

MODULE SYLLABUS

The myth of the abduction of Persephone

HPAH6038

Module Code: HPAH6038
Credit points: 20
Pre-requisites/restrictions: None
Taught: Block 1 2022
Lecturer: Dr. Ruth Parkes

GENERAL INFORMATION

The myth of Hades' abduction of Persephone and the fertility goddess Demeter's reaction to the abduction has been told and retold throughout antiquity. This module examines the use and function of the myth in the ancient world across a period of some ten centuries, and provides students with a detailed study of the myth in a variety of literary works. A selection of literary versions of the myth will be studied in depth, such as the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Ovid *Fasti* 4.417-620, Ovid *Metamorphoses* 5.341-661, and Claudian *De Raptu Proserpinae*. The module offers the student the opportunity to explore the impact of the socio-cultural and historical context (such as the compositional, performative and religious backdrop) and the impact of the literary context, including the importance of intertextual relations between the literary versions. The module also affords students an opportunity to critically explore attitudes to gender, rape and marriage as conveyed through the studied texts.

AIM(S)

- to critically analyse the use of the Persephone abduction myth in literature in its socio-cultural and historical contexts, using detailed knowledge;
- to engage with scholarly approaches to and theoretical frameworks for the study of the Persephone abduction myth and its manifestation in literary texts in ancient culture.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate the ability to demonstrate:

- demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Persephone abduction myth and of the individual literary manifestations of the myth read as part of the module;
- display an understanding and critical appreciation of key themes and diverse scholarly approaches to the Persephone abduction myth;
- demonstrate an understanding of literary, socio-cultural and historical contexts, and how these affect our interpretation of the literary manifestations of the myth.

HOW TO CONTACT ME

Please feel free to come and see me if you would like to discuss any problems you may have concerning this module. Please catch me after class or email me to arrange a time (R.Parkes@uwtsd.ac.uk). You can also ask questions (not confidential) on the discussion board available in the Moodle space for this course.

COURSE MATERIALS AND MOODLE

I encourage students make active use of the Moodle forum that will be set up for this course. You may contact me via the forum, but more importantly, you will also have the opportunity to discuss aspects of the course with your fellow students there. Furthermore, all information regarding this course, including the module syllabus and assignment details will be available on the Moodle space.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

Attendance is compulsory for ALL sessions. If you cannot make a class because of illness or other good reason, you need to inform the faculty office and myself about this. Sessions are on Mondays/Tuesdays/Thursdays/Fridays 10.00-12.50 (Sheif Khalifa 2), unless otherwise indicated (there will be no class on the day of the queen's funeral and on the day when the first two assignments are due in: Monday of second week and Monday of third week).

Course Outline:

week 1: introduction and background; Homeric Hymn to Demeter

week 2: themes and variants: Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Ovid *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*

week 3: other versions including Cicero *Verrines* and Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*; themes

week 4: themes

ASSESSMENT

Coursework in three parts (do not repeat material from prior assignments):

Part 1 (25%)

You should choose ONE of the following gobbets and comment on its context and content in an essay of 1,000 words (worth 25% of your final mark) (due 26/09/2022):

i) *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 90-117

OR

ii) *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 387-413

Part 2 (25%)

(due 3/10/2022) (1,500 words)

EITHER

1) Choose TWO out of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Ovid *Fasti* 4.417-620 and Ovid *Metamorphoses* 5.341-661; Then give a detailed account of the flowers and vegetation in these sources and include analysis of reasons for the difference in treatments.

OR

2) Choose TWO out of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Ovid *Fasti* 4.417-620 and Ovid *Metamorphoses* 5.341-661. Then give a detailed account of the main deities involved, their power and their activity, and include analysis of reasons for the difference in treatments.

NB If you are a creative writing student, your assessment for this part will be:

Drawing inspiration from EITHER *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Ovid *Fasti* 4.417-620 OR Ovid *Metamorphoses* 5.341-661, write a creative response to the text. You may choose any form for your creative work (e.g. one long poem / three shorter poems, monologue, flash fiction), up to a limit 1,500 words.

Part 3 (50%)

Write an essay of 2,500 words on one of the following questions (due 14/10/2022):

1) Analyse the exploitation of location and/or topography in literary presentations of the Persephone abduction myth.

