Course content: In this course, students will learn about myths and religious traditions from the Mediterranean and Near Eastern regions including ancient Greece, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, as well as the religions of Judaism, and Christianity. Lectures will present the history and cultural contexts of these religions. Class discussions will focus on interpreting the myths and traditional stories of these religions as well as religious practices and beliefs. Students will also compare the mythology of different areas according to themes such as creation, heroes, the afterlife, fate, myth and politics, and the relationship between people and divine power.

Course goals:
- To gain a broad knowledge of the myths and religious practices and beliefs of cultures of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East and to compare them
- To practice close observation, questioning, and analysis of different sources of information including mythology texts, art, and architecture
- To nurture and expand curiosity and inquiry by exploring complex questions about mythology and religion
- To improve critical thinking, writing, and speaking skills
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Odyssey questions, reflective writing</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>March 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myth comparison essay 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>April 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myth comparison essay 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>May 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>all semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forum questions</td>
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*Readings:* You can either buy the course reading packet from the photocopy center or access the sources electronically on the Moodle site. You need to bring the course readings to class every day. You will also need to obtain a copy of the *Odyssey* by Homer.

*Odyssey reading, questions, and reflective writing:* In this course, we will read and discuss the Greek epic *The Odyssey* by Homer. You can read a translation in any language you wish. Translations in Turkish or English are available for purchase in the bookstore or on reserve in the library. You could also read it online at [www.theoi.com](http://www.theoi.com). As you read you should make a list of questions that you have about the epic (at least 25-30 questions). You will also need to submit 3-4 pages reflective writing about the epic based on themes and questions and questions that I will distribute.

*Class Discussion and Attendance:*  
Every class I will begin with a lecture giving information about the history and culture of the ancient society we are studying in that unit. In the second part of each class we will have class discussion, when we will examine a particular myth or religious text in detail and practice evaluating and interpreting myths. Discussion grades will be based on your level of participation in the discussion. Class discussion is a vital learning component of this course and it is important that everyone attends every class session in order to form a vibrant learning community. I take attendance at the beginning of class and look forward to seeing you there on time. Attendance will be posted on the Moodle site. If you miss 10 or more classes you will receive a zero for your participation grade. The grading scale is given below.

*Class forum questions:* This course is based on a learning approach called inquiry-based learning, which involves asking and investigating different types of questions. This method depends on students asking their own questions and using their close observation skills and analytical abilities to explore these questions. For this reason, each week I will ask you to come up with a list of 6-8 questions that you have about the readings. You need to post your list of questions each week on Tuesday at least one hour before class begins, and I will be referring to them in class for that week. You should post your questions on the Class Forum at the Moodle site. For some weeks, I will ask you to respond to a question posted by another student (specific instructions for these responses will be given in the weekly forum). These questions and responses will also be evaluated on a scale of 5 (excellent) to 0 (not submitted) and you will be able to see these points on the Moodle site.
Myth comparison essays: You will be given a choice of questions that ask you to compare certain aspects of the myths that you have been learning about throughout the semester. The essays should be 3-4 pages long (double-spaced) and submitted to turnitin.com by 17:00 on the due date. The first essay is due on April 4 and the second is due on May 18. You will need to use your class notes to help you with these essays and so make sure to keep good notes during lectures and discussion.

Revision policy: For the first two assignments (Odyssey writing and the first essay), students have the option to turn in a revised version. If substantial improvements have been made, I will increase the grade. All revisions must by submitted by May 1. The second essay cannot be revised (due to a lack of time before final grades must be given).

Late assignment policy
Late assignments will be penalized 5 points for each day it is late. Class forum questions and responses cannot be submitted late.

Class forum and office hours:
You can also use the class forum on Moodle as a way to ask questions about the course to me or to the other students. If you need help in the course, with your research paper or any other aspect of the course, please come and talk to me. My office hours are on Tuesday between 1:30 and 3:30, or you can make an appointment.

