This two-semester course is designed to introduce students to a selection of ‘classic’ texts, 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 the literary historical tradition, their significance in shaping cultural norms, and their meaning for us today. We will focus primarily on three skills: a firm knowledge of the content of the works; ability to do close reading and analysis; and ability to integrate various works through the discussion of common themes.

**Aug.**  
23 Introduction and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablets 1-3  
24 Last day to add/drop classes without the dean’s permission  
25 *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablets 4-11  
30 Homer, *The Odyssey*, Books 1-5  

**Sept.**  
1 *The Odyssey*, Books 6-10  
6 *The Odyssey*, Books 11-15  
8 *The Odyssey*, Books 16-20  
13 *The Odyssey*, Books 21-24 and Introduction to Greek Tragedy  
15 Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*: *Agamemnon*  
20 *The Oresteia*: *The Libation Bearers* and *The Eumenides*  
22 Euripides, *Medea*  
27 Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*  

**Close Reading Assignment Due**  

**Oct.**  
4 *The Symposium*, 40-77  
6 Review  
11 Midterm Exam  
13 Genesis 1-5  
17 Last day for “W”  
18 Genesis 6-36  
20 Genesis 37-50  
25 Job  
27 Luke  

**Nov.**  
1 Ancient Egyptian Poetry  
3 Confucius, *The Analects*, Books 1, 2, 4, 6-9, 12, 15-17, and 19  
8 *The Bhagavad Gita*  
10 *The Jataka* (excerpts)  
17 *The Aeneid*, Books 3-6  
22 *The Aeneid*, Books 7-9  
24 no class  
29 *The Aeneid*, Books 10-12
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.

2. **Participation (10%)**: You will get the most out of class and improve the formulation of your thoughts if you participate in the discussions. Please bring your book to class, as we will be looking closely at particular passages. 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 on a computer) and 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**: about half a 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. “My printer doesn’t work” and “I didn’t have time to print my homework” are not acceptable excuses. If your absence is excused, you may bring your homework for the day you missed on the day you return to class. No other late study question responses will be accepted.

4. **Wikispace Postings (10%)**: 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 $\sqrt{+}$ if you provide all of the requested information (in the case of pictures, 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 $\sqrt{-}$. 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, and the winners will receive extra credit, which may raise their final grade. 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 influence of the works we cover.

5. **Opening Discussion (5%)**: At the beginning of the semester you will sign up to open discussion on one day. You will be expected to briefly discuss something that interests you in the assignment and raise a topic to initiate class discussion on that day. 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, provided that you add something original to it (2-3 minutes). On some days two students will open discussions on different topics.

6. **Close Reading (2-3 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, analyzing a
passage I will give to you. 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 spoken to me about it beforehand.

7. **Midterm Exam (15%)**: The midterm will include passage identifications and an essay topic.

6. **Final Exam (20%)**: The final will include passage identifications, a close reading, and an essay topic.

**Other Important Information:**

**Film Screenings**: I will screen films related to our readings in the course of the semester. You will receive extra credit for attending the screenings. 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. Unless otherwise indicated, films will be shown on Thursdays at 1:30 in the Shawnee Theater, 138 Clark Student Center. Starred films have not yet been scheduled. See below for the schedule.

**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.

**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 during class.

**Cell Phones**: You may not use your cell phone at all in class or at exams.

**Attention**: I know this class is very 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 you believe I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.

**Email Communication**: The only way I can communicate with you outside of class is through email. You are responsible for checking your MWSU or “preferred” email daily for any clarifications, reminders, or other communications from me.

**Books**: You must bring your book to class, as we will be looking closely at selected passages. You must use the editions listed on this syllabus. Ebook versions of these editions are acceptable if you feel you can read the book just as effectively on an electronic device as you would in print.
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.

Repeated or serious violations of course policies may be grounds for lowering your grade.

Film Screenings:

Sept.  
29 Lars von Trier, *Medea* (1988, will start at 3 rather than 1:30))

Oct.  
13 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Oedipus Rex* (1967, will start at 3 rather than 1:30)  
*27 The Cohen Brothers, A Serious Man* (2009)

Nov.  

Required Texts (available at the College Bookstore):

- GILGAMESH (Penguin, tr. A. George)
- THE ODYSSEY (Harper, tr. Lattimore)
- THE ORESTEIA (Aeschylus I, U. of Chicago, tr. Lattimore)
- OEDIPUS THE KING (Sophocles I, U. of Chicago, tr. Grene)
- MEDEA (Euripides I, U. of Chicago, tr. Warner)
- SYMPOSIUM (Hackett, trs. Nehamas, Woodruff)
- BIBLE: Revised Standard Version (Meridian)
- THE ANALECTS (Chinese University Press, tr. Lau)
- BHAGAVAD GITA (Penguin, tr. Mascaró)
- THE AENEID (Bantam, tr. Mandelbaum)

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.”

Submission of a plagiarized paper or cheating on a test will result in an “F” in the course and commencement of disciplinary proceedings.