**IDH 2930 Homer The Odyssey**

**Fall 2018**

**Th, Period 10, LIT 0117**

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**INSTRUCTOR**: CHRYSOSTOMOS KOSTOPOULOS, Turlington Hall 3328, (352) 392-8902 X209, CKOSTOPO@UFL.EDU

For an updated version of this document please visit the class web site at Canvas.

**OFFICE HOURS**: 10:45 – 11:30 AM M -Th, and 1:00 – 2:00 T/Th OR BY APPOINTMENT

**COURSE CONTENT:** For more than twenty-five centuries, Homer’s Odyssey has profoundly influenced literature, art and thought in the Western world and beyond. It is a monumental artistic achievement, admired and still imitated by artists today. In the story of the Odyssey, the arduous homecoming trials of the wandering hero Odysseus are intertwined with captivating adventures in the Mediterranean stormy-seas and terrifying encounters with one-eyed giants, witches, and seductive princesses. The hero’s endurance, restlessness and crafty intelligence fascinates the reader who cannot but marvel at the sheer genius of the poet who started European literature.

The goal of the course is to provide the student with the opportunity to read the Odyssey and reflect on a variety of topics that are fundamental to our understanding of the poem. Themes addressed will range from literary to cultural. In addition to an extensive examination of the story of Odysseus, we will also deal with broader topics ranging from questions of gender and religion as well as the reception of Homer’s poetry across various genres from Antiquity to present day.

The class is taught in English and there are no special requirements.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

* To become familiar with the key events in the story of Odysseus and to be able to identify what makes the Oddysey a unique and fascinating poem.
* To appreciate the importance and continued influence of the Odyssey in literature and art from the ancient times to the present day.
* To practice close readings and informed literary analysis and criticism, including considerations and interpretations of character, plot, and structure.
* To acquire a better understanding of the religious, political, and social background of the *Odyssey* with particular attention paid to the way history is reflected in ancient legends and mythology.

**TEXTBOOK:** Homer, Odyssey, translated by Barry B. Powell, Oxford University Press (2014)

**GRADING POLICY:**

* Essay, 50 points (November 8)

Students will write a short 4 pages essay on a topic of their choosing that relates to Homer’s Odyssey and the topics discussed in class. Please consult the professor before choosing a topic.

* Presentation, 50 points (Last weeks of the semester)

In order to foster in-depth study of a particular topic of interest, students will make a presentation using as a basis their essay. The presentation should last about 15 minutes. You are responsible for scheduling an appointment with me before your presentation to discuss the details of your presentation.

Please note that requests of any special accommodations must be made to the course instructor in writing and in advance of the class or exam time.

You are more than welcome to discuss any of these requirements or assignments with the professor.

**ATTENDANCE**:

According to the Office of the University Registrar, “acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused.”

For further information about the University of Florida’s attendance policy, please see the current Undergraduate Catalogue (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>).

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

Academic dishonesty, including cheating on exams and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism, and what the university policies are. If you have doubts, we would be happy to discuss with you. Please refer to the current Undergraduate Catalog for more information on the Student Honor code (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>). If you have questions about these policies, we would be happy to discuss them with you.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this class, you should contact the Dean of Students Office ([www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/)) so that special arrangements can be made to accommodate you. It is your responsibility to do so at the beginning of the semester.

**GRADING SCALE:**

A 94-100

A- 90-93

B+ 85-89

B 80-84

B- 75-79

C+ 70-74

C 65-69

C- 60-64

D+ 56-59

D 52-55

D- 48-51

E 47 or below

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1**

1. Syllabus, discussion of course objectives, requirements, important course dates etc.

2. Background to Homer, the Oral Tradition, Epic Poetry and the Trojan War.

**Week 2**

1. Book 1: Setting the plot in motion: Council of the gods, Zeus, Athena;

Odysseus’ son Telemachus—his experiences; his wife Penelope; her suitors; the situation at home.

