

Imagining the Future of Classics Pedagogy: An
Introductory-Level, Undergraduate Course on Medea,
Intersectionality, and *Beloved*

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IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF CLASSICS PEDAGOGY: AN INTRODUCTORY-LEVEL,
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ABSTRACT

Over the past two years the field of Classics, alongside many other disciplines, has undergone a much more public and mainstream reckoning with its complicity in institutionalized racism and other discriminatory, even oppressive practices. While many folks in Classics have already been doing the work to make the field a more equitable space, this recent reckoning asks us to think critically about how we can work to dismantle oppression in our field and society at large--some even wonder if Classics can both exist viably in its current iteration and in a potential anti-oppression capacity. Thus, this project was an exercise of imagination: perhaps the best way to envision a Classics invested in anti-racism and anti-oppression was to envision a whole new Classics entirely. I sought to imagine and craft an introductory-level Classics course, where one's education in the ancient Mediterranean would be grounded in anti-racist, liberatory practices and frameworks.

Medea is the focal point of the course due to her positionality as a foreigner, woman, sorceress, mother, etc. I argue that Medea's many iterations offer the classroom a unique way to examine intersectionality both in ancient Greco-Roman literature and our classroom's contemporary moment. Intersectionality is just one of the tools students will use to examine identity, power, oppression, and privilege and empower themselves against systems of oppression. Indeed the framework of this course is rooted in transformative justice and

abolition, alongside critical pedagogy and Black and Brown feminist theory to work towards cultivating an equitable, inclusive environment that both addresses and repairs harm as well as commits to gratitude, microaffirmations, and other liberatory practices. Indeed, I found my gravitation around transformative justice tactics to be particularly radical in shaping how I envisioned my classroom community to operate—seeking to reimagine and transform the ways both the instructor and the students interact with one another to honor each other’s humanity.

Introduction:

“I’m not interested in demolition for demolition’s sake. I want to build something” (Peralta from NYT 2021).

I would like to begin with a story. It was a year ago, Spring 2021, and I was racking my brain to come up with an idea for my thesis project. I knew that I wanted to invest my project in the intersection of Classics and social justice, and that one of my main entryways into the world of Classics was through reception.¹ Initially, my reflection and research led me towards a project aimed at examining ancient Mediterranean prisons, law, justice, and oppression—was there something there that could help us critique and dismantle the prison-industrial complex today? While I still find this idea to be an interesting and potentially fruitful one, at the same time something about it did not feel quite ‘right’ with me. I knew very little about ancient Greek and Roman law and the treatment of different people by the law. Although I was excited by the idea of learning something new about the ancient world, it felt like a daunting task to both investigate a topic completely new to me and then explore its possible uses today all in the span of a year and a half. There were moments where I felt that I had merely suggested this project idea to my advisors and peers

¹ Recent years have seen Classics departments change their name to some form of “Ancient Mediterranean Studies;” indeed, a change myself and this project whole-heartedly supports. A whole thesis could be written on the problems with elitism, racism, exceptionalism, ethnocentrism, etc., the name of “Classics” upholds. That being said, I have chosen to use the label of “Classics” in this project. I acknowledge that this usage in a way does legitimize the problems of “Classics” as a label. However, seeing how this project involves a critique of the field of Classics (as bolstering white supremacy, elitism, imperialism, etc.) I wanted to be specific in that I am naming and critiquing the ‘baggage’ (to put it lightly) that comes with this name. I think of my usage of “Classics,” more as an indictment rather than a legitimization. And, I feared that simply replacing every use of “Classics” with “Ancient Mediterranean Studies” would seem to “seamlessly” cover up the problematic nature of the term/the field which this project addresses in part. Perhaps this will prove to be contradictory, unhelpful, and an option to me because of privilege, but it is my decision given the nature of this project.

just so I had something to say, but in my head I still felt like I was at square one. Indeed, I became less confident in this idea the more I realized that it was just an idea put forth to sound off my personal interest in social justice in Classics—not an idea that I was passionate about, invested in, nor felt that I could follow through to its appropriate end. Although my concerns for this project churned in my mind for several weeks, they dissipated in an instant when a new project idea struck me like a bolt of lightning.

During that spring I was a Teaching Assistant for Dr. John McDonald's Greek Iconography course, and unfortunately we were met with some (likely unintentional but still harmful) racism on some students' assignments concerning a vase painting of Heracles attacking Busiris and other Egyptians. A handful of students used an antiquated, harmful descriptor to identify the Egyptian figures, so they were informed about the inappropriate use and hurtful history of the term in their assignment comments. From here, I asked to meet with Dr. McDonald to discuss the possibility of offering the students some kind of framework or terminology for addressing race and ethnicity in antiquity. Dr. McDonald and I had a long and productive conversation about the complexities in labeling and perceiving difference in ancient figures from a modern perspective. We talked through some of the major issues in the field of race in the ancient Mediterranean: the sinister assumption/proclamation that 'everyone was white' in ancient Greece and Rome, the issue with using a term such as "African features" to try to avoid racism when describing iconography (but still flattening the diversity of an entire continent), the lack of consensus and at times willful disregard towards addressing the topic of race and ethnicity in antiquity, and more. We acknowledged that although race and ethnicity were not the focus of the

course, it would be beneficial to extend a resource to our students about this topic, and Dr. McDonald was kind enough to take me up on my offer to create this resource for the students. I soon found myself creating a mini lecture alongside a resource document with links to accessible websites, journals, books, and even Twitter accounts that address race as well as other topics regarding marginalized groups in the ancient Mediterranean.

It was not long in the process of creating this resource when I realized I was trial-running the kind of work that felt much more akin to my goals for a thesis project. I remember wishing that the information I gathered was available to and engaged by Classics students and scholars alike; that investing Classics in dynamic, anti-oppression, critical pedagogy alongside frameworks from critical race theory and feminist theory (to name a few) was the standard and not a just an additive consideration. It was then that I realized the work I wanted to do would have to be of my own creation. A creative, generative option would allow me to envision, experiment, and enact the change I want to see in this field. Rather than working solely as a reactionary force to the harm that was already caused, I would imagine and craft an introductory-level Classics course, where one's education in the ancient Mediterranean would be grounded in anti-racist, liberatory practices and frameworks. Of course, I do not mean to sound as though I am the first person to attempt this kind of project, nor am I an isolated innovator in this quest for a more equitable Classics. With a whole host of incredible folks (many cited below) working towards equity in Classics, this project was and is a tremendous learning opportunity for me. Indeed, I see this project as my way of being in conversation with and growing alongside the scholars, educators, and activists who have already been doing the work to push this academic field to adopt

anti-racist tactics, to dismantle oppressive systems, and to disavow our field's bolstering of and complicity in white supremacy.

