

Myth Makers (CLSA:3016)

Paper topics (Spring 2021)

Activity/Paper 1: Modern Hymns

10% of final grade

PART 1: Creative writing

Online submission due date: 2/19 @ 11:59 PM

Length: 300-1000 words

Assignment description: Write an ode about or prayer to someone or something you encounter on a daily basis and value their/its functionality/purpose/existence in the tone/style of Homer, Sappho, Horace, or Callimachus (see readings for 2/5 and 2/12). In the past I have had students write on everything from their hand-me-down winter coat and toothpaste to their significant other and bus driver. Coffee has been done frequently and while I definitely appreciate it and sympathize, you may want to look elsewhere.

Specific assignment criteria:

1. Students will need to reference at least 2 different mythological events from 2 different ancient texts (they can be from the same author). You will NOT have in-text citations (unless it is a direct quote) or a works cited for this document. That is for the "Reflection" section.
2. Poems/odes can have lines or stanzas or can be in paragraph form. There is no requirement here.
3. Poems do not have to be written in a certain meter or rhyme; extra points may be awarded if you do manage this, however.
4. Students will be graded on their ability to understand and interpret the myths they include in their poem; the myths that they reference and use to describe their object/person should be accurate and insightful.
5. Extra credit may be awarded to students who are within 200 words of the maximum limit (writing 800-1000 words for this assignment).
6. You can see the rubric for the Creative Writing portion here: [Rubric for creative portion.docx](#)

FAQ:

- Where do I find references to myths?
 - Any ancient Greek or Roman source, including those listed in ACM, is fair game.
- Do the references to myths have to be about the gods or anything else?
 - They can be a reference to anything in myth- gods, heroes, the Trojan War, etc.
- What type of formatting do I need to use? Meter? Stanzas? Or is a paragraph OK?

- Formatting in stanzas may be best– this truly mimics the style of a poet- but is not required.
 - If you can write in meter, go for it! But don't feel compelled to do so.
- What are other examples of prayers and odes that I can look at besides the ones we discussed in class?
 - See *Homeric Hymns* in ACM for more inspiration!

PART 2: Reflection

Online submission due date: 2/19 @ 11:59 PM

Minimum number of sources needed: 2 ancient sources

Length: 500-1500 words

Assignment description: The point of this part of the assignment is to allow you to discuss your decision-making process when you wrote the creative portion of the activity/paper. Note that this part is still considered a formal paper (though you will not have an introduction and conclusion) and so your tone should be professional, organized, and respectful. Please do not submit a rambling stream of consciousness. You should take into account the following issues, in separate numbered paragraphs. Do not repeat the questions below, but number each paragraph and write on the following:

1. What object/person did you write your poem/ode to and why? What is your personal connection with this person/object?
2. What ancient author's style did you seek to mimic in this prayer/ode (Homer, Sappho, Horace, or Callimachus)? Why this author? What aspects/stylistics/techniques, in particular, did you seek to mimic?
3. What else influenced your writing (i.e. class lectures, in-class writing exercises, a trip to the writing center, a discussion with a friend, a meeting with Dr. Trusty, etc.)?
4. Compare and contrast your ode to that of the author you sought to mimic. For example, what did and didn't "work" when you tried to apply a modern object/person? What did you have to change or what worked well from the ancient versions? What sort of relationship do you have with the person/object you are writing on compared to the ancient author and his topic? What does this reveal about differences in culture, values, social structure, technology, etc. This potentially requires you to write quite a long answer.
5. What mythical events did you include in your ode/prayer and why (remember, you had to have at least two)? How do they fit in your ode? What ancient author mentions these myths (see "[Readings and sources that may help with papers \(with FAQ at bottom\)](#)" on ICON for help). You need to include the original author, title of text, and book/line #s. For example: "Achilles ransoms Hector's body, from Homer's Iliad 24, lines 350-700."
6. Bibliography. Cite all sources that influenced your writing (ancient and modern) including the original author for the myths that you referenced in #5. This means you must have at least TWO ancient texts listed here (it is OK if

they are the same author). See [Citing papers properly and avoiding plagiarism](#) on ICON for help.

