

V55.0400. CONVERSATIONS OF THE WEST: TOPICS – LITERATURE AND MUSIC. Fall 2007. Tues. and Thurs. 12:30 – 1:45. 19 University Place, Rm. 102.

Prof. John Hamilton

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The course spans over two thousand years of varying interpretations, settings, and appropriations of the Orpheus myth. The power of music and the fatality of passion, the expropriating effects of language and the regenerating promise of poetry, individual uniqueness and the conditions of knowledge, are but a few of the themes addressed and elaborated within the myth's threefold configuration of harmony, descent, and dismemberment. In addition to investigating the rich literary tradition, the course also turns to significant versions in opera, film, and the visual arts. Emphasis will be placed throughout on close reading, with attention to the philosophical, aesthetic and theoretical ramifications.

Requirements for the course include three short-response papers, one midterm, and one final exam. Attendance in lecture and participation in section are also required. The short-response papers will address particular questions on the readings; each paper should be approximately 2 – 3 pages (1000 – 1200 words). Papers are due in lecture on the dates specified below; late submissions will be marked a half-grade lower for each class meeting. Final grades for the course will be determined accordingly:

First short-response paper	10%
Second short-response paper	15%
Third short-response paper	20%
Mid-term exam	20%
Final exam	25%
Attendance/participation	10%

Required Books (available at the NYU Bookstore):

- Oxford Study Bible
- Plato, *Symposium* (Hackett)
- Novalis, *Hymns to the Night* (McPherson)
- Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (Cambridge)
- Rimbaud, *A Season in Hell* (Norton)

Also, please purchase a course sourcebook available at Advanced Copy, LaGuardia Place.

Reading and Assignment Schedule:

Sept	4	Introduction: Themes, Motifs, Issues
	6	Book of Genesis (Oxford Study Bible)
	11	The Song of Solomon (Oxford Study Bible)
	13	Pindar, <i>Second Olympian Ode</i> (sourcebook)
	18	Plato, Allegory of the Cave (<i>Republic</i> ; sourcebook)
		First Short Response Paper Due in Class
	20	Plato, <i>Symposium</i>
	25	<i>Symposium</i> (cont.)
	27	Vergil, <i>Georgics</i> 4 (sourcebook)
Oct	2	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> 10.1-85; 11.1-66 (sourcebook)
	4	Gospel according to John (Oxford Study Bible)
	9	Boethius, <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i> 1.1-3; 3.12 (sourcebook)
		Second Short Response Paper Due in Class

- 11 Petrarch, *The Triumph of Love* (sourcebook)
 16 Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo* (opera)
 18 Spenser, "The Ruines of Time" (sourcebook)
- 23 **MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS**
- 25 Poussin, *Landscape with Orpheus and Eurydice* (painting)
 30 Gluck, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (opera)
- Nov 1 Novalis, *Hymns to the Night* 1 – 3
 6 *Hymns to the Night* 4 – 6
 8 Wordsworth, "The Power of Music" (sourcebook)
 13 Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* 1 – 15
 15 *The Birth of Tragedy* 16 – 25
 20 Rimbaud, *A Season in Hell*
 22 **THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**
 27 *A Season in Hell* (cont.)
 29 Rilke, "Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes" (sourcebook)
- Dec 2 – 3 **Film Screening: Cocteau, Orphée (location and time TBA)**
 4 Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus* (sourcebook)
Third Short Response Paper Due in Class
- 6 Cocteau, *Orphée* (film)
 11 Blanchot, "The Gaze of Orpheus" (sourcebook)
- 20 **FINAL EXAM: 12:00 – 1:50 pm**