Some even wonder if Classics can exist viably both in its current iteration and in an anti-oppression capacity. To that query, then, I draw upon the words of Dan-el Padilla Peralta in his now famous interview with the *New York Times* regarding the future of Classics: "I'm not interested in demolition for demolition's sake. I want to build something" (Poser 2021). Although some may (and have) find the notion of 'destroying Classics' extreme, I leaned into Peralta's words in order to frame my own deconstruction and building anew of what an introductory-level, undergraduate Classics course could be. This article about Peralta arrived in early February 2021, but Poser asks her readers to reflect on the summer of 2020; a time that saw global protests for racial justice, organizing against police brutality, and even alleged monetary promises by some of the biggest American corporations to 'do their part' in the fight for racial equity.² Peralta's interview demonstrates that higher education, and Classics in particular, were no exception to this public reckoning with their complicity in institutionalized racism and other discriminatory, even oppressive practices. Classics has a long and sordid history with its links to a construction of whiteness, the urge for a traceable heritage for western civilization, and reinforcing segregation with Classics being the pursuit

² To learn more about how these corporate promises hold up 1-2 years later, how and if these pledges can be held accountable, if these corporate actions could enact systemic change, etc., there are the following articles: "Corporate America's \$50 billion promise: A Post analysis of racial justice pledges after George Floyd's death reveals the limits of corporate power to effect change" by Tracy Jan, Jena McGregor, and Meghan Hoyer <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2021/george-floyd-corporate-america-racial-justice/> And "A year later, how are corporations doing on promises they made to fight for racial justice" by Janet Nguyen <https://www.marketplace.org/2021/05/24/a-year-later-how-are-corporations-doing-on-promises-they-made-to-fight-for-racial-justice/>

for “the elect” (Bostick 288).³ All of these factors come to a head today as Classics departments and universities at large reinvigorate their drive for the (in)famous ‘diversity, equity, and inclusion.’ This is not to disavow all efforts made by the people doing DEI work in higher education, however it must be acknowledged the ways in which, “the pursuit of “diversity and inclusion” has strengthened the dichotomy between people who belong and those who do not, a demarcation that positions white power figures as magnanimous hosts welcoming foreign “others” to their space” (Bostick 296). Thus, how are we as Classicists able to unstitch the pervasive link between our field and constructions of whiteness? Can such a thing be done? What tools do we have in our field to help us reflect, critique, and dismantle oppression? How do we ‘open up’ Classics as a space for radical engagement and enthusiastic participation for everyone without reinforcing this dichotomy of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ or those who ‘belong’ and ‘others’? There is no single answer to all of these questions, nor can Classicists be expected (nor presume themselves) to have all the answers to such problems. Indeed, this line of questioning is what drew me to Peralta’s words about building something out of destruction. Perhaps the best way to envision a Classics invested in anti-racism and anti-oppression was to envision a whole new Classics entirely. This solidified my decision to craft an introductory-level undergraduate course, so I could reimagine the building blocks to a post-secondary education in Classics. Indeed, this is why I began this project with my own story about my experience arriving at this project, because stories require imagination. And, it is the imagination, as will be discussed later, which is one of the most powerful and

³ While the subject of how the field of Classics is intertwined with white supremacy must be acknowledged and critiqued, it could easily fill up its own entire thesis project (and almost did...). Here, I am citing a couple portions from Bostick’s article, but I would highly recommend reading the whole thing for a more in-depth analysis on the specific history of the ACL and SCS with racism and segregation and its impact on secondary schools.

important tools for re-imagining and recreating a field (and indeed a broader community) that rejects oppression in all forms.

1. First Steps: Picking a Course Topic

One of the main creative outlets for this project would be constructing a course syllabus, so it soon became time to select a course topic. Early on, this selection process was guided by the following criteria: a desire to introduce students to ancient Greco-Roman mythology through the lens of critical gender and race studies, and—perhaps most importantly—to ensure that the course was made at an introductory level. For the purposes of this course, ‘introductory-level’ would mean that any student, regardless of their familiarity with Ancient Mediterranean Studies, could enroll, with the understanding that each student contains the potential to both gain as well as offer knowledge and experience to the course. I found this insistence on the course to remain at an introductory level to be one of the most challenging initial aspects of the project. In drafting the syllabus, I had to negotiate how to engage students in thinking about gender and race as social constructs alongside the fact that some of them might not know who Zeus is, let alone be able to point out Athens on a map.

That being said, I argue (as will be discussed further below) that keeping my course at the introductory level is not only the most appropriate method but also integral to my efforts to reimagine the trajectory and make-up of a post-secondary Classics education. Indeed, it was tempting at first to envision a senior-level, capstone course; one in which ‘advanced’ students could draw upon their previous 3.5 years of experience to critique the

current state of Classics, to engage with critical theory and praxis, and to write extensive research papers on a range of topics. However, upon further research and reflection, I realized that perhaps it was this kind of hierarchical thinking that hampers more equitable work in Classics and academia in general. Of course it is true that one must take familiarity level and skill-set into consideration when constructing a course; however, could not an introductory-level course, too, critique the field of Classics, engage with theory and praxis, and develop their own research projects? Rather than following the tendency to assume that the most ‘valuable’ or ‘worthwhile’ work would come from more ‘advanced’ students (note the amount of scare quotes, here), this humbling realization not only solidified my choice to make an introductory-level course, but also to ensure that some of the course goals would revolve around critical thinking, engage with theory in some way, and develop the students’ research skills.

Bearing in mind this certainty that the course would be at the introductory-level, I decided that I wanted one central figure or theme to guide the content of the course. When we think of an introductory-level course for most disciplines, we might imagine a large lecture hall filled with students from a variety of fields, where a broad span of information must be covered in just one semester. For a Classics course, this might look like a Greco-Roman mythology course, or a history course focusing on ancient Greek or Roman civilizations. It is true that I could have spent more time earlier on thinking through how my course ideas could apply to a broad lecture course, rather than the smaller, discussion-based course I settled on.⁴ However, my desire to focus particularly on the social constructions of

⁴ The conclusion of this work will feature a reflection on how the course methods, goals, assignments, themes, etc., could be adapted to a large lecture course that is typically expected of introductory-level courses.

gender and race led me to think about the applicability of intersectionality to this course—thereby reinforcing my intent to focus on a singular, ancient, mythological figure upon whom an intersectional analysis could be applied. As will be explored further in the explanations for Weeks One through Three of the course, my decision to invest the course in intersectionality was impacted first by a beneficial meeting with Dr. Elisa Glick. Initially, I told Dr. Glick that I planned for the first week of the course to focus on examining race, the second week on gender, and then the third week would find some way to bridge the two. Upon hearing this, Dr. Glick immediately, and rightly, asked me why race and gender were separated. If this course was to ask students to analyze the social constructions of race and gender, should not these categories, which are both social constructions (today and in antiquity) and interact with each other as such, be analyzed in tandem? Indeed, a course with the goals I established would benefit from an intersectional lens, and soon enough one figure stuck out to me who could facilitate such an analysis: Medea.

