

## CWL 430 Heroic Tales of the Mediterranean / Section #21726

Class meetings: T/TH 11:00-12:15, Hum 202

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**CWL 430** is a required course for Comparative and World Literature majors and minors. It also fulfills partial requirements for GE segment III, "Mediterranean contributions to World Culture" and "The Folklore Cluster." It is acceptable for elective credit in MEIS curriculum, "Cultures and Arts Electives." The course may also fulfill elective requirements in other depts. Check with your advisors as to applicability.

**Prerequisites:** Eng 114 (or an approved equivalent) is a prerequisite for the course. In addition, students are strongly advised to have completed Eng 214 or its equivalent. Good reading and writing skills are integral to your success in this class.

**Course Description:** Hero tales are common to many cultures widely separated in time and perspective. Appearing in poetry, prose, and folktale, heroic narratives provide the means for examining aspects of the traditional ancient and medieval cultures of the Mediterranean. By concentrating on the hero tales of the eastern Mediterranean and Near East, we will identify characteristics unique to specific cultures as well as those values shared by cultures which have occupied the Mediterranean region over 4000 years.

Consequently, I have organized the course around core texts that have shaped the genre of the hero tale in the Mediterranean, with a primary focus on the Eastern Mediterranean. However, this focus does not preclude us from examining the cultural interventions of literary traditions somewhat removed from our immediate geographical location. Therefore, in addition to these core texts, we will also read several excerpted texts that have contributed to the genre's development although these excerpts might not be considered properly "Mediterranean."

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students compare/contrast Mediterranean hero tale traditions from antiquity to modernity. This comparison enables them to focus on the diversity of Mediterranean cultures as well as the development of the hero tale category as various groups begin to borrow folkloric materials

- from each other.
2. Students study not only the literary traditions of the Mediterranean, but also how the hero tale category is understood cross culturally and in modernity. Consequently, they view Mediterranean hero tales through the complementary lens of history, cultural anthropology, women studies, Classics, and mythology.
  3. Students gain an awareness and understanding of thirteen hero tale traditions so that they understand the study of folklore in relation to global diversity.

**Required Readings** (available as texts in the Bookstore):

<i>Myths of Mesopotamia</i> (in <i>Gilgamesh and Epic of Anzu</i> ).	<i>Iliad</i> . Homer. Fagles ed.	
<i>David Story</i> . ed. Robert Alter	<i>Digenes Akritis</i> .	<i>Jason and the Golden Fleece</i> .
<i>Greek Alexander Romances</i> .	<i>Medea</i> . Euripides.	

The Following are **required readings**, available both as pdf files and as a reader available off-campus.

"Epic of Baal."	"Story of Moses."	Excerpts of <i>Antar and Khaled</i> .

**Resources for the Ancient World:** [Art of the First Cities Exhibit at the Met](#)

**Assignments:**

3 exams (bring Zeus Scantrons)	60%
1 paper (eight-ten pages)	25%
Unannounced short quizzes and / or short papers based on assigned reading and lecture	15%

Since attendance is required, class participation and group discussion are givens. I will resolve "borderline" grades on the basis of your attendance and participation.

**Last Words about Grading:**

As a rule, I do not accept late papers or give make-up quizzes and exams.

If you miss a quiz or written assignment, you'll have to take it as a loss. I won't waver from this policy except for extreme circumstances. I expect you to participate actively in this course. Assignments can be turned in any time during the day on which the syllabus states they are due; moreover, they can come as email attachments or hard copies. However, if you do email a writing response, I will not be able to comment on it. If you're having difficulties with any of the assignments, come to see me asap. Don't debate about it; come to my office hours.

I wish to make this course as accessible as possible to students with disabilities or medical conditions that may affect any aspect of course assignments or participation. You are invited to communicate with me at the beginning of the course or at your discretion about any accommodations that will improve your experience of or access to the course. Since the [Disability Programs and Resource Center \(DPRC\)](#) provides the appropriate documentation warranted by the University, you should also contact them at 338-2472 (Voice/TDD).

The University and the College of the Humanities has specific guidelines for students caught plagiarizing someone else's work. Consequently, faculty have specific guidelines for instances of plagiarism. Therefore, any student who uses the words or ideas of another person, be it author, critic, or another student, without attributing those ideas according to MLA standards, will receive a No Credit for that paper and will not be allowed to revise it; a student who turns in a paper that is substantially or completely written by someone else will receive No Credit for the course. In either case the student will be reported to the SFSU Student Discipline Officer, who may take further action. Students should also consult not only with the teacher about improper attribution, but also the published [guidelines](#) of the University.

**SCHEDULE**

Date	UNIT	LECTURE	READINGS and ASSIGNMENTS:
8/26	Unit 1 Ancient Near Eastern Epic Heroes: Warrior-Kings and Gods.	Indo-European myth and culture. Defining the "Hero" and the "Hero Tale."	Rdg: <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , all Tablets I-VII (in <i>Myths of Mesoptamia</i> ). Text is in the Bookstore.
8/28	Sumer	Gilgamesh, the Sumerian Hero King (2700bce). Introduction.	Rdg: <i>Gilgamesh</i> , Tablets VII-XII.