Schedule

Week 1
Feb. 2, 4
**How to read a myth: the Adam and Eve story**

Week 2
Feb. 9, 11
**Greek gods, goddesses and other supernatural beings**
Weekly discussion: how the deities are depicted in art

Week 3
Feb. 16, 18
**Greek gods, goddesses and their spheres of power**
Weekly discussion: The Goddess Demeter. What kinds of power did the gods have according to the ancient Greeks?
Reading: Homeric Hymn to Demeter (from *Classical Mythology* by M. Morford and R. Lenardon, ch. 14)

Week 4
Feb. 23, 25
**Ancient Greece: Minoans, Mycenaeans, Age of Heroes**
Weekly discussion: creation of the gods, Pandora
Reading: Hesiod: Selections from the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* (from Thurby and Devinney, *Introduction to Mythology*)

Week 5
**Ancient Greece: The Trojan war myths and the Iron Age**

March 7: Odyssey questions and reflective writing due, 17:00, turnitin.com

Week 7 Ancient Greece: Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic, the Parthenon, sacrifice, temples, and votives Weekly discussion: *The Odyssey* by Homer

Week 8 Ancient Greece: Hero stories - Herakles, Perseus, Jason Mar. 15, 17 Weekly discussion: *The Odyssey*, continued


Week 10 Roman religion and mythology, Aeneas Mar. 29, 31 Weekly discussion: the *Aeneid*, myths and politics Reading: Selections from the *Aeneid* by Virgil

April 4: Essay 1 due


Spring Break

Week 12 Ancient Mesopotamia: historical and cultural background, myths and political power Ap.19, 21 Weekly discussion: Gilgamesh and Enkidu Reading: Selections from the epic of Gilgamesh (from www.ancienttexts.org)

Week 13 Judaism/Christianity: the Bible as a text Ap. 26, 28 Weekly Discussion: Creation, Cain and Abel story, Noah, Moses Reading: Old Testament Bible: Genesis 1-10, 16-17, 22, Exodus 1-4, 7-8, 11-12, 14, 20

May 1: final day to submit revised assignments
Week 14  Christianity: beginning of Christianity, life of Jesus
May 3, 5  Weekly discussion: formation of Christianity
          Reading: New Testament Bible:  Matthew 1-6

Week 15  Christianity: debates within the early church,
         St. Paul, martyrs
May 10, 12  Course summary and final discussion
           Weekly discussion: Martyrs as the new heroes?
           Reading: “The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas.” (from
           www.pbs.org. “From Jesus to Christ”)

May 18: Essay 2 due, 17:00, turnitin.com
Grading scale for final grades
97-100 A+
93-96 A
90-92 A-
87-89 B+
83-86 B
80-82 B-
77-79 C+
73-76 C
70-72 C-
67-69 D+
63-66 D
60-62 D-
59-0 F

Grading scale for forum questions and responses
5 points: excellent, careful observation skills, demonstration of critical questioning, thought-provoking, complex, or unexpected questions, shows curiosity – seems like the student is truly interested in these questions
4 points: well-done, interesting, thoughtful questions, shows curiosity
3 points: good, but could spend more time in closely reading and thinking about the text, does not seem that the student is truly curious about all the questions
2 points: incomplete, not enough questions, too general or simplistic questions
1 point: poorly done, incomplete, questions not relevant to course
0 points: nothing submitted

At the end of the semester the top 10 highest scoring forum grades will be added up and then multiplied by 2 to form a Forum grade (out of 100 points).