Existing at a crossroads of identities and experiences, Medea inhabits a unique position at which to examine identity, difference, and myth-making. As asserted by Emma Griffiths, Medea is, “a figure who functions on boundaries” (57). Thus, throughout this course, students will engage with several different iterations of Medea as she navigates these various positions as a young maiden, a foreign woman living in the Greek world, and a mother struggling with family problems within a patriarchal society that also stigmatizes her divine, magical powers. This focused study will not only allow students to explore questions about gender and race, but also class, sexuality, ethnicity, ‘otherness,’ and the overall malleability, construction, and enforcement of identity categories. Indeed, an investigation

such as this would require students and instructors to expand their thinking and imaginations to hold many truths at once. These truths being that something like gender can be a construct both in our modern time and in antiquity, and these constructions can operate in both divergent and overlapping ways.

Here, then, is where the emphasis on intersectionality comes into play. Although intersectional thinking has been around for decades, the term and theory of intersectionality was conceptualized in the late 1980s by critical race theory scholar, feminist, and law professor, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. Intersectionality is considered not only an integral part of critical race theory, but also one of, if not the most important, development in recent feminist theory. Indeed, intersectionality could be seen as a link that brings feminism and critical race studies together, as it seeks to, “disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable” (Crenshaw 1997: 248). It interrogates how different types of discrimination, oppression, and privilege interact within various systems of power. Intersectionality asks us to imagine busy traffic at an intersection: just as an accident in or around the intersection can occur from cars moving in one or several directions, so too can a person (and in Crenshaw’s case, a Black woman) experience different but sometimes simultaneous discriminatory harm based on their existence at an intersection of marginalized identities (Crenshaw 1989: 149). Crenshaw developed this framework specifically to address the legal issues and harm affecting Black women who tried to file lawsuits for experiencing racist and sexist discrimination. But, the law saw these categories as exclusive and “hing[ing] on narrow legal categories of either racism,” with an assumed masculine subject, or sexism with an assumed white subject (McCann and Kim 164).

Returning to the notion that Medea operates on boundaries, we can see how intersectionality offers a kind of framework and vocabulary to examine Medea's experience with discrimination, harm, and even privilege. Medea, like many literary figures, cannot be said to operate in one lived experience at a time, say as a woman, **or** a foreigner (non-Greek), **or** a sorceress, rather Medea moves through the world inhabiting these identities simultaneously. Thus, to adopt an intersectional lens in this course is to offer tools to the classroom community with which to expand our thinking and afford Medea the nuanced and critical analysis she deserves. Oftentimes, a study of Medea's mythology may revolve around her gendered experience, and her experiences with race/ethnicity and class would take more of a backseat (if they are acknowledged at all). For example, while Griffiths' extensive study on Medea's many iterations is quite informative and useful, it affords considerably more time to the gendered dimensions of Medea's mythology—with a whole chapter devoted to "Witchcraft, Children, and Divinity" (Griffiths 41). Although Medea's roles as a witch and a mother certainly must not be ignored, these particular experiences receive attention from an entire chapter; whereas, "Ethnicity" receives just a page and a half of analysis, and race is not really brought up until the brief discussion of modern reception at the end of the book (60-61). Therefore, it is my hope with this course to bring the topics of race and class in Medea's myth to the fore alongside the popular gender analysis through an intersectional lens. Of course, a modern theory such as intersectionality cannot be so easily mapped onto ancient Greco-Roman mythology. This is not to say that some form of intersectional thinking did not exist at this time, rather that the specific history and origins of intersectionality should be recognized and honored. While it is clear that I do see some

value to this approach since it is a focus in the course, a major aspect of the course will be to not only learn about the theory of intersectionality itself, but also to work together to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses in an ancient Greco-Roman mythological context. Although Crenshaw herself has acknowledged that intersectionality, “should be expanded [beyond race and gender] by factoring in issues such as class, sexual orientation, age, and color” its expansion and application to ancient Mediterranean literature and their characters is (of course) not so clear (Crenshaw 1993: 248). As explored in Weeks One and Two, it will be crucial for the classroom community to understand and recognize intersectionality’s roots in Black feminism and examining violence against Black women. From there, we will transition into our study of myth and Medea with what we have learned about intersectionality intertwined throughout.

Pedagogical Framework:

My pedagogical approach for this project focused on cultivating a classroom community, addressing harm, and resisting oppressive practices. These focuses drew my research towards Black and Brown feminist movements and radical pedagogy (such as the work of bell hooks), to critical pedagogy (as with Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*), and finally to abolition and transformative justice work. Before I can continue with this explanation, however, an attempt must be made to acknowledge and honor the innumerable mentors, peers, and experiences that have shaped the way I view the experience of education, the relationship between instructors and students, and the realm of possibility in

the classroom.⁵ While most folks might consider themselves a ‘lifelong learner/student,’ my current position as both a Teaching Assistant and a graduate student in coursework offers me the unique experience of simultaneously being a student in a classroom and an instructor in a classroom. Alongside my research, it is this particular experience which has led me to interrogate the relationship between the ‘instructor’ and the ‘students.’ Here, I found myself drawn to bell hooks’ realization (after a particularly “resistant” class) that her work operated on the “understanding that I was speaking to and with both students and professors” (hooks 9). Just as I see myself as both student and instructor, so too did I hope to create a project that could collaborate with and speak to students and instructors alike. Albeit this project does label myself as the course instructor, however it was my concurrent positionality as instructor/student which informed my initial understanding of students as my accomplices in this work towards equity.

