

Hercules: The Man, the Myth, the Legend (IDH2952)

Spring 2025 | Honors (un)Common Arts

Class Number: 25975 | Section: A002 | T 8 (3:00pm-3:50pm) | Honors Village 1-114

Instructor: Anthony Smith (a.smith2@ufl.edu), Department Phone (352) 273-3701

Office Hours: MW 7 (1:55pm-2:45pm) or by appointment in Dauer 217

Course Description

The quintessential strong man of the ancient Greek and Roman world, the hero Hercules has remained a constant figure in media over the millennia. Who is Hercules? What's his story? Did he really go "from zero to hero"? In this course, we'll discover "the gospel truth" about Hercules as we "go the distance" and explore the changing media depictions of him across time and cultures, from the pottery, painting, and drama of the ancient world to modern television and film screens.

The heroic Hercules used his strength, brains, and resolve to take on the twelve labors but also was involved in many comic stories. With our primary focus on artistic depictions, we'll also check out how Hercules appeared in ancient literature, especially drama. Modern media, on the other hand, tends to lean in more on Hercules' heroic characteristics. We'll explore three time periods of Hercules on screen: the mid-20th century, the turn of the millennium, and the 2010s.

What can we learn from a fictional character who carries with him millennia of 'baggage'? Why do stories about Hercules remain so popular across time and cultures?

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- identify the major elements of Hercules as a character and the many stories about him.
- basically explain the concept of classical reception and how it relates to the media we consume in the class.
- trace the changes in depictions of Hercules across time and cultures.
- assess their critical thinking skills to persuasively argue and present information coherently.
- combine creativity and research to present about Hercules or a story about him.

Course Requirements

Required Materials

There are no required materials for the class, as everything will be available via UF Libraries Course Reserves. However, if you choose not to view the movies and TV show through Course Reserves, you may need to procure these materials:

- *Hercules* (1983), Luigi Cozzi (director) [streaming on Pluto.TV and Tubi]
- "The Warrior Princess" (1995), Season 1: Episode 9 of *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*, Bruce Seth Green (director) [streaming on Prime Video]
- *Hercules* (1997), Ron Clements and John Musker (directors) [\$3.79 on Prime Video]
- *Hercules* (2014), Brett Ratner (director) [streaming on Max, \$2.99 on Prime Video]
- *The Legend of Hercules* (2014), Renny Harlin (director) [\$3.99 on Prime Video]

Prerequisites

This course is open to UF Honors students.

Technology

To complete your tasks in this course, you will need access to Canvas, an internet browser, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint,¹ and the ability to access the UF Libraries Course Reserves or otherwise watch the movies/TV show.

Cell phone use in class is **not** allowed unless expressly stated for a class activity. Students are welcome to take important calls in the hallway outside of the classroom. Cell phone use in the classroom will result in deducted points in the Participation category. Earbuds or headphones are **never** allowed unless an accommodation has been granted. Taking pictures of classroom slideshows is highly discouraged: all in-class materials are posted to the course's Canvas page in a timely manner. Students can inform the instructor before a class period that they need to access their cell phones for a specific reason without penalty.

Course Policies

All students are expected to complete 100% of the required course activities. There are no make-ups without a university-approved reason. If a student misses an in-class assignment due to an excused absence (having provided the appropriate documentation), they will be expected to make it up in a timely manner after contacting the instructor with appropriate documentation. The responsibility of timely communication lies solely with the student.

Course Communications

Students are requested to use Canvas Mail to contact the instructor whenever possible. Emails sent through Outlook should include IDH2952 in the subject line. Students can expect responses within 24-48 hours but not between 4:55pm-8:30am or on weekends. However, students are encouraged to contact the instructor on their own schedule. Students are expected to check Canvas Mail and Announcements regularly and to respond, when needed, within a reasonable time.

Attendance

Perfect attendance is expected. For every unexcused and/or undocumented absence **over one**, you may lose up to one point from the final course grade. Arriving fifteen minutes or later to class three times will be equivalent to one absence unless an arrangement has been made with the instructor ahead of time. If you miss a class, please check Canvas for what was missed and contact the instructor if you have further questions. The responsibility of communication lies with the student.

For absence due to participation in an official university activity, observance of a religious holiday, performance of a military duty, or any other conflict (e.g., jury duty) as per [university policy](#) that the student knows about in advance of the scheduled assignment, the student is required to notify the instructor of the conflict before the assignment is due, and if possible at the start of the semester in order to arrange make-up time and procedures. The responsibility of communication lies with the student.

No make-ups will be allowed for unexcused absences except in extreme circumstances.

Late or Make-up Assignments

Late work will not be accepted except under extreme circumstances. If allowed, late assignments receive a 25% reduction per 24-hour period as a late penalty with no exceptions granted for unexcused reasons and/or without requested extensions. If a student cannot attend class for a university-approved reason, just let the professor know (ahead of time when possible). The responsibility of communication lies with the student. Further requirements for make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with these [university policies](#).

¹ Students have access to Microsoft Office online for free. Consult the instructor for instructions.

