

Classical Studies 404 – Seminar in the Reception of the Classical World *Classics and Popular Culture*

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Buch C217, phone 604-822-4048
class time MW 2:00-3:20

This course will examine the intersection of Classics and (Western, post-War) Popular Culture along two axes. One will examine the representation of the Classical myth and history, referring to focusing on comics and cinema. The other will examine how ways of reading classical texts (including theories of myth) enhance the appreciation of modern texts. This seminar will also discuss the place of Reception Studies within the field of Classics.

Required Texts:

1. G. Nisbet (2008) *Ancient Greece in Film and Popular Culture* (2nd ed).
2. L. Hardwick (2003) *Reception Studies. Greece and Rome* New Surveys of the Classics 33.
3. Screenings. It is not possible to watch all of the films and television episodes discussed, and so students will be responsible for ensuring specific episodes have been watched outside of class time. In every case, there will be at least a week's notice to allow students to borrow copies or rent them from video stores. This is an essential part of the preparation for class, and students will be expected to take notes and come armed with questions about specific issues raised.
4. Students will also be assigned both primary sources (e.g. poetry or comics) and secondary sources (articles and chapters) to read to enhance their knowledge of the reception of classics in popular culture generally, and to lay the groundwork for the research essays.

Since some readings will be distributed electronically, please send me an email address that you check regularly for class discussions: <toph@interchange.ubc.ca> **by January 18**. this address will be made public to the entire class, to allow mass mailings or out-of-class discussion.

Grading Scheme:

a. research essays

2 x 40%

Students will write two 2500-word (c.10 page) research essays on specific aspects of the reception of Classics in popular culture since 1900. These will be due at the start of class on **March 1** and **March 31**; papers may be handed in before this date, but late papers will receive a zero. Students will select topics for these essays in consultation with the professor, observing the following restrictions:

1. essays must treat at least two distinct aspects of the ancient world.
2. essays must address reception in at least two distinct modern media.
3. ideally, all papers will address different works of modern popular culture; students wishing to discuss works already covered must ensure that a unique research component is introduced.

Discussing your paper topic with me at least two weeks before it is due is optional, but will ensure these distribution requirements are met and allow me to point you to secondary sources.

With your essays (which will be graded out of 30) students will prepare a one-page handout presenting an overview of their research project for their classmates on either one or two sides. Projects will all then be discussed briefly in class. These handouts (which will be graded out of 10) should include your name, a short bibliography, and your research question and conclusions. In addition to the copy submitted to be marked, please bring enough copies for everyone in the class, including the professor.

Papers will be marked within a week (by March 8 and April 7); students who receive a total of less than 30/40 (75%) may revise their papers and handouts and resubmit them by March 15 (for the first essay) or April 14 (for the second); revised papers may receive a total grade of no more than 30/40.

Guidelines for formal writing are provided on p. 3 of this syllabus.

b. in-class tests

2 x 10%

There will be two in-class tests. These will be written on **February 10** and **April 14**, and will draw heavily from classroom discussion. The first will focus on the textbook readings; the second on specific examples of popular culture reception, including student projects.

Regular preparation and attendance, and full participation in classroom discussion, are required. A seminar such as this will only work if all students come prepared to interact with the assigned material. Students are always responsible for material they have missed in class. **Students who are absent without medical excuse or come egregiously unprepared to class more than three times will receive a flat 10% penalty to their final grade.**

Schedule

It is expected that some make-up classes will be needed into the exam period. This may lead to an adjustment of due dates, etc., to the above schedule in March and April. Consequently, The syllabus may be subject to alteration as the term progresses. Any changes will be noted in class.

The initial readings are set out in the following table. It is expected that students will regularly introduce examples from popular culture

Jan 11	Nisbet ch. 1
Jan 13	Nisbet ch. 2
Jan 18	Nisbet ch. 3
Jan 20	Nisbet ch. 4. Please also (re-)watch Zack Snyder's <i>300</i> before this class.
Jan 25	Hardwick I and II
Jan 27	Hardwick III and IV
Feb 1	Hardwick V. There will also be a film for this class, to be decided in class on Jan 25.
Feb 3	Hardwick VI. There will also be some comics readings for this class: <i>The Infinite Horizon</i> .
Feb 8	More on comics (readings distributed in class): <i>Wonder Woman</i> ; <i>The Kindly Ones</i> ; <i>The Three Paradoxes</i> .
Feb 10	Test!
Mar 1	First Research essay due. Discussion of student projects.
Mar 3	More discussion of student projects.
Mar 8	<i>Battlestar Galactica</i> .
Mar 10	Ovid and <i>Sandman</i> .

The remainder of the semester will be scheduled depending on student interests.

CWM