Simply put, the current iteration of the field of Classics does not wholly possess nor maintain the tools and frameworks necessary for the kind of equitable and liberatory work described in this project and the work of many others. Here, I do not mean to promote Classics as some enigmatic entity devoid from the people that work in and comprise the field. Rather, I posit that while the past several decades have seen an exponential growth in equitable, anti-racist work in Classics, a great deal more folks will need to be on board and willing to engage meaningfully with this kind of work to deconstruct, reimagine, and reconstruct a field grounded in radical community support, anti-oppression tactics, and hope.

⁵ My work on this project assuredly draws on the more informal, intimate conversations between colleagues, friends, and family members about my project or about education in general. Indeed, I am grateful for the community formed within my current cohort who generously listened and responded to tangential thoughts about this project in the past year and a half.

Indeed, this kind of work is not uniquely necessary to Classics: it is merely a microcosmic representation of the work required to combat the white supremacist capitalist cisheteropatriarchy of higher education, the American education system, and American institutions at large.⁶ But to focus on Classics, when I say that ‘more folks’ need to engage in this liberatory work, I mean in particular more folks such as myself with the privileges of race, class, etc.: folks who can both use their privilege to get the attention of authority figures with little risk to their safety while also reckoning with and confronting the safety that privilege provides. While a topic of conversation for this course is how to confront discomfort and hesitancy with certain topics, specifically those topics that could challenge the comfort and stability of members of dominant groups, this notion of sitting with discomfort and learning ways to expand our imaginations towards liberation is necessary for instructors as well. Thus, as Dr. Sasha Mae Eccleston reminds us:

“...there is no shame in admitting that the way we have been trained, the skills we have learned to complete projects recognizable within our disciplines, may not empower us to do the work that emancipatory projects demand. We may very well have to *unlearn* those skills and, instead, learn from those excluded by the framing of our disciplines and the gates of our institutions (Eccleston 2021).

Again, there is **no shame** in recognizing that we as Classicists might not have all the tools in our toolbox to solve the problems of our field. As mentioned above, several of the issues with equity affecting Classics affect countless other fields, so would it not make sense to learn

⁶ At my time of writing this, any quick Google search about ‘DEI initiatives,’ ‘CRT,’ or ‘gender identity’ in schools will make clear the flagrant local and state policy efforts to control, contain, combat, and mark dangerous any effort (actual or assumed) of K-12 teachers to address ‘controversial’ topics—that is, topics or discussions which could disrupt a policymaker’s perception of what is ‘palatable’ or ‘appropriate’ in a white supremacist capitalist cisheteropatriarchy. While these legislators might assert their concerns for the ‘protection’ of children, it is truly queer, Black, Brown, Indigenous people of color (often about whose experiences and identities this legislation revolves) who face the most harm, erasure, and disavowal from these sinister policies.

from and collaborate with other disciplines in this work? This is not to say that Classics has nothing to offer emancipatory projects, but to offer my reasoning and encouragement for Classicists such as myself to do more engagement with feminist movements/theory, critical pedagogy, and transformative justice (to name a few) as explored below.⁷ Indeed, the incorporation of skills from those disciplines that were typically excluded from our field/institution could work wonders on an academic discipline that at times seems to, “thrive on...being inaccessible. It [the inaccessibility] gives them [Classicists] a sense of prestige and power that they cannot receive from studying other fields whose scholarship are meant to be accessible to the public, like Education” (Lee-Chin 2021).

Before diving into my engagement with feminist and critical pedagogy, I want to raise abolition and transformative justice as guiding practices for my course creation and pedagogical outlook. One possible definition of abolition, as put forth by abolitionist activists, organizers, and educators is “a political vision with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance and creating a sustainable flourishing worlds for all” (Education for Liberation Network & Critical Resistance Editorial Collective, 2). Abolition is a community-oriented, political vision, and it asks us to reevaluate our own personal circles and our society at large and how they address harm, enact punishment, and envision community safety. Indeed, one of the ways we as Classicists can make progress towards a de-carcerated world is to critique our own relationships with harm and

⁷ In their March 2021 Res Diff 2.0 talk “Cultivating a “sociological imagination” in Classics: reconceptualizing difficulty using critical pedagogical approaches,” Jonah Stewart and Nicolette D’Angelo critique Classics’ engagement with critical pedagogy and are guided by these questions: “Why haven’t many Classicists meaningfully engaged with pedagogical theory? What does Classics have to do with pedagogy? → What *doesn’t* Classics have to do with pedagogy? What might a critical Classics pedagogy look like?” (from handout).

punishment as instructors. In order to evaluate how we as educators alongside our students might address harm and build community in the classroom, I turned to transformative justice. Oftentimes transformative justice and abolition might be used interchangeably, when in fact abolition is just one result of transformative justice. adrienne maree brown describes transformative justice as “the methods people use to uproot injustice patterns in communities...I don’t simply want the prisons gone, I want a radically different way of interacting with each other to grow” (brown et. al. from *The New Inquiry* 2017). A transformative justice framework, bearing in mind the goal of abolition, asks us to address the original reasons and factors that lead to harm occurring. Upon rooting out the source of harm being caused, communities can work together to imagine ways to hold each other in accountability and to interact with one another in a way that honors our humanity and does not rely on carceral logics to determine how we treat each other.⁸ Indeed, Mariame Kaba and Kelly Hayes, when envisioning (at the time) the year 2018, they saw, “a state of unrestrained imagination” (Kaba 25). In order to work for liberation from oppressive systems, we must pool together our collective imaginations to radically generate a vision of justice, community, and how we address harm. Whether Peralta intended it or not, his quote above about building something after the destruction of Classics does align itself well with abolitionist notions about crafting and imagining new systems, connections, and communities that reject oppressive systems and practices.

Thus, abolition in education asks us: how can we create environments where harm is remediated? What systems or mechanisms can we put in place to repair harm, allow for self

⁸ For more information on carceral logics, abolition, and reimagining how we deal with human wrongdoing, the introduction to *Contesting Carceral Logic: Towards Abolitionist Futures*, edited by Michael J. Coyle and Mechthild Nagel is particularly helpful (Routledge, 2021).

