**Classics 2300, Hollywood Classics: The Ancient World in Film**

**Spring 2015 TTH 9:30-10:50 am in 207 Preston Hall**

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**Office Hours: TTH 12:30-1:30 pm and by appointment**

This course studies images of the Classical world as represented in modern films, in comparison/contrast to the primary ancient sources on which they are (sometimes quite loosely) based. Since the number of films set in Greco-Roman antiquity is almost beyond counting and constantly growing, I have had to be ruthlessly selective in my choice of films; this semester I have chosen films rooted in ancient Greek mythology and history (realms that the Greeks themselves tended not to distinguish as sharply as we moderns do, but recognized as belonging to a chronological continuum). As a result, this course will also serve as an introduction to important events, figures, and literary works of the Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods of Greek history.

As we juxtapose ancient literary and modern cinematic narratives, we will examine how the films recast their source material to suit both the cinematic medium and the values, interests, and expectations of modern audiences. Topics of special interest with regard to the latter include the roles played by women and religion: to what degree has the rise of feminism influenced the representation of female characters, and how is ancient Greek religious practice presented to an audience of presumed non-believers? These are just two areas in which we will discern fundamental cultural differences between ourselves and the ancient Greeks, despite the importance of their cultural legacy for all of Western civilization.

**PLEASE NOTE** that in addition to our T/TH class sessions, there will be film screenings on selected Tuesday and Thursday evenings, beginning at 7 pm in College Hall 106 (see screening schedule below). Although these sessions are optional, they are highly recommended, since they provide an opportunity to see the films on the big screen, as intended by the filmmakers. If you are unable to attend, you remain responsible for seeing the films on your own prior to their discussion in class. Most of the films are widely available for purchase or rental (from Netflix, for example), although recent research suggests that Michael Cacoyannis’ *Electra* and *Iphigenia* may be less than easy to come by. All of the films are available on reserve from UTA’s Central Library, but be forewarned that the library owns only a single copy of each, so plan accordingly.

**Course Prerequisites:** None.

**Textbooks:** There are three required textbooks for this course:

1. *The Essential Homer*, trans. S. Lombardo (Hackett 2000)
2. *The Electra Plays*, trans. by P. Meineck, C. Luschnig, and P. Woodruff (Hackett 2009)
3. *Ancient Greece in Film and Popular Culture*, 2nd ed., G. Nisbet (Bristol Phoenix Press 2008)

Your first obligation as students in this class is to purchase these books, whether as hard or e-copies. Even if you own other translations of Homer or the Electra plays, you should buy the (inexpensive but excellent) Hackett versions specified, since these are the texts we will be working with in class, and from which quotations will appear on exams. Speaking of which, since we will be examining these texts closely in class, be sure to bring the relevant textbook(s) to each class session.

There is a fair bit of additional reading to be done, as specified on the schedule below, which I have posted as files on Blackboard, under the rubric “Course Materials.”

**Requirements and Grading**

12 weekly quizzes (dates specified below)

Mid-term Exam on Thursday, March 5th

Final Exam on Thursday, May 14th

Quizzes (10 highest scores) 1/3 of course grade

Mid-term Exam 1/3 of course grade

Final Exam 1/3 of course grade

**PLEASE NOTE** that since your composite quiz grade will be based on your highest ten quiz grades, you may miss two of the twelve scheduled quizzes without effect (although I wouldn’t recommend missing quizzes on purpose). There will be NO make-up quizzes given under any circumstances. If you miss an exam, a make-up can only be justified by a suitably grave and **documented** excuse. If you miss an exam unexpectedly, as a result of unforeseen circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible by phone or e-mail to explain those circumstances.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of both the primary (ancient Greek) sources assigned for the course and the films that use them as their source material. Students will also demonstrate their knowledge of how the films in question modify the ancient narratives, and for what purpose(s).

**Attendance:**  At the University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance.

In this course I allow students to attend class at their own discretion, with the understanding that in order to do well you will need to attend regularly, with the day's reading assignment completed beforehand. In this course regular attendance is especially crucial because of the weekly quizzes, whose content will be based on the previous week’s class discussion. Although attendance (or lack thereof) will not directly affect your grade in this course, the consequences of non-attendance are predictable: students who often miss class tend to get lower grades than their more conscientious peers, and frequently end up dropping the course altogether—a waste of two precious commodities, money and time.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session [specifically, through Friday, April 3rd]. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Classroom Demeanor:** I expect that while in class you will be courteous to one another and to me. I expect you to show up for class on time and (barring unforeseen developments) to stay for the entire period.

Cell phones and their ilk are—for some, and arguably—a necessary evil outside of class. During class, when you need to focus on the material presented without external interruptions, they are (in my curmudgeonly opinion) simply, inescapably, and profoundly evil. Please turn them off, lest you distract me, yourself, and/or others. The use of laptop computers, Kindle readers, and the like in class is permissible FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES ONLY.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX**: The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U. S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Student Support Services**:UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Emergency Phone Numbers**: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at 817-272-3003 (non-campus phone), 2-3003 (campus phone). You may also dial 911.

