

Save Ancient Studies Alliance

Summer 2022 Texts-in-Translation Reading Group

Heroes and Monsters of Greek Mythology

Ever wondered why a dishwashing soap is named after a Greek hero? Curious about where Percy Jackson's characters come from? Want to know what the deal with Achilles and his heel was, and why that is never mentioned in the *Iliad*? Traveler, you have come to the right place!

This reading group focuses on the heroes, antiheroes, and monsters of Greek mythology. We will analyze their origin stories, epic (and decidedly less epic) deeds, and how they interacted with each other and the world of gods and men alike. We will read from texts such as Hesiod's *Theogony*, the Athenian tragedies, Apollonios' *Argonautica*, the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*. We will also integrate each text with lots of images of archaeological sites and objects representing the myths in question to show how heroes and monsters were not remote figures but appeared on everyday life objects and religious practices.

By the end of the course, students will have a better understanding of the main heroes, monsters, and other non-human creatures in Greek mythology. They will also gain some knowledge of the main themes and narrative arcs involving the most important heroic figures of Ancient Greece, and will be able to identify them in popular media (e.g. tv shows and books such as *The Song of Achilles*).

TW: much of Greek mythology deals with violence of all kinds. Should any of the materials make you uncomfortable, feel free to raise the issue or skip the topic. This is a chill reading group and we want to make sure that everyone feels safe and comfortable.

Your SASA Educational Ambassadors:

Full Name: Kate Minniti

What you study & where you are getting your degree: PhD Candidate in Classical Archaeology, University of British Columbia (UBC), Department of Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies (AMNE)

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Social media handles: @ammit_ (Twitter), @ammit__ (Twitch)

Dates (8-weeks):

Thursdays @ 10 am EDT

- Session 1: June 16th
- Session 2: June 23rd
- Session 3: June 30th
- Session 4: July 7th
- Session 5: July 14th
- Session 6: July 21st-Postponed
- Session 7: July 28th-CANCELED
- Session 8: August 4th

Location:(Provided by SASA)

Zoom Meeting Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83579249110?pwd=MXIOQnNuSFBLR0FtcWM4MExJSEp6UT09>

Zoom Meeting ID

835 7924 9110

Zoom Meeting Password

400104

Reading Group Google Folder: (PDF Readings and Recordings of Sessions)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1A3BQHEzp1NGKoT2c1GvP2mDpyxDUSf_?usp=sharing

Week 1: Introduction

Introduction to the universe and gods: Titans, Olympians, other deities, demigods

The creation and organization of the universe

The Five Ages of Men

Hesiod, *Theogony*: from [this page](#), parts 2, 3, 7, 9, 11-14

[Family trees](#) from *Mythoi Koinoi*

Hesiod, *Works and Days*: [the Ages of Men](#)

Week 2: Heroes, Part One

Who qualifies as a hero?

The good guys: Kadmos, Perseus, Atalanta, ...Orpheus?

Pseudo Apollodorus, *The Library*, [sections 1-4](#) (if you prefer podcasts: [here](#))

[Perseus and his adventures](#) (one more [link](#))

[Atalanta](#) (longer version [here](#); if you prefer podcasts: [here](#))

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, [Orpheus and Eurydice](#)

Week 3: Heroes, Part Two

Zero to Hero: Herakles

Everyone's least favourite: Theseus

Herakles and his deeds: [here](#), [here](#) for a condensed version, or [here](#) for a longer one
Theseus: Diodorus, *The Library of History* 4, 59-63 [here](#); and *Mythoi Koinoi*, [here](#)

Week 4: Monsters

Monster theory: what *is* a monster? *Why* is a monster?

- Sea monsters: what is boiling under the surface?
- Hybrid creatures and where to slay them
- Sirens, Harpies, and other unpleasant birds

A beautiful [bestiary](#) to enjoy for your own leisure

[Medusa in all her glory](#)

Homer, *Odyssey* Book 9, [105-566](#), the Cyclops, and Book 12: [the Sirens and Scylla and Charibdis](#)

Some [more](#) sea monsters

Week 5: Antiheroes and other oddities

The Amazons

The Centaurs

Centaur 101: [here](#) and Diodorus, *The Library of History* 4, 69-70 [here](#)

The Amazons: [here](#) and in case you wanted to listen to a whole lecture, enjoy [this](#)

Week 6: Epic cycles before Troy

The Argonauts

The Theban Cycle

The Argonauts: Pseudo Apollodorus, [The Library](#), 1.9.16-28 (a summary [here](#))

Thebes: Pseudo Apollodorus, [The Library](#), parts 3.5.7 to 3.7.4 (a summary [here](#))

Week 7: The Trojan War, Part 1

The Epic Cycle

The origins and beginnings of the war

The *Iliad*, part 1

What is the Epic Cycle? An explanation [here](#) (just read the summaries by Proclus and the additional notes), and some more general information [here](#)

A very short summary of the *Iliad* [here](#)

The Greek heroes: [a list with images](#)

The Trojan heroes: [another list with more images](#)

Iliad, Book 1, [1-187](#); Book 6, [369-529](#) (very sad); Book 16, [1-100](#), [426-507](#), and [777-867](#)

OPTIONAL READINGS: *Iliad*, Book 5, [297-351](#) and [767-909](#) (if you want to read some badassery), and Book 6, [119-211](#) (*fighting etiquette*)

Week 8: The Trojan War, Part 2 [NB: readings are still a work in progress, do not fear!]

The *Iliad*, part 2

The end of the war, the returns (*nostoi*) and the end of the age of heroes

Iliad, Book 19, [1-73](#) and [282-337](#); Book 22, [131-87](#) and [247-404](#)

Some sadness [here](#)

A short summary of the *Odyssey* [here](#)

Odyssey, Book 6, [1-47](#) and [110-250](#); Book 11, [385-592](#); Book 17, [290-504](#); Book 22 (TW for general slaughter), [1-67](#) and [241-309](#); Book 23, [141-246](#) (awww!)

OPTIONAL READINGS: *Odyssey*, Book 5, [43-493](#) (meet Odysseus!), Book 10, [133-574](#) (meet Circe!), Book 21, [1-185](#) (archery contest!)

*Main readings must be in the language your group will be conducted in, additional readings and resources are highly encouraged, and can be in any language available.

Guest Scholars

In the past, our Educational Ambassadors have invited other scholars to join them for a session, an expert in an area you will be discussing, and people really enjoying getting the perspective and discussion with multiple scholars in order to help them get a well rounded view of the topic.