reflection, and establish a classroom community that is safe for everyone involved? I should acknowledge here that I am using the term ‘harm’ knowing that it can manifest in a wide array of forms and severities. Abolition and the adoption of transformative justice are often seen in the context of addressing state violence such as police brutality, settler colonialism, anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, and more. Indeed, one ‘type’ of harm that might be most pertinent to this study is the school-to-prison pipeline, and the ways in which school systems can be seen to both replicate and bolster the tactics of the prison-industrial complex by funneling young, typically students of color, into “under- or unemployment and prisons” (Kaba 76).⁹ Although discussions about the school-to-prison pipeline typically revolve around K-12 schools, there are certainly ways that colleges and universities uphold and continue the punitive, carceral logics that begin in K-12 schools—not to mention the fact that most higher-education institutions have their own campus police division. Thus, it is just as important in a college classroom as it is in a kindergarten classroom to have strategies in place to remediate harm when it occurs, in whatever form that harm may take (as will be discussed later with the creation of ground rules in the classroom). As asserted by Lisa Kelly when discussing how she incorporated abolition into her pedagogy, “how can you bring your full humanity to this work and honor the full humanity of students?” (“Lessons in Liberation Launch: Grounding Education in Abolition” 2021). Abolitionist pedagogy rejects the notion that educators, students, and the classroom exist in a “mythic neutral space,” but rather recognizes and insists that education plays a crucial role alongside many other disciplines in

⁹ This chapter from Mariame Kaba about education and imprisonment is enlightening, and her entire book, *We Do This ‘Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice* is a must read for folks wanting to learn about abolition and transformative justice. Kaba’s work was and is critical to my work on this project.

the movement for liberation (Education for Liberation Network & Critical Resistance Editorial Collective, 4).

Seeing how transformative justice itself is a “Black and Brown feminist movement” perhaps it seems obvious that it enriched my engagement with bell hooks’ pedagogical work (Piepzna-Samarasinha et. al. from *The New Inquiry* 2017).¹⁰ hooks’ chapter “Theory as Liberatory Practice” from *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* was particularly insightful given both the course’s engagement with intersectionality and pedagogical investment in transformative justice. This chapter presents theory as “not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary. It fulfills this function only when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end” (hooks 61). In this way, I began to think through how this course could engage with and learn about intersectional, Black feminist theory in a way that works towards liberation and healing. Here, then, transformative justice offered me a framework through which to analyze this problem. Just as the make-up of this course encourages students to address and repair harm that may occur in the classroom, so too perhaps could we engage with intersectionality with the capacity to heal and enact liberatory praxis. Indeed, such a framework seems useful as the class will evaluate the harm and possibility for healing and liberation experienced by Medea and the characters in *Beloved*. Do I expect every (hypothetical) student to walk away from this course with a grasp on intersectionality to facilitate liberatory praxis and personal healing? Not necessarily. Since

¹⁰ Piepzna-Samarasinha asserts a recognition of the history and legacies of transformative justice: “I’m not just talking about the transformative justice movement of the last 20 years in North America; I’m talking about Mohawk Clan Mother law on Six Nations, the trans women of color sex workers like Miss Major, Sylvia P. Rivera, Mirha-Soleil Ross, who fought police at Stonewall and also fought back physically against transphobic violence on the street. This work we are doing is not new, and no, white punks did not invent everything” (2017).

I had to consider that some students might not have engaged with intersectionality, let alone feminist theory, my hope was that the students could walk away from the course with a set of analytical tools to see theory as liberatory practice, to be able to engage with other folks in their everyday life about intersectionality, and to have a greater confidence in resisting systems of oppression and rejecting “the commodification of feminist thinking” (hooks 71). Indeed, hooks states that, “any theory that cannot be shared in everyday conversation cannot be used to educate the public” (64). Albeit, discussing Black feminist theory in a university classroom inevitably comes with a set of privileges and exclusions that can exclude this work from everyday conversation and the public. However, it is my hope to first present intersectionality in a manner accessible to all students, and second to emphasize the importance of self-reflection and rumination in the class—whether through class discussion, assignments, or on their own time. It is through this emphasis on accessibility and reflection that I hope to encourage students in their ability to share and reflect on theory in their everyday life and conversation outside academic spaces.

Because this project concerns itself with liberatory pedagogy, it seems I would be remiss to not discuss Paulo Freire’s work on critical pedagogy. Throughout my research, however, I was most drawn to bell hooks’ interactions with Freire’s work as a feminist theorist herself. hooks’ describes how “[d]eeply committed to feminist pedagogy...much like weaving a tapestry, I have taken threads of Paulo’s work and woven it into that version of feminist pedagogy I believe my work as a writer and teacher embodies” (52). This description comes from hook’s response about her work as an African-American woman, feminist theorist, and social critic engaging with Freire’s work and the noted sexism that

accompanies his frameworks. Although I do not inhabit the same positionality as hooks, I was drawn to her image of weaving a tapestry when engaging with Freire. I, too, saw myself as weaving a kind of tapestry when pulling together tactics from abolition and transformative justice into hooks' feminist pedagogy alongside Freire's critical pedagogy: most specifically, Freire's notable "banking model" which envisions "the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits [of content/information from the instructor/informer]" (Freire 45). Needless to say, the weaving together of these various critical pedagogical ideas and strategies solidified, for me, the necessity to create this syllabus with the understanding that the possibility for learning, insight, and liberatory thinking does not come from me alone, but that the students and the instructor are in community with each other in this work for liberation and equity.

2. Explication of the Syllabus:

Nuts & Bolts:

For this project, I have created a 15-week syllabus for a course that meets three times a week for 50 minutes at a time. Readings, assignments, and (on occasion) classroom activities are detailed for each class meeting. Furthermore, the course capacity is envisioned around 20-30 students in order to emphasize class discussions and group work to bolster the classroom community as well as investigate challenging topics. A course description, learning/course objectives, and instructor objectives are also provided to articulate the main focus and goals of the course alongside ways to maintain transparency and

accountability—these will be explained below. At the present moment, it is quite obvious that I am describing and adhering to the ideal conditions and parameters for my constructed course. Of course, in ‘reality’ the ability to pick one’s precise course capacity, meeting times, etc., would be considered a luxury. Continually, for all online elements of the course, I will assume the operation of a Canvas site for the class.

Continually, I must address another major elephant in the room in which I constructed my course—the effects, obstacles, and pains of the Covid-19 pandemic. I must admit that at moments when my need for escapism during this unprecedented time of loss and hardship was especially pervasive, I even sought to escape the pandemic in my idealized classroom world. For a while in my initial research and preparatory stages, I tried to ignore the effect of the pandemic on my idealized course. After all, I was creating a hypothetical course, so could not Covid-19 hypothetically not exist in my classroom world? It felt so much easier, more convenient, and more comfortable to craft this syllabus for a classroom in which the classroom community could converse without masks, without fearing for their lives just because they share the same air with their peers, without having to suddenly and chaotically transition to an online format with the report of a positive test. And yet, I came to realize that it would be negligent of me to construct a course that claims to encourage the investigation of oppression and be rooted in social justice teachings and practices only to ignore and effectively erase this catastrophic event and upheaval of society. Indeed, for myself as well as my hypothetical students, the Covid-19 pandemic is and will be a defining moment in our lives not just for the immeasurable loss and suffering, but also for the ways in which it exposes and exacerbates the systems of oppression and injustice operating in the

United States and globally. While the institutionalized issues and injustices with housing, policing/the prison industrial complex, education, employment opportunities, disability justice, and so much more existed long before Covid-19, the pandemic swiftly stripped away veneers of equity and progress to further showcase the sinister effects of global capitalism and white supremacy. Thus, building an equitable classroom community would involve recognizing these violent disparities exacerbated by the pandemic which disproportionately affects those who are marginalized. In doing so, the classroom community can work towards cultivating a compassionate, affirming space for all folks involved.