Additional notes:

1. Students who double the source/example # requirements (for this assignment, citing 4 or more ancient texts/sources) will receive a 3 point bonus to their “reflection” portion of their paper (for a max of 50 points).
2. You can see the rubric for the Reflection portion here: [Rubric for reflection portion.docx](#)

Activity/Paper 2: Behind the Scenes

10% of final grade

PART 1: Creative writing

Online submission due date: 3/5 @ 11:59 PM

Length: 1000-2000 words

Assignment description: “Behind the scenes” exercise. On the first day of class, you were asked to write a short paragraph about the god/goddess/hero/heroine that you most relate to. Using one of the myths that involves that character, retell the story from the perspective of a minor character (or object) in the story. This CANNOT be from the perspective of the character you selected, but someone who was present at an event they were involved in. For (an ancient) example, Lucian’s *Dialogues of the Dead* 23 has Agamemnon and Ajax discuss why Ajax ignored Odysseus when he travelled to the underworld. Another (ancient) example, is the Ethopoeia 20 and 25 found in [Gibson](#)

[handouts.pdf](#) [_download](#). Alternatively, for (a modern) example, the short story of Argos (Odysseus’ dog) in *so Orpheus: Fifty New Myths* has Argos talk about his feelings when he saw Odysseus for the first time in 20 years. Do not use these examples, but read them for an understanding of the assignment. Instead, use a minor character in a myth that involves the character you most relate to. You CANNOT modernize this myth. It must be set in the “original” ancient Greek/Roman setting. Students need to demonstrate full understanding of the scene/event, including ancient context and culture. Tone can be serious or humorous, as long as it is clear that you understand the myth and the dialogue and actions are true to the character(s).

Specific assignment criteria:

1. Students will need to reference at least 2 different ancient versions of the event (they can be from the same author). You will NOT have in-text citations (unless it is a direct quote) or a works cited for this document. That is for the “Reflection” section.
2. This cannot be from the perspective of the character you selected; it must be someone who witnessed the account but wasn't a main actor or never had a voice in the event.

3. You cannot modernize this myth. It must be set in the “original” ancient Greek/Roman setting.
4. Students will be graded on their understanding of the mythological scene/event, including ancient context and culture.
5. Extra credit may be awarded to students who are within 200 words of the maximum limit (writing 1800-2000 words for this assignment).
6. You can see the rubric for the Creative Writing portion here: [Rubric for creative portion.docx](#)

PART 2: Reflection

Online submission due date: 3/5 @ 11:59 PM

Minimum number of sources needed: 2 ancient sources

Length: 500-1500 words

Assignment description: The point of this part of the assignment is to allow you to discuss your decision-making process when you wrote the creative portion of the activity/paper. Note that this part is still considered a formal paper (though you will not have an introduction and conclusion) and so your tone should be professional, organized, and respectful. Please do not submit a rambling stream of consciousness. You should take into account the following issues, in separate numbered paragraphs. Do not repeat the questions below, but number each paragraph and write on the following:

1. Which myth did you select and by which author specifically? You need to include the original author, title of text, and book/line #s. For example: “My paper is based on the night where Achilles ransoms Hector’s body, from Homer’s Iliad 24, lines 350-700.” Continue this paragraph by explaining why you selected this myth/event/version? Is there a personal connection or some other aspect that made it stand out to you?
2. Whose perspective did you take? Why did you select this character as your narrator? Is there a personal connection or some other aspect that made them stand out to you?
3. While you aren’t required to mimic a certain ancient author’s writing style, is there one that you tried to mimic? If not, why did you make the choice to use a different tone/style/format?
4. What else influenced your writing (i.e. class lectures, class writing exercises, a trip to the writing center, a discussion with a friend, a meeting with Dr. Trusty, etc.)?
5. Compare and contrast your story/character’s perspective to the “original” version that you are basing your story on. What did and didn’t “work” when you tried to change the perspective of the story? What did you have to change and why? What does this reveal (if anything) about differences in culture, values, social structure, technology, etc. This potentially requires you to write quite a long answer.
6. List the other mythical event(s) you included in your retelling (remember, you must have at least two total including the one mentioned in #1). Why did you

- incorporate this specific myth(s)? What is useful about it/them? Provide citations with line numbers or sections as in-text citations (see "[Readings and sources that may help with papers \(with FAQ at bottom\)](#)" on ICON for help).
7. Bibliography. Cite all sources that influenced your writing (ancient and modern) including the original author for the myths that you referenced in #1 and #6. This means you must have at least TWO ancient texts listed here (it is OK if they are the same author). See [Citing papers properly and avoiding plagiarism](#) on ICON for help.

