghost”? Does the concept of “ghost” differ across time and place?
- Is it just people who can become ghosts, or also animals and objects? Why or why not?
- Do you know any folk-beliefs (superstitions) about ghosts?
- What are some reasons ghosts might appear to the living?
- What can be done to stop a ghost from haunting a place or a person? What methods are most effective, and why? Consider this question from both a literary and religious point of view.
- Besides ghosts, what other “restless dead” creatures can you think of, and why are they restless?
- Why do you think people *tell* ghost stories?
- Why do you think some people *like* ghost stories—what is it that we enjoy about such stories?
- How have ghost stories changed (or not changed) over the last two thousand years?
- Do you have a favorite ghost story (from any time period or region of the world)?