

Ancient Legacies

Grant Moss

HONR 2000-001; HONR 2000-002

Description: For this course, we will examine three classic texts—Homer’s The Odyssey, Shakespeare’s Othello, and Shakespeare’s Sonnets—and compare them with modern texts that deal with similar characters and themes. Specifically, we’ll compare The Odyssey with Madeline Miller’s novel Circe, Othello with Keith Hamilton Cobb’s play American Moor, and Shakespeare’s Sonnets with Marilyn Nelson’s A Wreath for Emmett Till. Hopefully, this will help us gain a greater appreciation for the ancient works and see what relevance and influence they have in the modern era. Coursework will include some short essays, an oral presentation, and a research project.

Kristina Gibby

HONR 2000 Ancient Legacies: Heroes and Monsters in World Literature

Description: The hero’s journey is a common theme in world literature dating back to the earliest written works. From the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Odyssey to Star Wars and Harry Potter, this theme has captivated humanity on a global scale. What makes this theme so appealing across time and space? How do we relate to heroes and how do their quests illuminate our own life “journey”? These heroes are often foiled by monsters and other villains. What makes these antagonists effective opponents? What must the hero do/become to defeat them? Is there a cost? Is the hero so different from the monster? How do women appear in these texts? How do heroines compare to their male counterparts? What makes a woman “monstrous” in these ancient societies? We will consider these questions and more as we explore cultures and literatures from around the world, from ancient Mesopotamia to classical Japan to Renaissance Spain through the lens of heroes and monsters.

Daniel Horns

HONR 2000 SECTION 005: The Legacy of Mount Vesuvius

Description: Mount Vesuvius, in what is now Italy, produced a catastrophic eruption in the year 79 AD. The eruption buried several Roman towns, most famously Pompeii and Herculaneum. While the eruption killed thousands of people and was clearly a major disaster, it also preserved buildings, artworks, food, jewelry, and even people and animals in a way that provides a unique glimpse into a 2,000-year-old culture. In this class we will learn some of the science of volcanoes and why that eruption was so explosive, and we will explore many of the elements of Roman culture that have been revealed by excavating the remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Brendan McCarthy

HONR 2000 SECTION X01: Sports and History

Description: This section of Ancient Legacies will investigate the role of sports in societies throughout history and the way scholars use modern sports to better understand the past. We will focus on art and literature, modern and ancient, as we explore major issues like creating communities through competition, using competition to establish social hierarchies, and the physical effects of life on the human body.