All of this is to say that for my course to claim to have a stake in dismantling oppression and facilitating students' ability to evaluate identity, difference, otherness, and oppression, then the Covid-19 pandemic must be recognized. So, although my course is currently formatted as an 'in-person' class, I have included a note on the course format and the potential to go online. Also, later on there will be a more complete discussion of Covid protocols, how I would transition this course into a remote format, etc. Indeed, given that my course also finds a foothold in our ability to collectively expand our imaginations in ways to grapple with complexities, evaluate tough problems, and work towards liberation, I'd like to imagine there is a future where Covid-19 for once becomes an afterthought. However, it is clear at my moment of writing this that Covid-19 and all of its complexities, inflicted hardships, and grief will be around for some time. And, thus, for my course to pretend as though the pandemic did not exist would almost be akin to pretending the sky is not blue. Perhaps to some this rumination on Covid-19 and my hypothetical classroom seems intuitive, to others it may seem unnecessary. Regardless, it is my hope to emulate and

replicate the compassion, patience, and understanding that was extended to me as a student during the pandemic in the underpinnings of this course.

Student Hours:

Rather than calling my available time to meet with students my “office hours,” an interesting post from Nadhira Hill’s invaluable blog, *Notes from the Apotheke: A Blog about being BIPOC in Classics*, convinced me to label this time as “student hours.” What may seem like a small change Hill noted as a “rebrand” which “puts more emphasis on the *student* from the very beginning” (Hill, “Syllabus Shake-Up Day Three” 2022). Of course, as I know quite well, the possibility of having an office is sometimes circumstantial. That being said, the hope is that making this small change, and explaining its importance to the students, will demonstrate explicitly to students that this time is reserved for the instructor to help their students. At times, due to the institutional, hierarchical relationship between the instructor and the students, students could feel nervous, hesitant, or like an “intrusion” to attend an instructor’s ‘office’ hours (Hill 2022). Albeit, I do empathize with Hill’s sentiment that sometimes an instructor might rejoice that no students arrive to their office area, and they can get more work done (Hill 2022). And yet, it is the hope that this ‘small’ rebrand to ‘student hours’ encourages communication and more accessible interactions between instructors and students.

Course Description:

Perhaps the course description speaks for itself. However, the goal of this section was to introduce students to the course material as well as prime them to some of the major

questions guiding the course. The description makes clear to the students how we will approach ancient representations of Medea and the theory of intersectionality. In addition, the course description articulates the final portion of the course which focuses on Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. While perhaps this addition about *Beloved* and its inspiration makes the course description a tad 'long,' the goal here was to allow students to look ahead in the course before even seeing the week-to-week schedule, to prime the classroom for conversations to come, and to plant a small seed early on for the possibility of *Beloved* being used on the final project.

Learning/Course Objectives and Instructor Objectives:

The learning and course objectives serve not just to articulate what students can expect to learn in the course, but also to provide some transparency about the connection between course learning objectives and assignments. Nadhira Hill notes the importance and usefulness of "aligning learning objectives with course activities and assessments" (Hill 2022). Thus, I developed the course learning objectives to often directly tie in with course assignments: for instance through the objectives about the final research project, cultivating our analytical skills for primary and secondary sources, etc. Furthermore, while creating my learning and course objectives, I thought of the idea to produce a set of Instructor Objectives. When the instructor goes over their personal instructor objectives with the students, it could help provide transparency and cultivate a culture of accountability between the instructor and the students. As mentioned above, there is (almost) always going to be an institutional power differential between the students and the instructor. Indeed, when an instructor is

doing something that is harming a student, that student might not reach out about it for fear of retaliation, ridicule, disavowal or some mixture of all of these. In recognizing that I (as the hypothetical instructor) would be in a position of privilege and power relative to the students, these Instructor Objectives offer the students a tangible set of actions they can point to if the instructor is not fulfilling an objective, causing harm, etc. Rather than struggling to find the 'appropriate' words to address an issue with the instructor, students could supply the verbiage of the Instructor Objectives. Not to mention, I would discuss with students the fact that these objectives (for the learning/course and the instructor) are subject to potential changes, edits, and revisions depending on the needs of the class.

Course Format / Covid-19 Protocols:

As discussed above, I created this course with the understanding that the Covid-19 pandemic could affect the modality of the course. So, assuming the use of a Canvas site for the course, I have kept in mind the ways this course could be adapted to an online format through synchronous lectures, discussion boards, etc. Based on the guidelines at the University of Missouri, I noted that there is no mask requirement in the physical classroom. However, a guiding principle throughout this syllabus is that of a classroom community, in which students are encouraged not only to care for themselves, but to do what they can to look out for their peers. In this instance, that type of community care could look like opting to wear a mask in class, getting vaccinated, staying home when sick, etc.

Assignments:

This course was designed to revolve around student (and instructor) critical thinking, reflection, and engagement with the classroom community to learn and grow together. Thus, the majority of the students' grade (40%) comes from weekly journal entries/discussion board posts, participation in class, and attendance. The goal of the weekly journal entries / discussion board posts are to facilitate reflection and engagement with the course material on a frequent and consistent basis.¹¹ Through the journal entries, students will be able to personally reflect and think through topics that might be challenging or interesting to them and receive feedback from me. The discussion board posts, on the other hand, will present students with a chance to engage, reflect, and learn with their peers in discussing course material. Indeed (and I myself have been guilty of this before) it is possible students may enter this course and view these weekly, online assignments as "busy work," "unimportant," etc. Therefore, I hope to counter this by emphasizing to the classroom that these weekly journal entries/discussion board posts are their chance to reflect on and engage with the course material in a more informal setting. Recognizing that some folks are more quiet learners, these weekly writing opportunities also present students with a chance to work through their thoughts that they might not have been able to vocalize in the classroom. The students are expected to participate in class, given that much of the class relies on class discussion. In fact, as will be discussed later, one aspect of drafting the ground rules for our classroom community will involve imagining how we want to create a classroom community

