

Hum 119: Metamorphosis

Professor: Jocelyn Holland (jholland@caltech.edu)

Winter 2018, T/Th 10:30 a.m. -11:25 a.m.

Office hour: Th. 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. and by appointment

This writing-intensive course will explore literary narratives of metamorphosis – a radical changes of form – using examples from antiquity through the twentieth-century.

These narratives will give us the opportunity to ask a number of different questions, such as:

- How is metamorphosis put into words? To what degree does perspective make a difference?
- How is metamorphosis both a physical and a “mental” experience?
- To what degree are the metamorphosis collected by Ovid, a Roman writer from the first century BCE, influenced by his immediate political and cultural environment?
- What changes does Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* undergo when it is adapted by writers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?
- How can we compare the constraints for narrating a metamorphosis in literature as opposed to, for example, depicting a metamorphosis in film or painting?

Student activities will include short writing assignments (including the chance to invent your own narrative of metamorphosis) and two essays. You will also be “adopting” your favorite metamorphosis narrative from Ovid and charting its history in modernity.

Course Readings

Please purchase copies of the editions listed below. Readings listed on our course schedule are to be completed before coming to class.

- Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (translator: A.D. Melville ; publisher: Oxford). ISBN: 0199537372
- Jeremias Gotthelf, *The Black Spider* (translator: Susan Bernofsky; publisher: New York Review). ISBN: 1590176685.
- Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis* (translator: Susan Bernofsky; publisher: Norton Critical Edition). ISBN: 0393967972.
- Christoph Ransmayr, *The Last World* (publisher: Grove Press). ISBN: 0802134580.

All other readings will be available as handouts or posted online.

Class Policies

Attendance and Late Work: Attendance in this course is required. Your success in this course depends upon timely attendance and active participation. Multiple unexcused absences and late arrivals will result in a failing grade.

You may miss one class without penalty beyond any in-class work missed. Absence from class does not extend a due date. Late work is not accepted.

Formatting: Your papers should adhere to MLA formatting guidelines. I will help you with this in class and refer you to online sources that give you an easy overview.

Plagiarism: this includes both direct quotation and paraphrasing (summarizing) from internet or print sources without giving them credit. Because this class is to help you develop your own reading and writing skills, I do not expect you to consult secondary literature. All plagiarism cases will be reported immediately to the university administration.

Course site and email: Check our course website and your university email account regularly for important announcements. Be sure to use your school email for all course communication.

Electronic devices: Laptops are permitted for classroom purposes only. You will lose this privilege if you use electronic devices for personal use (e.g., emailing, texting, online browsing, etc.) during class. Please keep your cellphones silenced and stored away during class.

Course Requirements

All assignments must be completed in order to pass this course.

Written work: Students will write weekly readings responses (1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced, due on Tuesdays); a midterm paper (5 pages); and a final paper (5-7 pages).

- Weekly responses 20%
- Midterm Paper 25%
- Final Paper 25%
- Ovid projects (small posters)
- Participation* 20%

* Participation grades are determined from the following: timely attendance, in-class writing, quizzes, demonstration of preparation by responding to instructor's and peers' questions and posing questions of your own, and visiting office hours. Note: quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class. Late students will not be given additional time to complete a quiz.

Jan. 4 Introduction + first encounter with Ovid

Jan. 9 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (selections)

Jan. 11 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (selections)

Jan. 16 Gotthelf, *The Black Spider*

Jan. 18 Gotthelf, *The Black Spider*

Jan. 23 Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman*

Jan. 25 Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman*

Jan. 30 Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*

Midterm paper: due through email on Monday, Feb. 5th. Topics will be posted on course website by January 15th.

Feb. 1	Kafka, <i>The Metamorphosis</i>	
Feb. 6	Philip Terry, <i>Ovid Metamorphosed</i>	
Feb. 8	Philip Terry, <i>Ovid Metamorphosed</i>	
Feb. 13	Comparison of literature with the visual arts: metamorphosis in painting and film [a handout will be provided for this class meeting]	
Feb. 15	no class	
Feb. 20	Hughes, <i>Tales from Ovid</i>	
Feb. 22	Ransmayr	
Feb. 27	Ransmayr	
March 1	Ransmayr	Ovid projects and outline of final paper: due in class on March 6 th
March 6	Outlines & Project Ovid	Email submission of final paper: March 14 th
March 8	no class	