This honors course is designed to introduce students to a selection of classic texts from antiquity through the Renaissance, which have been chosen for their significance in shaping the institutions, thought, literature and arts of both Western and non-Western civilizations. As we study these texts, we will develop skills and habits of close observation, analysis and argument, as well as respect for different ideas and cultures. We will discuss the importance of these texts in their cultural context; their significance in shaping cultural norms; their influence on literature and art throughout the centuries; and their meaning for us today. We will focus primarily on three skills: a firm knowledge of the content of the works; the ability to do close reading and analysis; and the ability to integrate various works through the discussion of common themes. In addition, we will take a field trip to the Kimball Museum in Fort Worth. This course has no prerequisite, and it satisfies in part the humanities requirement for most majors, as well as the English major and minor.

Jan. 18 Introduction
20 *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
23 Homer, *The Odyssey*, Books 1-4
25 *The Odyssey*, Books 5-8
27 *The Odyssey*, Books 9-13
30 *The Odyssey*, Books 14-17

*Wikispace: The Epic of Gilgamesh*

Feb. 1 *The Odyssey*, Books 18-21
3 *The Odyssey*, Books 22-24
6 Euripides, *Medea*

*Wikispace: The Odyssey*
8 Plato, *The Symposium*, pp. 1-39
10 *The Symposium*, pp. 40-77
13 Genesis 1-5

*Close Reading Paper Due*

*Wikispace: Plato*
15 Genesis 6-36
17 Genesis 37-50
20 Luke

*Wikispace: Genesis and The Gospels*
22 Confucius, *The Analects*, Books 1, 2, 4, 8, 12, and 16
24 *The Jatakas*, 1, 121, 316, 385, 407, 476
27 *The Bhagavad Gita*
29 Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 1

March 2 *The Aeneid*, Books 2-4
5 *The Aeneid*, Books 5-7
7 *The Aeneid*, Books 8-10
9 *The Aeneid*, Books 11-12
Course Requirements:

1. **Attendance and Punctuality (15%)**: It is essential that you come to class and participate in discussion to help you grapple with and reach an understanding of the texts we will be reading. Absences will be excused on the basis of a note from a doctor, dean, or coach, or for religious holidays, if you inform me in advance. Exceptions may be made under certain circumstances if you explain your situation to me. It is your responsibility to explain your absence to me; if you do not do so, it will not be excused. Repeated lateness will be counted as an absence. Your grade will be affected if you have more than three unexcused absences. On the other hand, excellent attendance will be rewarded. If you are absent, you are still responsible for all material covered in class and posted on Blackboard.

2. **Participation (10%)**: You will get the most out of class and improve the formulation of your thoughts if you participate in the discussions. I encourage you to speak with all of your classmates and respond to one another’s ideas, rather than addressing your thoughts only to me.

3. **Study Questions (15%)**: I will post study questions on Blackboard for each class meeting. Please respond to one study question in writing (by hand or computer), submit your answer to me at each class session, and be prepared to discuss the other questions as well. Your written response should be brief: between half a page and one page long, double-spaced. Most questions will consist of several parts, but you need only respond to one or two. What I am looking for is
not length or plot summary but at least one original idea. You must give me a hard copy of your response; exceptions may be made under extraordinary circumstances and if you are absent, in which case you may send it by email. If your absence is excused, you may bring your homework for the day you missed on the day you return to class. If this is the case, please write on your homework why you were absent, as I sometimes forget. If you are absent and your absence is not excused, you may bring your homework to my office or send it to me by email on or before the day it is due. No other late study question responses will be accepted.

4. Wikispace Postings (5%): We will have a course wikispace, where we will be posting images and other media related to our readings. You must post something that has not already been posted on the wikispace; this means that you will have to look at everyone else’s posts before adding your own. You will receive a \(+\) if you provide all of the requested information (i.e., in the case of artworks, title, artist, and date) and do the assignment on time. If some of the information is lacking and/or the assignment is late, you will receive a \(\times\) or \(-\). You will get no credit for posting a duplicate. I can tell who posted first! Choose the most interesting media you can find, because at the end of the semester we will vote for the best posts. The main purposes of this assignment are to help you understand the literary works in their cultural context, to bring out the relations among the various arts, and to provide examples of the profound influence of the works we cover throughout the centuries. You may post as much as you want on the wikispace, and you will get extra credit for everything you post in addition to the assignment, including written descriptions of or background for your posts, comments on why you chose what you posted, and all additional images or other media.

Once you have joined the wikispace, you can sign into it at www.wikispaces.com. You may want to bookmark this address for convenience. I will also post a link on Blackboard.

