LATN350/647: OVID’S METAMORPHOSES
IRIS.HAVERFORD.EDU/OVID16

GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES

In this seminar we will luxuriate in Ovid’s Metamorphoses, a magisterial retelling of nearly 250 transformations from the creation of the universe to the assassination of Caesar. Along the way, Ovid touches on nearly every major myth (and more than a few minor ones as well), detailing the loves, hates, triumphs, and despairs of gods, heroes, Greeks, Romans—and Pythagorean vegetarianism. One of the most influential works of classical antiquity, Ovid’s funny, shocking, silly, disgusting, magnificent (un)epic inspired and challenged subsequent artists—and even transformed how Latin poetry was written. We will consider why Ovid wrote this strange work, who read it in the distant and recent past, and whether its status as a classic will (or should) endure.

Together we will read as much of the Metamorphoses in Latin as we can; the rest we will read in English. We will turn to the work of scholars to help us understand the poet, his poem, his age, and his influence. We will glance at artistic responses to the poem, in painting, music, and literature.

You will delve into Ovid’s retelling of one or more favorite myths, plumbing the depths (and heights) of Ovid’s reconstitution of myth. As a class we will also engage in a collaborative work of public scholarship, laying the foundation for a digital commentary on one or more episodes from the Theban myths of Book 3. A midterm and final will allow you to demonstrate mastery of the Latin of the poem. A variety of activities and assignments—inside and outside of our class meetings, many designed by you—will support these endeavors.

REQUIRED BOOKS


A verse translation of the Metamorphoses (your choice of translation; see the bibliography page on the course website for suggestions).

RESERVE MATERIALS

Secondary readings, selected texts, and commentaries for Ovid, etc. are on reserve in Magill and on Moodle.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A preliminary biography is available on the course website. All participants in the seminar will have the ability to post and access the website. Please add any works you think could be profitable.

COURSE INFORMATION

Conclave: Hall 106
Horarium: TR 1:30–4
Magister: Bret Mulligan
Studiolum: Hall Building 109
Inscriptio-E: bmulliga@haverford.edu
Horae in Studiolo: W 11:30–12:30; TR 10–12