

Topics

Myth and history (Seferis, *Mythistorema*)

Myth and identity (Nostos: poems by Cavafy, Seferis and Ritsos)

Myth and ideology (Elpenor and the other companions: poems by Seferis, Ritsos and Sinopoulos)

Women's writing and myth (Penelope: poems by Palamas, Ritsos and Katerina Anghelaki-Rooke)

Female mythical figures in poetry (Nausicaa, Calypso)

Film

Theo Angelopoulos, *Voyage to Cythera* (1984).

Teaching arrangements

There will be 16 hours of lectures, 8 in Michaelmas Term and 8 in Lent Term.

Students will also be required to attend two hours per week of languages classes in Michaelmas, Lent and Easter Term.

Supervisions

A total of eight supervisions will be offered to prepare the students for the essay questions in the examination. There will be three supervisions in Michaelmas Term, three in Lent and two in Easter.

Those interested in taking the paper or in obtaining more details should contact:

Dr Liana Giannakopoulou, ag585@cam.ac.uk and

Dr Regina Karousou-Fokas, rk354@cam.ac.uk

Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and
Linguistics
Modern Greek Section

Paper GR. 6 MYTH MATTERS (2023-24)



Nikos Engonopoulos, *Penelope and Odysseus* (1972)
(reproduced with the kind permission of Erietti Engonopoulou)

RECEPTIONS OF MYTHOLOGY IN MODERN GREEK LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Paper Gr. 6

Literature component

Myth has shown a remarkable capacity to evolve throughout the ages and adapt to the intellectual and aesthetic quests of different periods and places. Western European Literature is permeated by Classical Greek myths, and during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries writers such as Eliot and Joyce explored and re-interpreted these myths in order to offer modern approaches to the inherited past, time, history, humanity's yearning for order and individual and national identity.

The exploration of how Greek myths have been adopted and reworked in Modern Greek literature and culture offers students the opportunity to discover its interaction with and creative assimilation of European traditions. Among the writers and artists covered in the module some (Cavafy, Seferis, Angelopoulos) have a worldwide reputation, while there are others who are less well known but also accomplished. Study of all of them allows students to reflect on what happens when myths return to their "birthplace": does their use in Modern Greek culture offer an alternative paradigm of reception and creative assimilation?

The paper will therefore examine the reception, re-writing and re-evaluation of well-known myths based on a core of Modern Greek poems and novels. Films and examples from the visual arts will be used as complementary material to provide additional perspectives and broaden the student's exposure to the topic. Students will engage in cross-cultural comparisons and contrastive readings of important texts, to reflect on how the use of myth varies from genre to genre and to appreciate the dynamic, protean nature of ancient Greek myths and their ability to adapt to the needs of new ideas and sensibilities.

Language component

Language teaching focuses on comprehension and translation skills. The option of two levels of proficiency is available. The higher level is intended for students who have previously taken GR3 or have acquired a similar level of competence in Modern Greek.

The aim is to help the student develop a knowledge and understanding of the linguistic features of the Modern Greek language and to become a fairly confident reader in a range of texts at basic or advanced intermediate level.

In the first two terms, language classes concentrate on the essentials of grammar for the basic level, while for the advanced intermediate level classes build on the grammar base already acquired in previous studies and mostly concentrate on language use. In the Easter Term the emphasis will be on translation from Greek.

The examination

The examination takes the usual form of a three-hour paper, consisting of an unseen translation and essay questions on specific texts, as well as general questions inviting reflection on a topic more generally.

Moodle

All relevant material for the paper, including reading lists, visual material, texts and past papers are available on Moodle.