Additional notes:

1. Students who double the source/example # requirements (for this assignment, citing 4 or more ancient texts/sources) will receive a 3 point bonus to their "reflection" portion of their paper (for a max of 50 points).
2. You can see the rubric for the Reflection portion here: [Rubric for reflection portion.docx](#)

Activity/Paper 3: Near Translation Exercise

15% of final grade

PART 1: Creative writing

Online submission due date: 3/26 @ 11:59 PM

Length: No max or min.

Assignment description: Near translation exercise. Using the transliterated Latin/Greek text of the myth/scene that we selected on 3/3's class, the literal equivalent provided, and the notes for this text ([CLICK HERE FOR THE COMPLETE](#)

[DOCUMENT](#) [_download](#)), write your own translation of this myth/scene. For extra credit, you may also use a Latin/Greek dictionary and alternative published translations of the text that you find online or in the library. Some of the problems that you will have to solve include:

- References to foreign concepts (do you substitute an American equivalent?)
- Translating metaphors, alliteration, tone and other figures of speech, including words invented by the ancient author!
- Choosing a form (rhyming? meter? blank verse? prose?)
- Deciding when and how to keep the original word order.

Translating is always about choosing what to keep and what to let go. It is impossible not to add shades of meaning that aren't in the original because words rarely match up exactly from one language to another! You can't use Google Translate to help you here!

Specific assignment criteria:

1. Students will be graded on their ability to transform the ancient text into a new English translation that incorporates modern vocabulary and relate it to the modern world.
2. Students should make an attempt to address the language and culture-specific nuances and details in the ancient text (metaphors, alliteration, tone, other figures of speech).
3. Translations can have lines or stanzas or can be in paragraph form. There is no requirement here.
4. Translations do not have to be written in a certain meter or rhyme; extra points may be awarded if you do manage this, however.
5. For extra credit, you may also use a Latin/Greek dictionary and alternative published translations of the text that you find online or in the library. Contact Dr. Trusty if you need help with either of these tasks.
6. You can see the rubric for the Creative Writing portion here: [Rubric for creative portion.docx](#)

PART 2: Reflection

Online submission due date: 3/26 @ 11:59 PM

Length: 400-1500 words

Assignment description: The point of this part of the assignment is to allow you to discuss your decision-making process when you wrote the creative portion of the activity/paper. Note that this part is still considered a formal paper (though you will not have an introduction and conclusion) and so your tone should be professional, organized, and respectful. Please do not submit a rambling stream of consciousness. You should take into account the following issues, in separate numbered paragraphs. Do not repeat the questions below, but number each paragraph and write on the following:

1. What part of your "near translation" are you the most proud of? What about this made it meaningful for you?
2. What part of this exercise was the most difficult for you? How did you overcome it?
3. What form did you use for your "near translation" (rhyming? meter? blank verse? prose?) and why?
4. How did you deal with language-specific issues like word order, alliteration, and tone?
5. How did you deal with culture-specific issues like metaphors, figures of speech, and other temporally/culturally based references?
6. What else influenced your near translation (i.e. class lectures, in-class writing exercises, a trip to the writing center, a discussion with a friend, a meeting with Dr. Trusty, etc.)?
7. Compare and contrast your near translation to that of the literal equivalent. What changes were most dramatic/significant for you and why? Basically, why is your version BETTER than the literal one?

8. If any sources were helpful *besides the one we are translating* (such as a text you may have listed in #6) list them here as a bibliography. See [Citing papers properly and avoiding plagiarism](#) on ICON for help.