2) Analyse the impact of narrative factors on the textual presentation of the Persephone abduction myth.

3) Discuss and analyse the use of gender in literary instantiations of the Persephone myth. Use no more than three texts.

NB If you are a creative writing student, your assessment for this part will be:

Write a critical essay of 2,500 words (50% of the portfolio) reflecting on the process of researching

and writing your creative piece(s). The essay should include substantial reference to research and analysis of Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Ovid *Fasti* 4.417-620 and Ovid *Metamorphoses* 5.341-661.

Word count

Please be aware that if you go significantly over or under the word limit (i.e. more than 10%), you may be penalised.

REMEMBER that the word count includes everything apart from the bibliography, titles or captions. You must provide the word count clearly.

Some extra assignment/essay guidelines

Help for the writing of coursework is available through material on the faculty of Humanities website. You are advised to read the relevant sections carefully.

Marks will be deducted if your piece of coursework is not presented properly (e.g. double-spacing, font 12 is needed). Note that all coursework needs to be word-processed; hand-written work will not be accepted. Assessment criteria can be found through moodle.

***** You need to watch plagiarism whenever you use secondary literature (please read carefully the plagiarism section in the Student Guide – ALL coursework is submitted to a Turn-It-In analysis).** Please consult the material found via the faculty of Humanities moodle page for advice on how to reference secondary literature.

In case of problems....

Do come and see me during office hours (and well in advance of submission) if you have any problems with the writing or planning of your piece of coursework. You are also welcome to see your personal tutor for advice.

Welsh First language

If your first language is Welsh and you would like to submit any assessed coursework in Welsh, please see the Faculty Office as soon as possible to make arrangements for this.

Special needs / requirements

If you have any special needs (e.g. dyslexia, visual impairment) that need to be taken into account for the teaching of this module, please make sure that your welfare officer made aware of this so that we can make sure that we fully support you in your studies.

Returning of work

Details of the assignment deadlines and return dates are given above. Detailed feedback is given with the returned work but if you would like to discuss your work in more detail, do come and see me.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliographic references/links are provided in the Moodle space for this course. Please note that the books mentioned there are only recommendations. You should also make use of the relevant class notes and handouts and do some independent research.

Essential

main specified set texts. See e.g. online loebs. For paper translations, there is A.D. Melville translation of *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (1986, Oxford) and David R. Slavitt's translation of the *De Raptu Proserpinae* (*Broken Columns: Two Roman Epic Fragments: The Achilleid of Publius Papinius Statius and The Rape of Proserpine of Claudius Claudianus. With an Afterword by David*

Konstan. 1997, Philadelphia) and Claire Gruzelier's translation of the *De Raptu Proserpinae* which accompanies her 1993 Oxford commentary.

Recommended

Bowden, H. 2010. *Mystery cults of the ancient world* (Princeton)

Clay, J. S. 1997. 'The Homeric Hymns', in Morris and Powell (eds.), *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden, New York, Cologne), 489-507.

Fantham, E. (ed.). 1998. *Fasti* 4 (Cambridge).

Foley, H. (ed.). 1993. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Princeton).

Foley, H. (ed.). 1994. *Homeric Hymn to Demeter: translation, commentary, and interpretative essays* (Princeton).

Hinds, S. 1987. *The Metamorphosis of Persephone: Ovid and the Self-conscious Muse* (Cambridge).

Hinds, S. 'Return to Enna: Ovid and Ovidianism in Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*', academia.edu.

Parker, R. 1991. 'The Hymn to Demeter and the Homeric hymns', *Greece & Rome* 38, 1-17.

Richardson, N. 1974. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford).

Tsai, S-C Kevin. 2007. 'Hellish Love: Genre in Claudian's *De raptu Proserpinae*', *Helios* 34.1, 37-68.

Wheeler, S. 1995. 'The Underworld Opening of Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*', *TAPA* 125, 113-34.

Zissos, A. 1999. 'The Rape of Proserpina in Ovid "Met." 5.341-661: Internal Audience and Narrative Distortion' *Phoenix*, 53.1/2, 97-113.