9/02		Gilgamesh and Enkidu.	Rdg: "Epic of Baal (on ilearn)." *Baal links: <a href="#">Another version</a> ; Baal in NE tradition.  HW: <a href="#">1 page on Gilgamesh's quest</a> .
9/04	Canaan	Canaanite Hero-God/King. Discussion of the Baal Cycle. <b>HW due.</b>	Rdg: <a href="#">Exodus, chapters 1-8; 14-16</a> ; pdf version: " <a href="#">Moses narrative</a> ." Remember to read all of the assigned <i>Exodus</i> chapters.
9/09	Israel	Patriarch/Prophet--Moses. Biblical narrative and Near Eastern tales.	Rdg: <i>David Story</i> , 3-20 <a href="#">Quiz</a> assigned.
9/11	The Hebrew or Biblical Hero.	David and the longing for a king and hero.	Rdg: <i>David Story</i> , 21-192
9/16	Two experiences of <i>kavod</i> .		Rdg: <i>David Story</i> , 194-215.
9/18	David continues.		Rdg: <i>David Story</i> , 215-359.
9/23	David finishes today.		
<b>9/25</b>	<b>Rosh ha-Shanah.</b>	<b>Class Cancelled.</b>	Review Ancient <a href="#">Concepts</a> and bring to next class. Rdg: <i>Iliad</i> Books 1-7.
9/30	<b>Exam 1.</b>		<a href="#">Exam 1 Study Guide</a>
10/02	Trojan Hero / Archaic Hero	<i>Iliad</i> begins.	Rdg: <i>Iliad</i> Books, 8-17

10/07	Comparing the Homeric Heroes: Achilles, Hector, Patroclus, Odysseus	Concepts of Greek Heroism	Rdg: <i>Iliad</i> Books, 18-end
10/09	<b>Sukkot</b>	<b>Class Cancelled.</b>	
10/14	<i>Iliad</i> finishes.		<a href="#">Rdg: <i>Jason</i>, Book 1.</a>
10/16	<b>Shimini Atzeret</b>	<b>Class Cancelled.</b>	
10/21	Unit 2: Reconstructing the Hero under Hellenism Statesman-King-Hero.	Introduction to Jason (400-300bce).	Rdg: <i>Jason</i> , Books 2-3
10/23	The Hero's Rivals.	The Statesman vs. Herakles	Rdg: <i>Jason</i> , Bk. 3-4
10/28	Finishing Jason.	Jason's status and Medea.	Rdg: "Medea" (on ilearn). HW: 1 page on Medea as female hero.
10/30	Female Heroes?	Medea as Rival or the embodiment of the hero's fears. HW due. <i>Alex</i> begins.	Rdg: <i>Greek Alexander Romances</i> , Book 1, pp. 35-to end of Book 2. <a href="#">Required Alexander Video Lecture #1</a> (38 minutes). Optional Video lecture: <a href="#">Josephus and Hebrew Hero</a>
11/04	Hellenist Hero.	Contrasting heroic values in regional traditions. Problems with Paternity.	Rdg: <i>GAR</i> Book 3.
11/06	The Greek Ruler/Hero. We finish Alexander	<i>Alexander</i> ends..	<a href="#">Study Guide.</a> Prepare for exam.

	today.		
<b>11/11</b>	<b>Veteran's Day</b>	<b>Classes Cancelled.</b>	
11/13	<b>Exam 2</b>		Rdg: " <a href="#">Khaled and Djaida</a> "; " <a href="#">Death of Antar</a> "; " <a href="#">Birth of Antar.</a> " HW: <a href="#">1 page assignment (11/15 due)</a> .
11/18	Unit 3 Hero in Late Antiquity and the Medieval Period.	Nomadic Hero, Part 1 the Antar Cycle (6th-7thce). <b>HW due</b>	Rdg: <i>Dede Korkut</i> , " <a href="#">Bamsi Beyrek</a> "; " <a href="#">Deli Dumrul.</a> " HW: 1 page on <a href="#">female</a> characters in Arabic and Turkish traditions.
<b>11/20</b>	Nomadic Hero Part 2, the Turkish Hero	The Hero and Islam	
<b>11/25</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>
<b>11/27</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>
12/02	The Medieval Hero in Persia (9th-11thce).	The Hero in Conflict with Sovereignty.	Rdg: IN the book, 3-13.
12/04	Byzantine Hero.	Digenes, Gatekeeper of Christianity.	Rdg: <b>In the Book</b> , 14-62; <b>then</b> Parts 1 and 2 of the ilearn documents. Download from ilearn.
12/09	Digenes	The Female Signifier of Transgression	Rdg: In the book, 63--113.

12/11	Digenes	Digenes ends.	<a href="#">Study Guide for Final Exam.</a>
<b>Finals</b>	Thursday, December 18, 10:45-1:15.  <b>Exam 3.</b>	<a href="#">Final paper</a> due December 16, Tuesday.	The University sets the hours of the exam, i.e. you are obligated to take it at that time except for emergencies. Emergencies are not scheduling conflicts with exams for other courses or getting an early start on vacation.