Additional notes:

1. You can see the rubric for the Reflection portion here: [Rubric for reflection portion.docx](#)

Activity/Paper 4: Mythistorical News or Rhetorical Exercise 15% of final grade

PART 1: Creative writing

Online submission due date: 4/16 @ 11:59 PM

Length: 1000-2000 words

Assignment description: There are TWO OPTIONS for this paper. Please select ONE:

OPTION 1: Transform a story from **The Daily Iowan** ([Links to an external site.](#)) into an ancient Greek or Roman myth (either set in ancient Greece/Rome or in modern day with Greek/Roman gods and mythological situations). The news story must be set somewhere in Iowa. Think of the ways and reasons an ancient historical event may have been transformed into a myth (based on the hypotheses presented by Herodotus, Thucydides, and Diodorus of Sicily who make use of euhemerism and rationalization. These were mentioned and used in class on 3/1, 3/5, and 3/8). You will provide the link to the news story in the “reflection” portion of your paper. Here are the exact steps for the creative writing portion of this option:

- **Step 1:** Select a news story from this website: <https://dailyiowan.com/> ([Links to an external site.](#)) from any date. It does not have to be an event that has happened in the past month; it can be older, if you find that it has potential; it **MUST** be on an event or situation that took place in Iowa.
- **Step 2:** Decide how you will transform it into a myth. You can set it in modern day Iowa or in ancient Greece/Rome. You are free to rename characters, the perspective from which the story is written/voiced, etc. but you cannot change the basic events, the relationships between the characters, and the ending. If you transform it into an ancient setting, make sure to consider the difference in gender roles, political structure, technology, etc. These are major differences and so your ending may change a little, but it should be generally the same. See Dr. Trusty if you need help. Be prepared to explain your decisions in the reflection process.
- **Step 3:** Find at least 2 events/activities/features from Greco-Roman mythology that you can reference/compare/use in your creative writing portion.
- **Step 4:** Rewrite the story, sticking to the changes you said you would make in step 2 and mentioning the sources in step 3. It does not need to be written in

the style of a news article; it does not need to be in the style of an ancient author, but can if you wish (such as Herodotus, Thucydides, or Diodorus of Sicily); it can be fully narrative in structure or any other method you wish to use, as long as it meets the specific criteria.

Specific assignment criteria:

1.
 1. Students will be graded on their ability to transform the story into one set in Greco-Roman culture, specifically that of the mythological world where gods are ever-present and can control many aspects of human lives.
 2. Students will need to reference at least 2 different mythological events from 2 different ancient texts (they can be from the same author). You will NOT have in-text citations (unless it is a direct quote) or a works cited for this document. That is for the “Reflection” section.
 3. The creative portion does not need to be written in the style of a news article; it can be fully narrative in structure or any other method you wish to use.
 4. Extra credit may be awarded to students who are within 200 words of the maximum limit (writing 1800-2000 words for this assignment).
 5. You can see the rubric for the Creative Writing portion here: [Rubric for creative portion.docx](#)

OPTION 2: Write your own defense, encomium, or invective for a generally un-liked (for defenses and encomia) or liked character (for invectives) either in the style of Gorgias, Isocrates, or Gibson (2019)’s explanation of oratory exercises *OR* in the tone of a modern trial. Students cannot select Helen or Penelope. Some ideas for a written defense/encomium include (but is definitely not limited to) Procne and Philomela, Clytemnestra, one of the suitors (or the maids) of Penelope, or Jason. Some ideas for a written invective include (but definitely is not limited to) Odysseus, Aeneas, Heracles, Theseus, and Alcestis. Your speech should demonstrate ancient rhetorical devices, such as pathos, logos, and ethos.

Specific assignment criteria:

1.
 1. Students will be graded on their ability to defend an un-liked character or attack a beloved character from Greco-Roman myth and mimic the style of defense/invective that they have selected.
 2. Students will need to reference at least 2 different mythological events from 2 different ancient texts (they can be from the same author). You will NOT have in-text citations (unless it is a direct quote) or a works cited for this document. That is for the “Reflection” section.

3. The creative portion can be written either in the style of Gorgias, Isocrates, or Gibson (2019)'s explanation of oratory exercises *OR* in the tone of a modern trial, but all students must demonstrate ancient rhetorical devices, such as pathos, logos, and ethos.
4. Extra credit may be awarded to students who are within 200 words of the maximum limit (writing 1800-2000 words for this assignment).
5. You can see the rubric for the Creative Writing portion here: [Rubric for creative portion.docx](#)

