

ANT2800 (Classical Mythology): School Exam, Spring 2022 (9 June 2022): Assessment Guidelines

Course description: <https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/ifikk/ANT2800/index-eng.html>

Course content: ANT2800 offers an introduction to the mythology of the Graeco-Roman world through an examination of its divinities and heroes in the textual and iconographic sources of Greek and Roman culture. It looks at the role of mythology in the cultural and religious milieus of antiquity, the relationship between humanity and the supernatural/divine, the moral questions posed by these stories, and the reception of classical mythology in post-ancient media (literature, art, film, etc.). The course also looks into the historical development of the study of mythology and gives an overview of the most influential theories of myth.

Owing to the still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there were no synchronous lectures in Spring 2022. Instead, the lectures were podcasted and uploaded on Canvas on a weekly basis. Additionally, an optional hybrid colloquium was offered each week where the students were given the opportunity to ask questions and to engage in further discussions. The textbooks used were: Jenny March, *The Penguin Book of Classical Myths* (London 2009), and Fritz Graf, *Greek Mythology: An Introduction* (Baltimore 1996). This principal reading was supplemented by several pieces of primary and secondary reading (e.g., excerpts from texts such as Homer's *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, and articles and chapters from introductory volumes such as *A Companion to Greek Mythology*, ed. by K. Dowden and N. Livingstone, Malden 2011). All teaching material (except for the two main text books) was made available either through Leganto or on Canvas. All teaching material (the entire syllabus, all podcasts, all PPPs, and all handouts) was relevant to the exam unless something was explicitly marked as optional. The teaching language was English.

The exam was a 4-hours school exam consisting of two parts that both counted 50%. The first part consisted of 40 multiple choice questions; the second part was an essay on a topic/question related to classical mythology (whereby the students could choose from 3 topics/questions). A separate grade was given for both parts; the final grading was based on the mean.

Part I: Multiple choice questions

For each question, 4 possible answers were given, of which 1 was correct. The correct answers to the questions are as follows: 1) Poseidon – 2) Hermes – 3) Peacock – 4) Artemis/Venus – 5) Dionysos – 6) Metis – 7) Hektor – 8) Tantalos – 9) Thetis – 10) Charon – 11) Rhadamanthys – 12) Talos – 13) Lion, goat and snake – 14) Fifty – 15) Odysseus was the constructor of the Argo. – 16) He commits suicide. – 17) According to a prophecy, Troy cannot be defeated without Philoktetes' participation in the war. – 18) Penelope – 19) Kalypso – 20) Herakles is a distant cousin of Dionysos. – 21) Quintus of Smyrna – 22) Ovid – 23) Aeschylus – 24) Homer, *Odyssey* – 25) Homer, *Odyssey* – 26) Sophocles, *Oedipus The King* – 27) Vergil, *Aeneid* – 28) Dii consentes – 29) Aetiological – 30) Katabasis – 31) Euhemerus of Messene – 32) Joseph Campbell – 33) Claude Lévi-Strauss – 34) James G. Frazer – 35) A Centaur – 36) Janus – 37) Penates, Anchises, Aeneas, Ascanius – 38) Perseus and Andromeda – 39) A Giant – 40) Kapaneus.

Part I was graded as follows:

Correct answers	Grade	Correct answers	Grade
40, 39	A+	19, 18	D+
38, 37, 36	A	17, 16, 15	D
35, 34	A-	14, 13	D-
33, 32	B+	12, 11	E+
31, 30, 29	B	10, 9, 8	E
28, 27	B-	7, 6	E-
26, 25	C+	5, 4	F+
24, 23, 22	C	3, 2, 1	F
21, 20	C-	0	F-

Part II: Essay

Here the students had to choose one of three pictures of artworks displaying a scene from classical mythology and write an essay about it: 1) Hercules Farnese; 2) the Laokoon Group; 3) the Capitoline Wolf. They were instructed to describe which mythological scene is shown and to briefly contextualise the depiction within its wider mythological context. Thereafter, they were asked to give an account of how and why the artwork was, and is, of cultural relevance, taking into account a broad range of cultural aspects (e.g., literature, arts, history, history of ideas, etc.) and considering the cultural importance of the artwork in antiquity as well as in post-ancient times.

The following instructions were given:

- 1) You must write about ONE of the three pictures. If you write more than one essay, only the first essay will be read and evaluated. Essays that deal with several pictures will be considered a fail (F).
- 2) Indicate clearly about which picture you are writing.
- 3) You must write full and coherent sentences.
- 4) Your essay should be discursive and academic in nature. No excessive renarration and no bold statements without sufficient evidence!
- 5) Your text must be strictly between 600 and 800 words. A deduction will be applied for texts that are either too short or too long.
- 6) The spelling of names and terms must follow the conventions of the language in which you write your essay.

For the grading of the essay, its general quality, the level of reflection, the coherence of the thoughts and the discursive nature of the writing was assessed, along with an evaluation of whether the above-given instructions were followed.

Content-wise, there is of course no fixed template here, but the following points may indicate what a good answer should encompass:

- 1) *Hercules Farnese*. Here mention should be made of the popularity and the proliferation of this statue in antiquity, and this aspect should be connected to the different types of “Herculeses” united in this statue: Hercules the courageous doer of the Twelve Deeds (evidenced by the Apples of the Hesperides which he holds in his right

hand behind his back, and which can be interpreted as a symbol of his impending apotheosis) along with the type of the patient Hercules (tying up with the philosophical, especially the Stoic, Hercules). The proliferation of the statue testifies to the popularity of Herakles/Hercules in antiquity (having been a “national hero” for the Greeks). A good answer also says something about the designation “Farnese” (it has its name from its earlier place of exhibition, the Villa Farnese in the North of Rome) and about the continued popularity of Herakles/Hercules in the post-ancient periods.

- 2) *The Laokoon Group*. Here, for one, the importance of this incident for the final events leading to the destruction of Troy needs to be mentioned. For another, the cultural importance of this statue group must be discussed in some detail. It was not only one of the most famous pieces of art in antiquity, but it was also of great importance in relation to the increased enthusiasm for antiquity in the Early Modern Period. The Laokoon Group had been known from a description by Pliny the Elder, who described it as the best piece of art ever created. Therefore, when the Laokoon Group was found in Rome in 1506, the statue group did not only influence Italian artists over the subsequent decades and centuries, but it finally also gave rise to a general feeling of ambition and achievement, because the piece of art that Pliny the Elder had described in such enthusiastic terms was finally recovered.
- 3) *The Capitoline Wolf*. An essay on this topic should discuss the importance of the myth of Romulus and Remus having been nurtured by a she-wolf and the symbolic and cultural significance of this story for the ancient Romans and their self-conception as a nation of warriors and rulers. Furthermore, the artwork as such must be discussed as well, and in this connection, its misdating by Johann Joachim Winckelmann to the fifth century B.C. is of great significance. While it had always been known that the two twins had not originally been part of the sculpture (they were later additions from the 15th century), the correct dating of the bronze wolf into the 12th century happened as late as 2007. A good essay also reflects on the power of Winckelmann’s authority and how his misdating shaped the reception of Rome’s national myth.

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