

## ANT2800 (Classical Mythology): School Exam, Spring 2023 (24 May 2023): 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.

The teaching in this course was given in lecture format. The lectures were podcasted and uploaded on Canvas on a weekly basis; therefore, attendance was not required and it was possible to follow the course remotely. The textbooks used were: Jenny March, *The Penguin Book of Classical Myths* (London 2009), and Fritz Graf, *Greek Mythology: An Introduction* (Baltimore 1993). 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 and all PPPs) 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) Janus – 2) Pan – 3) Horse – 4) Okeanos – 5) Hermes = Neptunus – 6) With Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth – 7) Rhea – 8) Leto and Zeus – 9) Eteokles – 10) Lavinia and Silvius – 11) Charon – 12) Ixion – 13) Talos – 14) Numitor was a brother of Aeneas. – 15) There was a tradition in antiquity according to which the Argo was the first ship ever built. – 16) Homer, *Odyssey* – 17) Herakles – 18) According to a prophecy, Troy could not be defeated without Philoktetes' participation in the war. – 19) Skylla – 20) Kalypso – 21) The Amazons are not mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*. – 22) Quintus of Smyrna – 23) Prodikos – 24) Xenophanes – 25) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* – 26) Hesiod, *Theogony* – 27) Lysias, *Funeral Oration* – 28) Livy, *Ab urbe condita* – 29) Dii consentes – 30) Katabasis – 31) Euhemerus of Messene – 32) Joseph Campbell – 33) Claude Lévi-Strauss – 34) James G. Frazer – 35) The Capitoline Wolf – 36) Aphrodite – 37) Zeus – 38) Chimaira – 39) Eurystheus – 40) Echo and Narcissus.

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 from one of the following topics:

- 1) The role of death and the Underworld in Greek and Roman mythology.
- 2) The motive of the cursed dynasty in Greek and Roman mythology.
- 3) The major characteristics of the deities in Greek and Roman mythology.

The following instructions were given:

- You must write about ONE of the three topics. If you write more than one essay, only the first essay will be read and evaluated. Essays that mix the given topics will be considered a fail (F).
- Indicate clearly which topic you have chosen.
- You must write full and coherent sentences.
- Your essay should be discursive and academic in nature. Avoid excessive renarration as well as bold statements without sufficient evidence.
- 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.
- 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 could/should encompass:

- 1) *The role of death and the Underworld in Greek and Roman mythology.* Here, the most important aspect is the role of life after death in Graeco-Roman mythology. An essay on this topic should include a discussion of the nature of the Underworld in texts like Homer, *Odyssey* 11 and Vergil, *Aeneid* 6, as well as a brief historical outline of the major developments in the way the ideas about the Underworld changed and evolved over time. A good essay will also mention the role of characters such as Sisyphos and Tantalos in the Underworld, and it will also briefly discuss the blending of different (non-Roman!) traditions in Vergil's concept of the Underworld in the *Aeneid*.

- 2) *The motive of the fraternal strife in Greek and Roman mythology.* The motive of the fraternal strife – taking as its starting point the rivalry between two brothers and often (but not always) resulting in one brother killing the other – is a recurring narrative pattern that can be found in different stories in Graeco-Roman mythology such as Eteokles and Polyneikes, Romulus and Remus, Atreus and Thyestes and (to a lesser extent) Amphion and Zethos. A good essay will also connect this motive with some more general reflections on the meaning and importance of recurring narrative patterns in classical mythology and, hence, discuss mythology as a ‘system’ (as emphasized most prominently in structuralist approaches to the study of myth).
- 3) *The major characteristics of the deities in Greek and Roman mythology.* Some of the major characteristics of the deities in the Graeco-Roman sphere are: enhanced anthropomorphism; transformative abilities; immortality and youth; lack of all-powerful characteristics (omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence) and vulnerability; lack of omnibenevolence towards, and ambiguous relation with, humans. A good essay will also briefly discuss the major differences between the Graeco-Roman divine system and the concept of God in the three Abrahamic religions (polytheism vs monotheism; lack of religious fundamentalism; lack of a Holy Scripture).

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