

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, AND THEATRE

**ENGL 446**  
**CLASSICAL TRADITIONS:**  
**THE METAMORPHOSES OF OVID**  
**2007**

**Conveners**

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**Classes:** Friday 9–12 am, in VZ 808

**Texts**

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford World's Classics, 1986).

Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oxford World's Classics, 1994, or any other edition).

Two course anthologies, available from Student Notes: *Book 1, Medieval and Renaissance Texts* (\$38.40), *Book 2, From Dryden to 2000* (\$25.40)

**Aims and Objectives**

This cross-disciplinary paper is a study of a central classical text and its afterlife in English literature. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a Roman poem weaving together hundreds of legendary tales around the theme of metamorphosis or transformation, was for many generations the main route by which English readers encountered classical mythology; and Ovid's combination of romance, cynical wit, verbal brilliance, and sheer storytelling has fascinated English writers from Chaucer to the start of the 21st century.

The first half of the course (run by John Davidson), will deal with Ovid and the *Metamorphoses*, studied in A. D. Melville's modern English translation. The second half (run by Geoff Miles) will take a series of case studies in the influence of the *Metamorphoses*,

looking at the ways in which the poem itself has been successively metamorphosed in the hands of English writers. Focuses of discussion will include Ovid's style, his tone (or range of tones), his narrative techniques, his handling of mythology and of metamorphosis, his degree of seriousness or frivolity, his treatment of issues such as love, sexuality, violence, justice, and change. The latter part of the course will look at how these 'Ovidian' qualities and themes are reflected or refracted in English works which have drawn on the *Metamorphoses*, and raise larger questions about the workings of 'influence' and literary tradition.

By the end of the paper, students should

- be familiar with the *Metamorphoses* and the mythological stories it contains, and be able to construct a critical discussion of it (you are expected to read the entire poem, though discussion will focus on certain specified passages);
- be familiar with the English texts in the course anthologies, and be able to construct a critical discussion of them, with particular emphasis on their relationship to the *Metamorphoses*;
- be able to draw both broad and specific comparisons between the texts studied on the course, and to develop general arguments about Ovidian influence and the workings of literary tradition.

### **Timetable**

13 July	Introduction (JD/GM)
20 July	<i>Metamorphoses</i> book 1 and the start of book 2 (JD)
27 July	<i>Metamorphoses</i> books 2–6 (JD)
3 Aug	<i>Metamorphoses</i> books 7–10 (JD)
10 Aug	<i>Metamorphoses</i> books 11–15 (JD)
17 Aug	Medieval: Chaucer, Gower, and others (GM)
MID-SEMESTER BREAK	
7 Sept	Renaissance 1: Shakespeare and others (GM)
14 Sept	Renaissance 2: The erotic epyllion (GM)
21 Sept	Renaissance 3: Spenser and Milton (GM)
28 Sept	Restoration to early 19th century (GM)
5 Oct	20th century (GM)
13 Oct	Conclusion (GM/JD)

### **Attendance, preparation and presentations**

All students should prepare for each class by reading the assigned texts and being prepared to discuss them in the seminar. 'Students are expected to be well-prepared for classes, particularly in their reading, and to be ready to lead discussion' (SEFT Postgraduate Prospectus 2007). In addition, each student will be asked to give one or two short (10–15 min) presentations in the course of the seminars. These should raise for class discussion key issues about the seminar topic. Neither the presentations nor the discussions will be formally assessed, but they may be taken into account when the final Honours grade is being considered.

You are expected, though not formally required, to attend all seminars. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please contact me as soon as possible in order to find out what you will need to do before the next meeting of the class.

### Where to find additional information

Further information will be circulated in seminars, and posted on the Honours noticeboard in VZ 808.