Final Wikispace Contest Rules: Review all of the posts and vote for at least five and at most ten favorites. Send me your vote by email, including the students’ names and the titles or descriptions of their posts. You may cast a “double vote” for any posts you especially like. The winners will receive extra credit, which may raise their final grade. However, you cannot win if you do not vote!

5. Opening Discussion (10%): At the beginning of the semester you will sign up to open discussion on two days. You will be expected to briefly discuss something that interests you in the assignment and raise a topic to initiate class discussion. You should briefly explain the topic, say why you think it is significant, offer a few of your own thoughts on it, and then ask the class what they think. You may use a study question as the starting-point for opening discussion (3-5 minutes).

6. Close Reading (3-4 pages, not counting the cited text; 10%): We will be doing a lot of close reading in class, and this paper will help you to develop this skill on your own. Late papers will be marked down one third of a letter grade per day (i.e., A > A-), unless you have a good reason for lateness and have preferably spoken to me about it beforehand.

7. Take-Home Midterm Exam (15%): The midterm will include a close reading and an essay topic.

8. Final Exam (20%): The final will include IDs, a close reading, and an essay topic.

Please note: the penalty for deliberate plagiarism on any assignment will be an F in the course and the commencement of disciplinary proceedings.
Other Important Information:

Film Screenings: I will screen the following films related to the course, starting at 4 p.m. on the following Thursdays:

Jan. 24    Wolfgang Petersen’s *Troy* (2004);
Feb. 6     Lars von Trier’s *Medea* (1988);
Feb. 23    David Mallet’s *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1999);

You will receive extra credit for attending these screenings, which will be scheduled at a time that is most convenient for those who wish to attend. If you are unable to attend one or more screenings and wish to watch the films on your own and hand in a written assignment, please see me.

Office Hours: My office hours are given above, and I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have, whether they are about the texts we are reading, assignments, exams, absences, or anything else—or you may just come by to talk. If you can’t make my office hours, we can make an appointment.

Communication: I will request your preferred email address during the first week of class, and I will use it to send any clarifications, reminders, cancellations, or other communications, including the invitation to join the class wikispace. I will also post announcements on the Announcements section of Blackboard, which you should check regularly.

Blackboard: Study questions, handouts, and additional course-related material, required or recommended, will be posted on Blackboard.

Academic Accommodations: If you require special accommodations, please contact Disability Support Service, 168 Clark Student Center, 397-4140, at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements cannot be applied retroactively.

Course Policies:

Food: You may bring beverages to class, but please do not eat while class is in session.

Computers: You may bring your computer to class to take notes if you wish, but you may access the Internet only with my consent, e.g. to look up something related to our discussion. **You may not check email or do your homework during class.**

Cell Phones: You may not use your cell phone at all in class or at exams. Yes, I can see you texting behind your bag or under your desk, even in the back of the class.

Attention: I know this class is early, but please be alert and do not lay your head down on your desk during class.

Class Dismissal: Please do not start to pack up your things or leave until I have dismissed the class. If I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.
Books: You must bring your book to class, as we will be looking closely at selected passages. With the exception of the Bible, you must use the editions listed on this syllabus. Translations vary widely, and these editions have been selected as the most authoritative available. Warning: ebook versions of these works are frequently of extremely inferior quality.

Safe Zone Statement: This classroom is a “safe zone” in which all students will be treated and will treat one another equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is encouraged.

Your grade will be lowered for repeated or serious violations of any of these policies.

Required Texts (available at the College Bookstore or Amazon):

- GILGAMESH (Penguin, tr. A. George)
- THE ODYSSEY (Harper, tr. Lattimore)
- MEDEA (Euripides I, U of Chicago, tr. Warner)
- SYMPOSIUM (Hackett, trs. Nehamas, Woodruff)
- BIBLE: Revised Standard Version (Meridian)
- THE ANALECTS (Penguin, tr. Lau)
- THE BHAGAVAD GITA (Penguin, tr. Mascaró)
- THE AENEID (Bantam, tr. Mandelbaum)
- METAMORPHOSES (Penguin, tr. Raeburn)
- ARABIAN NIGHTS (Norton, tr. Heller-Roazen)
- INFERNO (Bantam, tr. Mandelbaum)
- DON QUIXOTE (Harper Collins, tr. Grossman)

From the Student Handbook:

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual’s to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Dean of Students office.

a. The term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff.

b. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

c. The term “collusion” means collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit of that collaboration is not authorized by the faculty member in charge.

For more details, please read the plagiarism handout, which I will distribute in class and post on Blackboard. Ignorance of the definitions of plagiarism will not be accepted as an excuse for academic dishonesty.