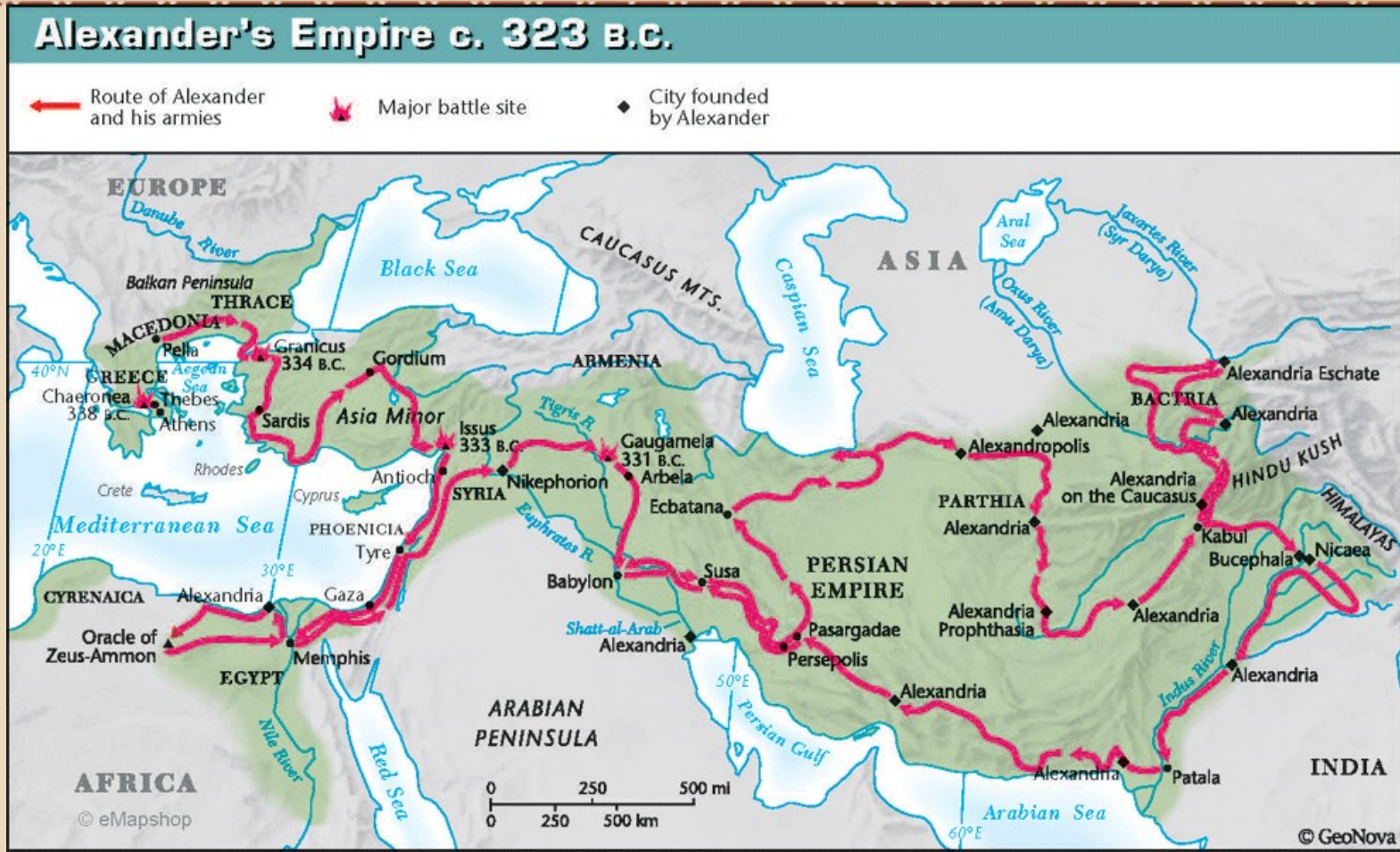


Classical Mythology and Legends in Roman and Medieval Times HPAH5082 / HPAH6082



Aims

To engage with scholarly approaches to and theoretical frameworks for the study of heroic myths from the Classical world and their manifestation in literary texts in ancient and medieval times.

To critically analyse the use of these myths in literature in their socio-cultural and historical contexts, using detailed knowledge;



Learning Outcomes



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

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



Indicative content



Myths concerning heroes from the ancient world, such as Achilles and Alexander, have been told and retold throughout antiquity and after. This module examines the use and function of some of the myths in the ancient Roman world and medieval times, and provides students with a detailed study of some mythic heroes in a variety of literary works. A selection of literary versions of the myth will be studied in depth, such as Statius' *Achilleid* and Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*. The module offers the student the opportunity to explore the impact of the socio-cultural and historical context (such as the compositional backdrop) and the impact of the literary context. The module also affords students an opportunity to critically explore attitudes to gender and heroism as conveyed through the studied texts.