### Assessment

Two pieces of in-term work and a final examination, weighted as follows:

- **First essay (30%):** due **8 April**, around 2500 words, on a topic related to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. (Relates to first course objective.)
- **Second essay (30%):** due **28 May**, around 2500 words, on a topic related to one of the English texts. (Relates to second and third course objectives.)
- **Examination (40%):** 3 hours, limited open book (i.e. course texts may be taken into exam). The exam will consist of 3 questions of equal value: A, an essay on some aspect of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; B, a critical analysis of a passage from an English text in the coursebook, focusing on its Ovidian qualities or connections; C, an essay on some aspect of the Ovidian tradition, referring in detail to at least 3 texts.

**Note:** The course uses a 'double chance' system: i.e. if your examination result is higher than your combined in-term/exam grade, the exam result will be taken as your final grade.

Written work should be presented in accordance with the SEFT style sheet, *Guidelines for SEFT Students* (available from Student Notes, \$1.00, if you don't have it already).

### Extensions

If you need an extension, apply *before* the due date to John Davidson (first essay) or Geoff Miles (second essay). Late work submitted without an extension will be counted, as long as it is received before Friday 4 June, but comments will be minimal. In *exceptional circumstances* the Head of School, Associate Professor Peter Whiteford, can allow work to be submitted up to the end of the examination period (25 June); no extensions beyond that point are possible. For your own sake you are urged not to let assessed work pile up towards the end of the semester.

### Workload

You should expect to spend, on average, about 22 hours per week on work for this course (*including* class time).

### Mandatory course requirements

The minimum course requirements which must be satisfied include the completion of all in-term assessment pieces by Friday 4 June, at least one seminar presentation, sitting the final examination, and gaining a total of 50% in total assessed work. You are not formally required to attend all seminars, but we expect you to do so unless there is an overwhelming reason why you cannot attend. Failure to satisfy the course requirements will leave you with a fail grade. This paper may form part of either an ENGL or a CLAS Honours programme.

### **Students with Disabilities at Victoria**

The contact for students with disabilities enrolled in English courses is Helen Heazlewood, English Administrator, VZ 816, phone 463 6800.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. You commit plagiarism at any time when you take words or ideas *without acknowledgment* from another source and try to pass them off as your own. It does not matter whether the source is a published book or article, an Internet site, or another student's essay. See *Guidelines for SEFT Students* for advice on proper handling of source material.

Minor plagiarism (i.e. the possibly inadvertent use of a few phrases, ideas, or sentences) will be penalised by a warning and a lowered grade (e.g. A- to B+). Repeated minor plagiarism, or major plagiarism (i.e. an essay wholly or substantially drawn from another source), will mean that the essay is given a grade of E, and may also result in action under the University's Statute of Conduct (see *Calendar*).

### **The University Statute on Student Conduct and Policy on Staff Conduct**

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. For queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor. This Statute is available in the Faculty Student Administration Office or on the website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct)  
The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct)

### **Academic Grievances**

If you have any academic problems with your paper you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School (Assoc. Prof. David Norton, VZ 814), or the Associate Dean (Students) of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Class representatives are available to assist you with this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievances Statute which is published on the VUW website:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances)

## SOME BACKGROUND READING

### ON OVID AND THE *METAMORPHOSES*

#### (1) Commentaries on the Latin Text

Anderson, W.S. (ed.), *Ovid's Metamorphoses Books 1-5*, Norman and London 1997.

———, *Ovid's Metamorphoses Books 6-10*, Norman 1972.

Hollis, A.S. (ed.), *Ovid Metamorphoses Book VIII*, Oxford 1970.

Hopkinson, N. (ed.), *Ovid Metamorphoses Book XIII*, Cambridge 2000.

Murphy, G.M.H. (ed.), *Ovid Metamorphoses Book XI*, Oxford 1972.

#### (2) Commentaries on an English Translation

Hill, D.E. (ed.), *Ovid Metamorphoses I-IV*, Warminster 1985.

———, *Ovid Metamorphoses IX-XII*, Warminster 1999.

———, *Ovid Metamorphoses XIII-XV*, Warminster 2000.

