

Module 4

For FLCL 271H (Classical Mythology: Honors Section)

Comparison of Mythic Elements

Course

Classical Mythology: Honors FLCL 271H 3 semester hours



The honors component of Classical Mythology is intended to give students a deeper understanding of the subject and its relationship to other academic areas such as art, music, and psychology. Each student must complete a project that involves reading one or more pieces of Ancient Greek and/or Roman literature in translation.

Module 4: Description

This module helps students to find and compare information about various mythologies. It affords them an opportunity to practice computer searching skills and to develop the technological skills required to produce a formal paper, using a software such as *Word Perfect* or *Word*.

Because of the current emphasis on multiculturalism in the curriculum, interest in comparative mythology has increased. Familiarity with Ancient Greek and Roman mythology, which has influenced several other mythologies, gives the students a good basis of comparison. For their mythology project, the students are asked (1) to read selections of sizeable length from a primary source of a mythology other than classical mythology, noting similarities to and differences from classical mythology, and (2) to write a formal paper of comparison.

Steps Involved in This Project:

1. Select a mythology. A good way to begin is to visit comparative mythology World Wide Web sites from a list the teacher has prepared. The following are some examples:
 - *Encyclopedia Mythica*
www.pantheon.org/
 - *Yahoo! Directory of Mythology*
http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Mythology_and_Folklore/Mythology/
 - *Gods, Heros, and Myth*
www.gods-heros-myth.com/
 - *Enter the Mist*
www.geocities.com/cas111jd/
 - *Windows to the Universe: Mythology*
www.windows.ucar.edu

2. Find a primary source of the chosen mythology—not a summary or retelling. (See Module 1 for assistance in finding a primary source in translation in a library catalog.) Some primary sources may be found online (e.g., for Norse mythology, the Volsunga—<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/OMACL/Volsunga/>).

Since library holdings of works of foreign, especially nonwestern, literatures are generally limited, an interlibrary loan may be required. Some mythologies, which were transmitted orally, may not have written transcripts of primary sources.

3. Read at least fifty pages of the chosen work of mythological literature. Note similarities to and differences from classical mythology. Based on the reading, choose a theme (e.g., characteristics of the hero, hospitality, the afterlife) on which to write a comparison paper. If possible, find writings on the chosen theme. The student should do both a library catalog search and an Internet search. The teacher should be prepared with suggestions for locating material on various themes.
4. Write a formal 10-15 page paper following the specific written guidelines provided by the teacher.

Transferability

The information learned in this module would be useful in a comparative mythology course, in a comparative religion course, in an anthropology course, and in any course in which the mythology of a particular culture is studied.

Mastery of basic computer skills makes the preparation of manuscripts quicker and easier.

Faculty Technology Skill

- Ability to search the Internet
- Basic computer skills

Student Technology Skill

- Basic computer skills
- Ability to access sites on the Internet

Faculty Equipment

- Computer with Internet access
- Printer
- Software such as *Word Perfect* or *Word*
- LCD projector
- Screen

Student Equipment

- Computer with Internet access
- Printer

- Software such as *WordPerfect* or *Word*

Benefits of Technological vs. Traditional Presentation

Computer searching greatly facilitates finding substantial amounts of information about lesser known mythologies. Some primary sources of myth that are only available in only a limited number of libraries may be found online. Through online searching, books in library holdings other than the home library can be located. These often can be ordered through interlibrary loan. World Wide websites, such as those listed on page one of this module, make comparison of various mythologies easier. Several websites are devoted to specific themes in comparative mythology/religion:

- *Comparative Mythology of Genesis and Mesopotamia*
www.geocities.com/garyweb65/myth.html
- *Flood Stories from Around the World*
www.talkorigins.org/faqs/flood-myths.html
- *The World Tree*
<http://inanna.com/~ouroboro/>

These websites save much time and work, and they are readily available (unless the site disappears).

World Wide Web sites on manuals of style (see next section) allow the student to answer basic grammatical and style questions. The major problem with all websites is that they, unlike books in a library collection, can suddenly disappear or move to another address. Before recommending any sites to students, teachers should verify the addresses.

Language Resource Center Usage

If the class holds sessions in a language resource center, the students could do some or all of the online searching there. It would be good to devote one session to solving computer problems related to the format of the paper. Although most students are accustomed to writing papers using software such as *Word Perfect* or *Word*, almost everyone lacks knowledge in some area. The questions range from simple to complex:

- How to insert page numbers
- How to indent quotations
- How to view the whole document on the screen
- How to cut and paste
- How to use the “search and replace” function
- How to view two documents at once

- How to insert footnote numbers
- How to replace a continuous separator line with a separator line
- How to navigate the “help” function

Students could help one another and/or an expert in a particular software could be asked to be present. If willing, he or she, in addition to answering questions, could demonstrate specialized functions, using a document camera, an LCD projector, and a screen. Having a technical manual on hand would be helpful.

Students who have questions about grammar (e.g., the placement of commas) or about manuscript style could visit an online website associated with a manual of style. The site entitled *Citation Styles Guides* (www.lib.auburn.edu/citations.html) has links to *MLA Style—5th Edition*, *Turabian on Line*, and *The Chicago Manual of Style Online*. The websites are not as thorough as the printed texts.

Internet Resources

Encyclopedia Mythica
www.pantheon.org/

Yahoo! Directory of Mythology
http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Mythology_and_Folklore/Mythology

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