**ODYSSEUS IN LITERATURE**

Comparative Literature COLT 0710Q-S01

Fall 2014

***Professor Vangelis Calotychos***

Monday -Wednesday- Friday 1:00 – 1:50 p.m.

Smith-Buonanno Hall 101

Examines the reincarnations of the Homeric figure of Odysseus in contemporary literatures and films as a modernist figure, a postcolonial subject, and an existentialist hero. How is the Odysseus myth altered from culture to culture (Greece, Rome, Ireland, the Caribbean), how is it re-adapted in different historical periods and from different perspectives (feminist, marxist, postcolonial), how does Odysseus change as the genre changes (epic, poetry, the novel, film, drama)? Major authors include Homer, Virgil, Alfred Lord Tennyson, James Joyce, Nikos Kazantzakis, C.P. Cavafy, George Seferis, Margaret Atwood, Derek Walcott, and Mary Zimmerman. Close attention will also be paid to three films: Theo Angelopoulos’ *Ulysses’ Gaze*, Joel and Ethan Coen’s *O Brother Where Art Thou?,* Bryan Singer’s *The Usual Suspects.*

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**WEEK 1**

**Sept. 3** Introductory Remarks: On Odysseus and James Bond

**Sept. 5** C.P. Cavafy, “Ithaka”; “Second Odyssey.”

**WEEK 2**

**Sept. 8** Homer, *The Iliad,* Books 2 & 9

**Sept. 10** Homer, *The Odyssey,* Books 1-4

**Sept. 12** Homer, *The Odyssey,* Books 5-9

**WEEK 3**

**Sept. 15** Homer, *The Odyssey,* Books 9-14

**Sept. 17** Homer, *The Odyssey,* Books 15-18

**Sept. 19** Bryan Singer, *The Usual Suspects* (film 1995)

Hanna M. Roisman, “Verbal Odysseus: Narrative Strategy in the Odyssey and in

the *Usual Suspects.*” In *Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema*, edited by Martin M. Winkler, 51-71.

**WEEK 4**

**Sept. 22** Homer, *The Odyssey,* Books 19-24

**Sept. 24** Virgil,The Aeneid, Books 2 & 6

**Sept. 26** Alfred Lord Tennyson, “Ulysses”

W.B. Stanford, “Virgil’s Ulysses” (from *The Ulysses Theme*)

**WEEK 5**

**Sept. 29** Nikos Kazantzakis, *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel*

The Odyssey (Synopsis)

**Oct. 1** Nikos Kazantzakis, *The Odyssey : A Modern Sequel*

Book I: “Odysseus subdues a revolt in Ithaca”

Book II: “Odysseus leaves Ithaca forever”

**Oct. 3** George Seferis, *Mythistorema*

**WEEK 6**

**Oct. 6/8/10 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Episode 1-6)**

* + The Telemachiad
    - Episode I, Telemachus
    - Episode 2, Nestor
    - Episode 3, Proteus
  + The Odyssey
    - Episode 4, Calypso
    - Episode 5, The Lotus Eaters
    - Episode 6, Hades

**WEEK 7**

**Oct. 13 NO CLASS**

**Oct. 15/17** The Odyssey Episodes 7-12

Episode 7, Aeolus

* + - Episode 8, The Laestrygonians
    - Episode 9, Scylla and Charybdis
    - Episode 10, The Wandering Rocks
    - Episode 11, The Sirens
    - Episode 12, The Cyclops

**WEEK 8**

**Oct. 20/22** The Odyssey Episodes 13-15

* + - Episode 13, Nausicaa
    - Episode 14, The Oxen of the Sun
    - Episode 15, Circe

**Oct. 24** [Joel & Ethan Coen, O Borther Where Art Thou? (film)

Janice Siegel, “The Coens’ *O Brother Where Art Thou* and Homer’s *Odyssey.”*

*Mouseion* 7: 3, 2007, 213-245.

**WEEK 9**

**Oct. 27/29/31** The Nostos (pp. 612-783)

* + - [Episode 15, Circe *cont.]*
    - Episode 16, Eumaeus
    - Episode 17, Ithaca
    - Episode 18, Penelope

**WEEK 10**

**Nov. 3** Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad*

**Nov. 5 “ “**

**Nov. 7** Penelope poems: Yannis Ritsos “Penelope’s Despair”; Katerina Angelaki Rooke, “Says Penelope” & “The Other Penelope”.

**WEEK 11**

**Nov. 10/12/14** Theo Angelopoulos, *Ulysses’ Gaze* (film)

**Nov. 12** Jameson, Fredric. 1997. “Theo Angelopoulos: the past as history, the future as form.” In *The Last Modernist: The Films of Theo Angelopoulos,* edited by A. Horton,78-95. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Kamboureli, Smaro. n.d. “Memory Under Siege: Archive Fever in Theo Angelopoulos’s *Ulysses’ Gaze.*”Proceedings of conference on “Performing Identity/Crossing Borders: The Cyprus Symposium. <http://www.tru.ca/cicac/media/smaro_2007.pdf>

Vangelis Calotychos, *The Balkan Prospect,* Chapter 3 (excerpt)

**Nov. 14** Angelopoulos discussion (continued)

**WEEK 12**

**Nov. 17** Derek Walcott, *The Odyssey – A Stage Version*

**Nov. 19 “ “**

**Nov. 21** Derek Walcott, Omeros (excerpt)

**WEEK 13**

**Nov. 24** Mary Zimmerman, *The Odyssey: A Play*

**Nov. 26 NO CLASS**

**Nov. 28 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

**WEEK 14**

**Dec. 1** Theodor Adorno, “Excursus: Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment.”

Erich Auerbach, “Odysseus’ Scar.”

**Dec. 3 Final paper presentations**

**Dec. 5 Final paper presentations**

**Required textbooks**

Homer, *The Odyssey.* Translated by Richmond Lattimore. New York: Harper Perennial, 1967.

James Joyce, *Ulysses.* New York: Vintage Books, 1961.

Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad.* New York: Random House (or Cannongate), 2005.

Derek Walcott: 'The Odyssey- a stage version." New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux (also

electronic resource), 1993.

Mary Zimmerman, *The Odyssey: a Play.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003.

*The above books can be bought at the Brown bookstore. All other readings will be distributed by the instructor or may be accessible in electronic form. Secondary readings to complement our reading of Homer’s* Odyssey *will be supplied as necessary.*

**ASSIGNMENTS**

There will be a midterm take home examination paper (8 pages; due on **October 15th**) and a final term paper (10 pages; due on **December 12th**). The former will ask you to answer two of a larger set of questions set by the instructor. No secondary sources will be required for this exercise. The final paper is a research paper on a topic of your choice. In November, students will be required to compose an abstract detailing the topic and thesis for this paper. They will then share it with the instructor and their peers and work on researching the topic and developing their argument over successive drafts.

Weekly responses to the readings of the week are to be kept in a journal. The instructor will collect these periodically.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE HANDED IN ON TIME. Extensions will not be given for typical problems.

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

Midterm Paper (8 pages) 20%

Oral presentation 15%

Weekly responses (one page) 15%

Final Paper (10 pages) 25%

Attendance and participation 25%

**ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend every session of the class. Students who miss class without instructor permission may have their grade lowered. Each student’s participation and preparedness is intrinsic to the success of our class discussions.

**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism, which is commonly understood as using another’s words or ideas as one’s own, is a very serious offense. Cases of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with strict university policy on academic dishonesty. If you are unsure whether a particular action constitutes plagiarism, you should consult your instructor well in advance of handing in your written work.