PART 2: Reflection

Online submission due date: 4/16 @ 11:59 PM

Minimum number of sources needed: 2 ancient sources

Length: 500-1500 words

Assignment description: The point of this part of the assignment is to allow you to discuss your decision-making process when you wrote the creative portion of the activity/paper. Note that this part is still considered a formal paper (though you will not have an introduction and conclusion) and so your tone should be professional, organized, and respectful. Please do not submit a rambling stream of consciousness. You should take into account the following issues, in separate numbered paragraphs. Do not repeat the questions below, but number each paragraph and write on the following:

IF YOU WROTE ON CREATIVE OPTION #1 (news story to myth):

1. What news story did you transform into a myth? Why did you select this one? Is there a personal connection or some other aspect that made it stand out to you? Include the link to the news story here.
2. While it was optional, did you seek to mimic any author's style in your paper? If so, why this author? What aspects/stylistics/techniques, in particular, did you seek to mimic?
3. What else influenced your writing (i.e. class lectures, class writing exercises, a trip to the writing center, a discussion with a friend, a meeting with Dr. Trusty, etc.)?
4. What did and didn't "work" when you tried to transform this modern factual story into a mythological one? What did you have to change from the modern version or what worked well? If you placed the story in ancient Greece or Rome, what difficulties did you have and what does this reveal about differences in culture, values, social structure, technology, etc. This potentially requires you to write quite a long answer.
5. What mythical events did you include in your retelling and why (remember, you had to have at least two)? What ancient author mentions these myths (see "[Readings and sources that may help with papers \(with FAQ at bottom\)](#)" on ICON for help). You need to include the original author, title of

text, and book/line #s. For example: "Achilles ransoms Hector's body, from Homer's Iliad 24, lines 350-700." Continue this paragraph by discussing why you used these specific myths and what was useful about them?

6. Cite all sources that influenced your writing (ancient and modern) including the original author for the myths that you referenced in #5. This means you must have at least TWO ancient texts listed here (it is OK if they are the same author). See [Citing papers properly and avoiding plagiarism](#) on ICON for help).

IF YOU WROTE ON CREATIVE OPTION #2 (encomium/invective of a character):

1. Which character did you select to defend, praise, or attack and why? Is there a personal connection or some other aspect that made them stand out to you?
2. Which tone (Isocrates, Gorgias, Gibson's invectives, or a modern trial) did you try to mimic in your paper? Which elements specifically did you try to emulate and why?
3. What else influenced your writing (i.e. class lectures, class writing exercises, a trip to the writing center, a discussion with a friend, a meeting with Dr. Trusty, etc.)?
4. What did you find difficult to defend or praise as you tried to write your encomium/invective for this mythological character? Is this because of ancient or modern cultural differences? What difficulties did you have with this assignment and what does this reveal about differences in culture, values, social structure, technology, etc. What sorts of arguments do you think an opponent could make in a rebuttal to your paper? This potentially requires you to write quite a long answer.
5. What elements of the myth (or version(s) from different authors) did you emphasize to make your point? Which parts of the story (or versions from other authors) did you find you needed to ignore or hide to prove your point? Be sure to cite specific authors and their works (providing line numbers or sections as in-text citations). See "[Readings and sources that may help with papers \(with FAQ at bottom\)](#)" on ICON for help.
6. Bibliography. Cite all sources that influenced your writing (ancient and modern) including the original author for the myths that you referenced in #5. This means you must have at least TWO ancient texts listed here (it is OK if they are the same author). See [Citing papers properly and avoiding plagiarism](#) on ICON for help.

Additional notes:

1. Students who double the source/example # requirements (for this assignment, citing 4 or more ancient texts/sources) will receive a 3 point bonus to their "reflection" portion of their paper (for a max of 50 points).
2. You can see the rubric for the Reflection portion here: [Rubric for reflection portion.doc](#)

Activity/Paper 5: Modernize a myth

15% of final grade

PART 1: Creative writing

Online submission due date: 5/7 @ 11:59 PM

Length: 1000-2000 words

Assignment description: Modernize any ancient myth from Greco-Roman mythology (but not one that you have already written about for any other paper). Add elements that are modern (smartphones, social media, politics, etc.) and/or subtract elements that are too rooted in ancient customs, manners, or technology. You can base it in any part of the world (USA, Mexico, China, etc.) but it needs to be set in the past 10 years or modern day (yes, pre-2020 is OK). I strongly recommend selecting a small section or portion of a myth rather than an entire hero or story (i.e. just one of Heracles' labors instead of all 12). Students need to either write in the style of one of the authors we have studied this semester (though writing in Apollodorus' style is not permitted as it is too simplistic) or bring in elements of ancient Greek and Roman storytelling that we have discussed this semester (i.e. *in medias res*, metaphors and similes, stichomythia, etc.). Extra points will be awarded to those students who do both.