#### (3) Monographs

Albrecht, Michael von, *Roman Epic: an interpretative Introduction*, Leiden/Boston/Köln 1999. Chapter VI contains material on Ovid and his readers, the story of Arachne (*Met.* 6), similes, gods and religion, the story of the daughters of Anius (*Met.* 13). Latin quotations translated!

Barchiesi, Alessandro, *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and other Latin Poets*, London 2001.

Boyle, A.J. (ed.), *Roman Epic*, London and New York 1993. Chapter 6 is William S. Anderson's article 'Form Changed: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*'. This is a brief, useful overview of the nature of the *Met.* Latin quotations translated!

Davis, Gregson, *The Death of Procris*, Rome 1983. Looks at the motifs of 'love' and 'the hunt' and deals with all the other relevant stories as well as that of Procris and Cephalus (*Met.* 7). Latin quotations translated!

Feeney, Dennis, *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition*, Oxford 1991. Chapter 5, 'Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', is an insightful study of divine/human relationships in the *Met.* Latin quotations translated!

Forbes Irving, P.M.C., *Metamorphosis in Greek Myth*, Oxford 1992 (1990)

Galinsky, G.K. (ed.), *Perspectives of Roman Poetry*, Austin 1974. Contains Galinsky's own article 'Ovid's Metamorphosis of Myth'. (Narcissus, *Met.* 3; Erysichthon, *Met.* 8.) Latin quotations translated!

—————, *Ovid's Metamorphoses: an Introduction to the basic Aspects*, Oxford 1975. Book-length general study of the *Met.* Latin quotations translated!

Glenn, Edgar M., *The Metamorphoses: Ovid's Roman Games*, Lanham 1986. Devotes one chapter to each book of the *Met.* No Latin text is quoted!

Hardie, Philip, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, Cambridge 2002. Very useful discussion which ranges well beyond the *Met.* and indeed beyond Ovid altogether.

Hardie, Philip (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, Cambridge 2002.

Keith, A.M., *The Play of Fictions*, Ann Arbor 1992. Studies in Book 2 of the *Met.* Latin quotations translated!

Knox, Peter E., *Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry*, Cambridge 1986. Looks at the literary traditions, genres, and individual works lying behind the *Met.* Latin and Greek quotations NOT translated.

- Mack, Sara, *Ovid*, New Haven and London 1988. See Chapter 4, 'The *Metamorphoses*'. Very clear, general discussion of the *Met*. Latin quotations translated!
- Otis, Brooks, *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.), Cambridge 1970. Latin quotations translated!
- Solodow, Joseph B., *The World of Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Chapel Hill 1988. Latin quotations translated!
- Toohey, Peter, *Reading Epic: an Introduction to the Ancient Narrative*, London and New York 1992. Chapter 8 'Ovid, *Metamorphoses*' is a brief, very useful introduction. Latin quotations translated!
- Wheeler, Stephen M., *Narrative Dynamics in Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Tübingen 2000. Latin quotations NOT translated.