Content Notice

The readings and viewings for this course will engage with topics of love, sex, gender, sexuality, violence, and vulgarity. We will examine the media, Greco-Roman society, and contemporary society through a critical lens with an understanding that a two-millennia-old society had different values from ours. Students with concerns about specific topics should speak with the instructor ASAP.

No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

Course Grading Policy

This course will be graded on a percentage system: 30% Attendance and Participation, 30% Reception Reports, and 40% Multimedia Presentation.

Grading Scale

90%+ A (4.0) | 80%-89% B (3.0) | 70%-79% C (2.0) | 60%-69% D (1.0) | 59%- E (0.0)

A minimum grade of B is required to earn academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements (Exception: Honors Quest I and II sections require a C). Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Milestone/Completion credit.

C- and lower is not a passing grade for courses in the major, General Education, or Gordon Rule credit. See the current [UF policies](#) for grading information.

Land and Labor Acknowledgement

The University of Florida acknowledges the Timucua, Seminole, and all other Indigenous peoples who live, have lived, and recognize their ancestral connection to these lands since time immemorial. We further acknowledge the enslaved peoples, primarily of African descent, whose labor was exploited to fund the construction of the East Florida Seminary School, the historical forerunner institution to the University of Florida.

To learn more about the significance of the Indigenous peoples in this region and throughout the nation, we encourage all to inquire more at [Know the History of the Land you Inhabit](#) and explore [native-land.ca](#) for additional insight. Additional sites for further education can be found [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

UF Policies

Classroom Accommodation

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (or call 352-392-8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. If there are any accessibility issues with the Canvas course page or course files, please inform the instructor as soon as possible so that a correction can be made.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available [here](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete

evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or [here](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The [Honor Code](#) specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this course.

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may **not** publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is **prohibited**. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student [Honor Code](#) and Student Conduct Code.

Getting Help

Technical Difficulties

For issues with technical difficulties for Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk [online](#), via phone at (352) 392-4357, or via walk-in at HUB 132. Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues should be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You should email your instructor **within 24 hours** of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a makeup.

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or call (352) 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit [website](#) or call (352) 392-1575 or the University Police Department at (352) 392-1111. Call 911 for emergencies.

- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): For the Student Health Care Center, call (352) 392-1161.
- University Police Department: Call (352) 392-1111 (or 911 for emergencies) or visit [website](#).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room/Trauma Center: For immediate medical care in Gainesville, call (352) 733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608.

Academic Resources

- Career Resource Center: Visit the office at the Reitz Union or call (352) 392-1601. Reach out for career assistance and counseling. Visit [website](#).
- Library Support: Visit [website](#). Reach out for various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Teaching Center: Visit the office at Broward Hall or call (352) 392-2010 or (352) 392-6420. Reach out for general study skills and tutoring. Visit [website](#).
- Writing Studio: Visit the office at Tigert Hall 302 or call (352) 846-1138. Reach out for help with brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. Visit [website](#).
- Student Complaints Campus: Visit [website](#).

Honors-Specific Resources

- Honors Program, 201 Walker Hall, Phone Number: (352) 392-1519
- Quick questions for an Honors advisor? Email advisor@honors.ufl.edu.
- Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft Bookings: <https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>.

Schedule of Topics

Week	Date	Topic	Prepare Before Class
1	01/14	Introduction	nothing {Add/Drop Week}
2	01/21	Hercules	TBD
3	01/28	The Twelve Labors	Apoll. <i>Bibl.</i> 2.55-160, Hyg. <i>Fab.</i> 29-36, Diod. Sic. 4.8-39 {selections}
4	02/04	Love Life (Drama)	Eur. <i>HF</i> , Soph. <i>Trach.</i> {selections}
5	02/11	Underworld (Drama)	Ar. <i>Ran.</i> , Sen. <i>HF</i> {selections}
6	02/18	Artistic Workshop	TBD
7	02/25	Peplum <i>Hercules</i> (1983)	watch movie
8	03/04	Children's Literature	TBD
9	03/11	<i>Legendary Journeys</i> (1995)	watch episode (S1:E9)
10	03/18	Spring Break	
11	03/25	Disney <i>Hercules</i> (1997)	watch movie
12	04/01	<i>Legend of Hercules</i> (2014)	watch movie
13	04/08	<i>Hercules</i> (2014)	watch movie
14	04/15	Presentations	final – multimedia presentation
15	04/22	Presentations	final – multimedia presentation

All details for assignments are given on Canvas at least one week prior.

Assignments

- For the Attendance and Participation category, please be sure to show up to class on time prepared to discuss about the weekly assignment(s).
- You will write four reception reports: The Twelve Labors, Hercules in Love, Disney Heroes, and Modern Hercules. The first part of the reception report involves explaining the content to a particular audience, while in the second part you will respond to specific questions about the material.
- In the multimedia presentation you will choose at least one material from at least two of the genres we explore (ancient art, ancient drama, modern children's literature, modern television, or modern film) to describe some element of Hercules and his story or the reception of his story.

Nota Bene: See specific details for readings and assignments on Canvas.