Specific assignment criteria:

1. Students will need to reference at least 3 different mythological events or use at least 3 different ancient texts on the same event (they can be from the same author). You will NOT have in-text citations (unless it is a direct quote) or a works cited for this document. That is for the "Reflection" section.
2. Students need to either write in the style of one of the authors we have studied this semester (Apollodorus' style is not permitted as it is too simplistic) or bring in elements of ancient Greek and Roman storytelling that we have discussed this semester (i.e. *in medias res*, metaphors and similes, stichomythia, etc.). Extra points will be awarded to those students who do both.
3. Students will be graded on their ability to understand and interpret the myths they include in their retelling and find creative ways of modernizing them; the myths that they reference and use in their modern version should be accurate and insightful.
4. Extra credit may be awarded to students who are within 200 words of the maximum limit (writing 1800-2000 words for this assignment).
5. You can see the rubric for the Creative Writing portion here: [Rubric for creative portion.docx](#)

PART 2: Reflection

Online submission due date: 5/7 @ 11:59 PM

Minimum number of sources needed: 3 ancient sources

Length: 500-1500 words

Assignment description: The point of this part of the assignment is to allow you to discuss your decision-making process when you wrote the creative portion of the activity/paper. Note that this part is still considered a formal paper (though you will not have an introduction and conclusion) and so your tone should be professional, organized, and respectful. Please do not submit a rambling stream of consciousness. You should take into account the following issues, in separate numbered paragraphs. Do not repeat the questions below, but number each paragraph and write on the following:

1. Which myth did you select to modernize and by which author specifically? You need to include the original author, title of text, and book/line #s. For example: "My paper retells the story where Achilles ransoms Hector's body, from Homer's Iliad 24, lines 350-700." Add to this paragraph by discussion why you selected this myth. Is there a personal connection or some other aspect that made it stand out to you?
2. You were required to either write in the style of one of the authors we have studied this semester (Apollodorus' style is not permitted as it is too simplistic) or bring in elements of ancient Greek and Roman storytelling that we have discussed this semester (i.e. *in medias res*, metaphors and similes, stichomythia, etc.).
 - If you wrote in an ancient author's style, who did you choose and why? What did you do to imitate their style? What did you struggle with while mimicking their style?
 - If you brought in elements of ancient storytelling, which ones did you incorporate and how? What did you find difficult about this?
 - If you did both of these (for extra credit), answer all of the questions above.
3. What else influenced your writing (i.e. class lectures, class writing exercises, a trip to the writing center, a discussion with a friend, a meeting with Dr. Trusty, etc.)?
4. Compare and contrast your modern version to the "original" that you based your story on. Yes, this could be a long paragraph.
5. What did and didn't "work" when you tried to update the myth to modern times? What did you have to change and why? What parts of the ancient myth still work well in a modern setting? What does this reveal about differences in culture, values, social structure, technology, etc. This potentially requires you to write quite a long answer.
6. If you referenced any other mythical events in your paper besides the main story mentioned in #1 or used any other versions, mention them here. Remember that you need 3 total sources minimum. Continue this paragraph by discussing why you used/incorporated these specific myths. What was useful about them? Provide citations with line numbers or sections as in-text citations. See "[Readings and sources that may help with papers \(with FAQ at bottom\)](#)" on ICON for help.
7. Bibliography. Cite all sources that influenced your writing (ancient and modern) including the original author for the myths that you referenced in #1

and #6. This means you must have at least THREE ancient texts listed here (it is OK if they are the same author). See [Citing papers properly and avoiding plagiarism](#) on ICON for help.

Additional notes:

1. Students who double the source/example # requirements (for this assignment, citing 4 or more ancient texts/sources) will receive a 3 point bonus to their “reflection” portion of their paper (for a max of 50 points).
2. You can see the rubric for the Reflection portion here: [Rubric for reflection portion.docx](#)