¹¹ While attending a Women's Classical Caucus Pedagogy Pop-Up Event, "Teaching Race & Ethnicity in Antiquity (Workshop & Panel)" many of the panelists such as Rebecca Futo-Kennedy noted the importance of 'organization' and 'scaffolding' to the course that encourages frequent, connective assignments for students to engage with the material in an informal way to attempt to mitigate some of the hesitancy that might accompany working with new, challenging material (WCC February 22nd, 2022).

in which everyone is comfortable speaking and learning together in class. I hope to recognize and honor that every student plays a key role in deciding how we want this class to function and how we want to interact with one another in order to grapple with the course material. Furthermore, attendance is also part of this portion of the grade. Admittedly, I have not explicitly given a percentage to the attendance grade. I want students to understand that their attendance in class is critical for not only their success in the course but also the maintenance of the classroom community. I feared labeling attendance as worth something like “5%” of their grade and students equating that with unimportance. All of this being said, bearing in mind the hardships of the pandemic, I want to be lenient in permitting students to miss class (a class that meets quite often) when necessary, as is explained in the Attendance policy below.

The next assignment, a mini lecture + class discussion leader, is a once-a-semester opportunity for students to lead the class for the day. This assignment aims to let students take an even more direct control over their learning and how they wish to engage with their peers in the course material. So, not only will students create a mini lecture on a topic of their choice (based on the material for that day), they will also lead the class discussion through the creation of 2-3 discussion questions.

One of the learning objectives of the course is to develop our critical thinking skills with primary and secondary sources as well as our research skills. The development of these skills will culminate in a Final Research Project. So, an earlier assignment between Weeks 6 and 7 will require students to meet with me to discuss ideas for their final project. While this assignment only requires one meeting with the instructor to discuss strategies for the final

project, it is possible for this initial meeting to encourage future interactions between the instructor and students to foster communication, collaboration, and the students' confidence in their work. Students will also create an annotated bibliography to prepare for their final research project. Given that this course is designed at an introductory level, it is entirely possible that this might be a students' first time creating an annotated bibliography. Thus, the goal of this annotated bibliography is to get students comfortable using research databases like JSTOR or Project MUSE, as well as work on skills to critically search for, read, or even skim secondary sources for one's final project.

The Final Research Project acts as the assignment for students to culminate the skills they have developed throughout the semester and wield them to create their project. While the notion of an open-ended project, with no true "prompt" might seem daunting to some students, the hope is that the scaffolded assignments beforehand (project meeting + annotated bibliography) will allow students to work through the stress of an open-ended project to arrive at a topic they are passionate about. The only stipulation is that the project must relate to Medea and other course themes in some way and involve a research component; otherwise, students are encouraged to pursue their project in whatever way they choose (and agree upon with me in our project meeting). As stated in the syllabus, then, the final research project can take the form of a typical final essay, but other options are available that might be more suitable to a students' interests / learning preferences such as a short film, podcast episode, art piece + critical explanation, etc. The final two weeks of the class will allow the students to present their work and receive feedback from the classroom community.

Late Work/Extensions Policy and Attendance Policy:

When thinking through the late work policies for the course, my goal was to be lenient but also firm in what can/cannot be submitted late. I will admit that my research for this project and different grading tactics sometimes brought me to the concept of “un-grading” or “contract grading” in which the matter of a student’s grade is the product of consistent conversations between the instructor and the student about their performance in the course, their engagement with course material, etc., and something like the weekly journal assignments I have presented would not receive a grade.¹² While I am quite intrigued by this idea, especially in its relation to transformative justice and abolitionist pedagogy, it was not something I had made time to explore more fully. In this particular moment, I recognized this project as a learning opportunity for me in which I did not have to adopt every innovative strategy I came across. Perhaps this sounds like an excuse to avoid one particular thing I was less comfortable or familiar with; however, I did want to raise un-grading/contract grading as a strategy that is on my mind, and I hope to pursue in the future. All of this being said, I emphasized with each assignment the importance of communication with me when the moment arises that a student might not be able to complete an assignment on time—in which I might be able to offer extensions or leniency. The same thing applies for the course attendance policy: I intend to be lenient in allowing the students three “no questions asked” absences. After these three absences, the next unexcused absence will start to affect their grade. That being said, I once again emphasize the necessity of communication with me about absences from class, because I plan to be

¹² Rebecca Futo-Kennedy, Women’s Classical Caucus Pedagogy Pop-Up Event, “Teaching Race & Ethnicity in Antiquity (Workshop & Panel)” (February 22nd, 2022).

lenient with excusing students from class, given the tumultuous nature of the pandemic. Could this lead to students taking advantage of my leniency? Perhaps, but I would much rather offer students the benefit of the doubt to miss a class rather than coerce them in a way to attend class for their grade when they may not be in an appropriate mental/physical state to do so.

The following four sections of the syllabus are those which are often required of university syllabi. That being said, I still plan to go over each of these sections with the students to assert that their needs, well-being, and indeed their humanity is what must be taken care of first and foremost in order to participate and succeed in this course. Indeed, I use these sections to not only assert my role in facilitating a safe classroom community, but also to offer information about university services that offer resources which I myself as the instructor cannot offer as instructors (despite assumptions at times) are not trained counselors, psychiatrists, etc.

Texts:

Given that this course examines several iterations of Medea's myth as well as Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, students will be required to acquire several texts for this course. Alongside acquiring copies/translations of some primary sources, I am also asking students to acquire a classical myth anthology. Although we will not work through a significant portion of the anthology, the students' access to this work will provide them with an extensive collection of primary sources in translation that could prove quite beneficial to their final projects. Although there are translations out there of Euripides' *Medea* and other

ancient sources by women that interest me, the translations I have chosen were done by men. While I had hoped to do more research into translations done by women, these translations were the ones readily available to me. That being said, these translations will still prove fruitful in our class discussions about identity, translation, and how an author works through portraying an experience different from their own. Furthermore, the assumed operation of a Canvas site will also allow me to assign short readings or articles for the class to supplement the longer works.