Grading scale for class participation
90-100 points: excellent, participates more than once in each class, shows curiosity and asks questions, engages thoughtfully in discussing complex intellectual topics, shows familiarity with assigned reading, listens closely and responds to other students respectfully, is never or rarely absent from class and comes to class on time
80-89 points: well-done, participates at least once during each class, listens with interest to other students and the teacher, only misses a few classes and comes to class on time
70-79 points: good, pays attention and listens with interest, but does not often speak in class, or a student who is inconsistent – has some good days, but is missing or does not pay attention on other days
60-69 points: present in class, but not fully paying attention (sleeping, texting etc.), misses many classes, often arrives late
50-59 points: disruptive or not respectful of teacher or other students, often does not pay attention and rarely speaks or asks questions, misses many classes
0 points: absent for more than 10 classes
Koç University

Statement on Academic Honesty

with Emphasis on Plagiarism

Koç University expects all its students to perform course-related activities in accordance with the rules set forth in the Student Code of Conduct ([http://vpaa.ku.edu.tr/academic/student-code-of-conduct](http://vpaa.ku.edu.tr/academic/student-code-of-conduct)). Actions considered as academic dishonesty at Koç University include but are not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and impersonating. This statement’s goal is to draw attention to cheating and plagiarism related actions deemed unacceptable within the context of Student Code of Conduct:

All individual assignments must be completed by the student himself/herself, and all team assignments must be completed by the members of the team, without the aid of other individuals. If a team member does not contribute to the written documents or participate in the activities of the team, his/her name should not appear on the work submitted for evaluation.

Plagiarism is defined as ‘borrowing or using someone else’s written statements or ideas without giving written acknowledgement to the author’. Students are encouraged to conduct research beyond the course material, but they must not use any documents prepared by current or previous students, or notes prepared by instructors at Koç University or other universities without properly citing the source. Furthermore, students are expected to adhere to the Classroom Code of Conduct ([http://vpaa.ku.edu.tr/academic/classroom-code-of-conduct](http://vpaa.ku.edu.tr/academic/classroom-code-of-conduct)) and to refrain from all forms of unacceptable behavior during lectures. Failure to adhere to expected behavior may result in disciplinary action.

There are two kinds of plagiarism: Intentional and accidental. Intentional plagiarism (Example: Using a classmate’s homework as one’s own because the student does not want to spend time working on that homework) is considered intellectual theft, and there is no need to emphasize the wrongfulness of this act. Accidental plagiarism, on the other hand, may be considered as a ‘more acceptable’ form of plagiarism by some students, which is certainly not how it is perceived by the University administration and faculty. The student is responsible from properly citing a source if he/she is making use of another person’s work. For an example on accidental plagiarism, please refer to the document titled “An Example on Accidental Plagiarism”.

If you are unsure whether the action you will take would be a violation of Koç University’s Student Code of Conduct, please consult with your instructor before taking that action.
An Example on Accidental Plagiarism

This example is taken from a document prepared by the City University of New York.

The following text is taken from Elaine Tyler May’s ‘Myths and Realities of the American Family’:

“Because women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage, single mothers rarely earn enough to support themselves and their children adequately. And because work is still organized around the assumption that mothers stay home with children, even though few mothers can afford to do so, child-care facilities in the United States remain woefully inadequate.”

Below, there is an excerpt from a student’s homework, who made use of May’s original text:

“As Elaine Tyler May points out, “women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage” (588). Thus many single mothers cannot support themselves and their children adequately. Furthermore, since work is based on the assumption that mothers stay home with children, facilities for day care in this country are still “woefully inadequate.” (May 589)”.

You may think that there is no plagiarism here since the student is citing the original author. However, this is an instance of accidental plagiarism. Although the student cites May and uses quotation marks occasionally, the rest of the sentences, more specifically the following section: “Thus many single mothers cannot support themselves and their children adequately. Furthermore, since work is based on the assumption that mothers stay home with children, facilities for day care in this country are still “woefully inadequate.” (May 589)” almost exactly duplicates May’s original language. So, in order to avoid plagiarism, the student either had to use quotation marks for the rest of the sentences as well, or he/she had to paraphrase May’s ideas by using not only his/her own words, but his/her own original ideas as well. You should keep in mind that accidental plagiarism often occurs when the student does not really understand the original text but still tries to make use of it. Understanding the original text and understanding why you agree or disagree with the ideas proposed in that text is crucial both for avoiding plagiarism and for your intellectual development

Reference(s):

Avoiding and Detecting Plagiarism: A Guide for Graduate Students and Faculty.