**Tentative Schedule of Events**

(Reading assignments are to be completed **before** the class for which they are listed. *EH = The Essential Homer*; *EP = The Electra Plays*)

**January**

20 T Course Introduction

22 TH Topic Introduction: Homer’s *Iliad*

READING: *Iliad* books 1-5 (*EH* pp. 1-69)

27 T READING: *Iliad* books 6-12 (*EH* pp. 69-129)

29 TH **QUIZ #1** (on *Iliad* 1-12)

READING: *Iliad* books 13-18 (*EH* pp. 130-87)

**February**

3 T READING: *Iliad* books 19-24 (*EH* pp. 188-240)

5 TH **QUIZ #2** (on *Iliad* 13-24) Film discussion: *Troy* (1994)

READING: Nisbet pp. vii-xiv (preface), 31-36, 79-86

10 T Discussion of *Troy* (cont’d)

12 TH **QUIZ #3** (on the film *Troy*)

Topic Introduction: The Persian Wars and Thermopylae

READING: Herodotus on Thermopylae (7.200-239), the

aftermath of Plataea (9.76-82), Gorgo (5.51, 7.239), and Artemisia (7.99, 8.67-9, 8.87-8, 8.101-3); Paul Cartledge, “Sparta 485: A Unique Culture and Society” (Blackboard files)

17 T **QUIZ #4** (on Herodotus and Cartledge)

Film discussion: *The* *300 Spartans* (1962)

19 TH Film discussion: *300* (2006)

READING: Nisbet pp. 72-77, 137-51

(RECOMMENDED READING: F. Miller and L. Varley, *300*)

24 T **QUIZ #5** (on the films *300 Spartans* and *300*)

Topic Introduction: Heracles

READING: Apollodorus 2.4.8-2.7.7 and Euripides’ *Alcestis* (Blackboard files)

26 TH Film discussion: *Hercules* (1958)

READING: Nisbet pp. 45-66

**March**

3 T Film discussion: Disney’s *Hercules* (1997)

5 TH **MID-TERM EXAM**

**[SPRING BREAK, March 9th to 14th]**

17 T Topic Introduction: Alexander the Great

READING: Plutarch’s *Life* of Alexander (Blackboard file)

19 TH **QUIZ #6** (on Alexander and Plutarch’s life thereof)

Film discussion: *Alexander the Great* (1956)

READING: Nisbet pp. 87-101

24 T Film discussion: *Alexander* (2004)

READING: Nisbet pp. 102-35

26 TH **QUIZ #7** (on the films Alexander the Great and Alexander) Topic Introduction: Greek Tragedy

31 T READING: Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers* (*EP* pp. 1-44)

**April**

2 TH *Libation Bearers* (in-class film and discussion)

7 T **QUIZ #8** (on *Libation Bearers*, text and film)

READING: Euripides’ *Electra* (*EP* pp. 45-106)

9 TH Film discussion: *Electra* (1962)

14 T **QUIZ #9** (on *Electra*, text and film)

READING: Euripides’ *Iphigeneia* *at Aulis* (Blackboard file)

16 TH Film discussion: *Iphigenia* (1977)

READING: M. McDonald, “Eye of the Camera, Eye of the Victim: Iphigenia by Euripides and Cacoyannis” (Blackboard file)

21 T **QUIZ #10** (on *Iphigen(e)ia*, text and film)

Topic Introduction: Homer’s *Odyssey*

READING: *Odyssey* books 1-8 (*EH* pp. 241-98)

23 TH READING: *Odyssey* books 9-11 (*EH* pp. 298-351)

28 T **QUIZ #11** (on *Odyssey* 1-11)

READING: *Odyssey* books 12-19 (*EH* pp. 352-422)

30 TH READING: *Odyssey* books 21-24 (*EH* pp. 423-82)

**May**

5 T **QUIZ #12** (on *Odyssey* 12-24)

Film discussion: *Ulysses* (1954)

7 TH Wrap-Up

14 TH **FINAL EXAM**, 8-10:30 am (alas)

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**Film Screening Schedule** (all films to be shown in College Hall 106, beginning at

7 pm)

Please note: these sessions are optional though recommended, since they provide an opportunity to see the films on the big screen, as intended by the filmmakers. If you are unable to attend, you remain responsible for seeing the films on your own prior to their discussion in class.

Tuesday, Feb. 3: *Troy* (2004)

Thursday, Feb. 12: *The 300 Spartans* (1962)

Tuesday, Feb. 17: *300* (2006)

Tuesday, Feb. 24: *Hercules* (1958)

Thursday, Feb. 26: Disney’s *Hercules* (1997)

Tuesday, March 17: *Alexander the Great* (1956)

Thursday, March 19: Oliver Stone’s *Alexander* (2004)

Tuesday, April 7: *Electra* (1962)

Tuesday, April 14: *Iphigenia* (1977)

Tuesday, May 5: *Ulysses* (1954)