#### ON THE OVIDIAN TRADITION

- Anderson, W. S. (ed). *Ovid: The Classical Heritage*. New York: Garland, 1995. Anthology of essays, more international in scope than Martindale; includes extracts from Fyler on Chaucer, Keach on Elizabethan Ovidianism, Hopkins on Dryden, Altieri on postmodern writers (eg John Barth).
- Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*. Oxford: OUP, 1993.
- Brown, Sarah Annes. *The Metamorphosis of Ovid: From Chaucer to Ted Hughes*. New York: St Martins, 1999. 'The first inclusive account ... [which] charts the reception of the *Met*. over the course of six centuries.' Includes discussions of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Marvell, Dryden/Garth, Keats, Beddoes, R. Browning, Eliot, Joyce, HD, Woolf, Hughes.
- . *Ovid: Myth and Metamorphosis*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2005. Brief introduction to the *Metamorphoses* and discussions of the afterlife of Daphne, Actaeon, Philomela, Arachne, and Pygmalion.
- Bush, Douglas. *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Literature*. 1932; repr. New York: Pageant, 1957.
- . *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Literature*. 1937; repr. New York: Pageant, 1957. Bush's two vast surveys of classical mythology in English literature cover the span from the middle ages to the early 20th century, with a great deal of Ovidian material. Full of information, opinionated, dryly witty, assuming a lot of prior knowledge.
- Carroll, William C. *The Metamorphoses of Shakespearean Comedy*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985. 'Argues that the idea of metamorphosis is central to both the theory and practice of Shakespearean comedy.'
- DuRocher, Richard J. *Milton and Ovid*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985. A study of 'Milton's thorough imitation, revaluation, and transformation of the *Met*. in *Paradise Lost*.'
- Hardie, Philip, et al (eds). *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' and its reception*. Cambridge Philological Society, supplementary vol. 23. Cambridge, 1999. Includes essays by Colin Burrow on imitations of the Cave of Sleep by Spenser and others, and by John Henderson on recent translations and imitations.
- Hardie, Philip (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*. Cambridge: CUP, 2002. Includes essays by Raphael Lyne, Jeremy Dimmick, Colin Burrow, and Duncan F. Kennedy on the reception of Ovid.
- Hulse, Clark. *Metamorphic Verse: The Elizabethan Minor Epic*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981.
- Keach, William. *Elizabethan Erotic Narratives: Irony and pathos in the Ovidian poetry of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and their contemporaries*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1977. [Currently missing from VUW.]
- Martin, Christopher (ed). *Ovid in English*. Poets in Translation series. Penguin, 1998. Anthology with brief commentary of translations and imitations of Ovid (*Metamorphoses* and other works); good brief introduction.
- Martindale, Charles (ed). *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian influences on literature and art from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century*. Cambridge: CUP, 1988. Includes essays on Chaucer

(Helen Cooper), Gower (Bruce Harbert), Spenser (Colin Burrow), Shakespeare (A.D. Nuttall), the Elizabethans (Lawrence Lerner), Dryden (Keith Hopkins), the 19th century (Norman Vance), and T.S. Eliot (Stephen Medcalf); also surveys of the stories of Daedalus (Niall Rudd) and Pygmalion (Jane Miller).

Rand, Edward Kennard. *Ovid and his Influence*. London: Harrap, [1925]. Brief, elegant old survey, still worth reading.

Rudd, Niall. 'Pyramus and Thisbe in Shakespeare and Ovid'. In *Creative Imitation and Latin Poetry*, ed David West and Tony Woodman. Cambridge: CUP, 1979, 173-93.

Taylor, A.B. (ed.). *Shakespeare's Ovid: The 'Metamorphoses' in the Plays and Poems*. Cambridge: CUP, 2000.

Tomlinson, Charles. *Poetry and Metamorphosis*. Cambridge: CUP, 1983. Essays on the Garth/Dryden translation, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and 'metamorphosis as translation'.

#### SOME TRANSLATIONS, ADAPTATIONS, AND SPINOFFS

Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Translated by John Dryden and others. Ed. Sir Samuel Garth. Introd. Garth Tissol. London: Wordsworth, 1998. The classic Dryden/Garth translation (in an amazingly cheap paperback reprint).

Golding, Arthur (trans.). *Ovid's Metamorphoses*. Ed. Madeleine Forey. London: Penguin, 2002.

Hofmann, Michael, and James Lasdun (eds). *After Ovid: New Metamorphoses*. London: Faber, 1994. Adaptations by poets including Adcock, Boland, Duffy, Gunn, Heaney, Hughes, Longley, Raine, Simic.

Hughes, Ted. *Tales from Ovid: Twenty-four passages from the 'Metamorphoses'*. London: Faber, 1997.

Slavitt, David R. (trans.). *The Metamorphoses of Ovid: Translated freely into verse*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994.

Terry, Philip. *Ovid Metamorphosed*. London: Chatto and Windus, 2000. Prose spinoffs by writers including Margaret Atwood, A.S. Byatt, Gabriel Josipovici, Joyce Carroll Oates.