HPAH5082/6082: on myth and reception of myth of Achilles and Alexander the Great



- Three assignments (**do not repeat material used for prior assignments. You must NOT treat the same heroic figure in all three assignments**):

Assignment 1 (account of sources): deadline Sunday 1/2/2026

Assignment 2 (critical commentary): deadline Sunday 8/2/2026

Assignment 3 (essay): deadline: Sunday 22/2/2026

NB there will be no on-campus sessions in week 4: this week is for researching and writing the essay.

There will be an extra online session on Thursday 29/1/2026, where people can sign-up to individually discuss the source assignment, and Thursday 5/2/2026 where people can sign-up to individually discuss the commentary assignment

On Monday am 15/4/2024 there will be online slots for individual discussion of essay plans.



NB

- Classes: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10-12.50 (on-campus apart from individual discussion slots, unless prior arrangement with student services)
- Please notify me if you are absent (email r.parkes@uwtsd.ac.uk)
- Email me if you wish to arrange to discuss anything outside of class
- the forum is also available for discussion and questions

Week 1: introductory background and sources



- **HPAH5082** Assignment 1: [500 words]

EITHER i) OR ii)

- i) Give a detailed account, including variants, of Alexander's encounter with Talestris in the sources. Focus upon Walter of Châtillon, *Alexandreis* 8.1-48; Quintus Curtius Rufus 6.5.24-32; *Historia de preliis* pp.77-9.
- or
- ii) Give a detailed account, including variants, of Alexander's relationship with Roxanne in the sources. Focus upon Quintus Curtius Rufus 8.4.21-30; Plutarch *Alex.* 47.4; Arrian 4.19.5-6.



Week 1: introductory background and sources



- **HPAH6082 Assignment 1 [1000 words]**

i) Give a detailed account of Alexander's encounter with Talestris in the sources and **include analysis of reasons for the differences**. Focus upon Walter of Châtillon, *Alexandreis* 8.1-48; Quintus Curtius Rufus 6.5.24-32; *Historia de preliis* pp77-9.

or

ii) Give a detailed account of Alexander's relationship with Roxanne in the sources and **include analysis of reasons for the differences**. Focus upon Quintus Curtius Rufus 8.4.21-30; Plutarch *Alexander* 47.4; Arrian 4.19.5-6.



Week 2: critical commentary



HPAH5082 Assignment 2: [1500 words]

Write a critical commentary on ONE of the following:

i) Ovid *Heroides* 3.1-26

ii) Lucan *Civil War* 10.1-33

iii) *Deidamia Achilli* 9-38

iv) Walter of Châtillon, *Alexandreis* 1.74-99 (59-84 Latin) (“The master, pale and wan..... I’ll teach you how you may accomplish it”)



Week 2: critical commentary



HPAH6082 Assignment 2: [1500 words]

Write a critical commentary on ONE of the following:

i) Ovid *Heroides* 3.1-38

ii) Lucan *Civil War* 10.1-40

iii) *Deidamia Achilli* 9-49

iv) Walter of Châtillon, *Alexandreis* 1.61-99/(48-84: Latin) (“And so he spoke, declaiming to his heart... ,.... I’ll teach you how you may accomplish it”)



Week 3: Alexander/Achilles



general themes/motifs/treatments, with sources such as Statius' *Achilleid* and the rhetorical tradition. Room for personal interests. Preparing for: **HPAH5082 Assignment 3 (3000 words)**:

Write an essay on one of the following questions:

- i) Describe and analyse some uses of the depiction of Achilles as a youth in any Latin texts focussed upon in this module. Do not use more than three sources.
- ii) How and why has Alexander been used as a figure in Latin texts which treat ruling and power? You must confine your answer to no more than three texts focussed upon in this module.
- iii) Consider why a Greek hero – using the example of Achilles OR Alexander – might have been treated in Latin texts from the Roman Empire. Illustrate your answer with examples from no more than two texts.
- iv) Consider why a Greek hero – using the example of Achilles OR Alexander – might have been treated in Latin texts written after the fall of the Roman empire. Illustrate your answer with examples from no more than two texts..



HPAH6082 Assignment 3:



Write an essay on one of the following questions [**2500** words]

- i) Analyse some uses of the depiction of Achilles as a youth in any Latin texts focussed upon in this module. Do not use more than three sources.
- ii) “Alexander acts as a model for contemporary rulers”. Discuss with reference to no more than three Latin texts focussed upon for this module.
- iii) Explore and analyse the use of a Greek hero – using the example of Achilles OR Alexander – in Latin texts from the Roman Empire. Illustrate your answer with examples from no more than two texts.
- iv) Explore and analyse the use of a Greek hero – using the example of Achilles OR Alexander – in Latin texts written after the fall of the Roman empire. Illustrate your answer with examples from no more than two texts.