1. Book 2: Assembly—the situation in town governance; Telemachus; Penelope.

**Week 3**

1. Book 3: Telemachus sails to Pylos, home of King Nestor, eldest chief at Troy, the visit framed by prayers and sacrifices; Nestor’s account of what happened when they left Troy and what happened to other warriors.

2. Book 4: Nestor’s son Peisistratus and Telemachus travel to Sparta, home of Helen and Menelaus; Helen’s and Menelaus’ stories; Menelaus and the Old Man of the Sea.

3. Books 1–4, the “Telemakheia” Telemachus’ story; why the poem about Odysseus starts with the story of the son.

4. Book 5: Council of the gods, Hermes to Ogygia, home of goddess Kalypso;

description of her home; interactions between Hermes and Kalypso, Kalypso and

Odysseus; what Kalypso offers Odysseus, his response.

**Week 4**

1. Book 6: Odysseus lands at island of Phaeacians; interaction between Odysseus and princess Nausicaa: what he tells her, his requests, her assistance

2. Book 7: Description of the Phaeacian palace and gardens; how Athena helps

Odysseus; Queen Arête’s role; King Alcinous’ hospitality.

3. Book 8: Songs and entertainment at the palace: respect for the singer; his 3 popular songs related to the themes of the poem: Achilles, the Trojan horse, and the extramarital love affair between the goddess of eroticism Aphrodite and god of war Ares.

**Week 5**

1. Book 9: Odysseus begins the story of his adventures since leaving Troy, 1st 3:

Thracians, Lotus Eaters, focus on the Cyclops—Odysseus’ cleverness, his folly,

Polyphemus’ curse.

2. Book 10: Encounters 4-6: god of winds Aeolus: what Odysseus keeps from his men and why; Laistrygonians; goddess Kirke: what she does to the men; what Odysseus experiences; her instructions.

**Week 6**

1. Book 11: #7: Odysseus and the shades of the dead: Teiresias’ prophecy; Odysseus’ encounters with his mother Antikleia, female shades, male shades—what each tells him and what he learns from them.

2. Book 12: #s 8-11: Kirke again, her further instructions; the Sirens; Skylla and

Charybdis; the sun god Helios’ island, his cattle, and consequences.

**Week 7**

1. Book 13: Parting gifts, passage home; how he lands; what happens to the Phaeacians; interaction between Odysseus and Athena, her instructions
2. Book 14: Odysseus, disguised as a foreign beggar, at hut of his swineherd Eumaeus: how they treat each other; Odysseus’ stories, Eumaeus’ responses.

**Week 8**

1. Book 15: Helen’s, Menelaus’ parting gifts; Telemachus’ return home; Eumaeus’ story; Telemachus lands, heads to Eumaeus’ hut
2. Book 16: Father and son; suitors snookered; Penelope upbraids suitors
3. Book 17: Disguised Odysseus goes to his palace, the suitors’ treatment of him

**Week 9**

1. Book 18: Omens: Telemachus sneezes, Penelope laughs, she elicits gifts from the suitors; Odysseus laughs
2. Book 19: Penelope, not knowing who he is, questions the disguised Odysseus; what they tell each other; his old nurse’s Eurykleia’s recognition; story of his scar; Penelope’s dream; the contest she proposes. What does Penelope know?
3. Book 20: Omens, prayers; more taunting of Odysseus; Telemachus takes charge

**Week 10**

1. Book 21: Penelope sets up the decisive contest; how Odysseus handles the bow
2. Book 22: Killing of the suitors: who gets killed first, who gets saved; how dead suitors, treacherous maids, and polluted house are dealt with

**Week 11**

1. Book 23: Reunion of Penelope and Odysseus: her tests, their secret sign; equivalency of their experiences
2. Book 24: Shades in the underworld tell of Achilles’ funeral; Odysseus with his father and son; the final battle line—grandfather, father and son: one killing, Athena brings peace.

**Week 12**

General Discussion. Presentations

**Week 13**

General Discussion. Presentations

**Week 14**

Thanksgiving No Class

**Week 15**

Conclusion