3. Syllabus Schedule:

Week One (1): Greetings–Syllabus Review + Intro to Intersectionality:

This first week of the course is crucial both for establishing the groundwork for the classroom community as well as introducing the class to intersectionality. Indeed, instructors and students alike often dread the “syllabus day” where the instructor finds themselves going through a long document of rules and expectations. While I cannot change the fact that it is necessary to go over the syllabus on the first day of class, what I can do is ensure that students know *why* we have a syllabus, and what it can offer the students in terms of transparency, accountability, and support. I will emphasize to students that the syllabus acts as a central hub for information about the course, and it is where we can find expectations for the course, the students, and the instructor as we work through the course material communally. In particular, I want to stress the syllabus as a living document, which can be subject to change and revision based on the needs of the class.

The next two days focus on introducing the concept of intersectionality. Before attending the second class, students will be asked to watch a short video “Intersectionality 101” which aims to explain intersectionality in three minutes to an audience that could range from younger children to adults. In response to the video, students are asked to write or type a response to a question about how they would define identity, privilege, and oppression, and how they experience/interact with those concepts. While the students are asked to bring in their responses, they will not be required to share these responses. I will ask that the students briefly show me their response, so I can ensure they completed it. From there I will seek the students’ opinions about the pre-class assignment in terms of what they thought and what they learned from the video, and at this point students may share and discuss their responses if they feel comfortable. After this brief discussion, we will watch a TedTalk by Kimberlé Crenshaw about her conceptualizing of intersectionality. This video does include some visually disturbing content, so I will only play the middle portion of the video that involves Crenshaw’s actual talk, and students can then decide for themselves whether they want to watch the entire video on their own time. The remainder of the class will be devoted to a discussion of Crenshaw’s TedTalk and the pre-class video on intersectionality. Indeed, I opted for the students’ introduction to intersectionality in the course to be through visual/audio content. While there are some great, accessible readings about intersectionality, these two videos present intersectionality and its origins in a conversational, accessible manner that might seem less daunting than tackling a theoretical reading. Indeed, the goal of this second day of class is for students to understand and work with intersectionality as a framework for analyzing identity, privilege, and oppression, as well as seeing the terms

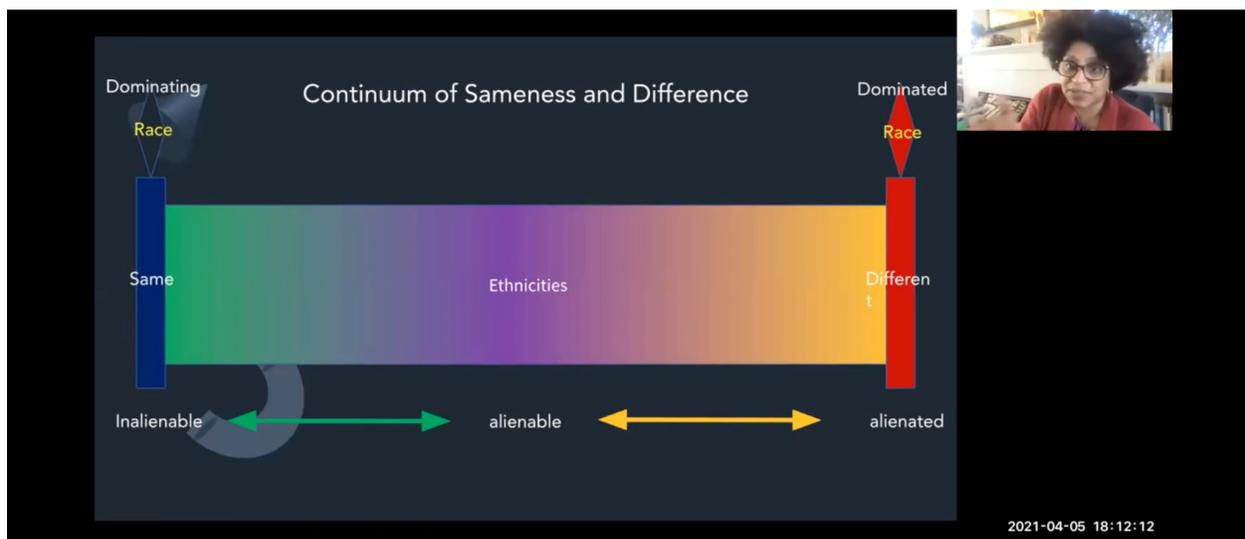
origins in Black feminism and Crenshaw's specific work with the legal harm perpetrated against Black women.

The final day of the first week, Friday, will focus on Audre Lorde and her engagement with intersectionality and identity. For today students will have watched an introductory video about Audre Lorde from PBS and read her essay "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference." I drew on Lorde's work in the classroom for a multitude of reasons. I find this essay in particular useful in how Lorde works with definitions: such as offering a definition of racism as well as interrogating the definition of 'woman' and how that can be shaped through privilege and whiteness to make "women of Color become "other"" (Lorde 117). Lorde's work is beneficial because she demonstrates intersectional thinking and a push for intersectional praxis without invoking the term "intersectionality," a term which arrives about a decade after this essay. Our focus on Lorde will allow us to witness intersectionality as a Black feminist framework that has been in practice long before Crenshaw coined the term. My goal is that Lorde's work will help us develop our abilities to adopt an intersectional lens when investigating our contemporary moment. Thus, Lorde's famous quote: "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives" will also guide our study of Lorde and intersectionality. This quote offers a poignant jumping off point for us to evaluate how certain issues about race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, etc., are discussed today such as in the news, with legislation, at the university, and so on. Furthermore, this examination of Lorde's intersectional thinking could also act as a primer for the students as we transition towards intersectionality in ancient myth.

Week Two (2): Social Constructs & Adding Antiquity to the Mix

The next week builds off of the previous by doing a more in depth examination of the social constructs of race and gender both today and in antiquity. On the first day, the students will read Ta-Nehisi Coates article “What We Mean When We Say ‘Race is a Social Construct’” which will then be supplemented by a lecture about social constructs as described by Coates and those we may encounter in ancient Greco-Roman myth. This lecture will draw primarily on the work of Denise McCoskey and Jackie Murray to provide a framework for analyzing race and race/ethnicity in antiquity. From McCoskey I look to her discussion of ‘racial formations’ to understand race as “sociohistorical processes by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed” (3). This concept of racial formation is useful in understanding race not just as a social construction but as a category which is constantly subject to change. Indeed, it is this notion of race as a category which has changed, destroyed, and transformed its criteria throughout history can be a difficult concept for some students to initially grasp. Examining representations of race and ethnicity in Medea’s myths will require expanding our classroom understanding of race beyond something such as skin color being its defining factor. Thus, this is where Jackie Murray’s work on racecraft will come into play. Jackie Murray’s online lecture “Listening to Anti-Racist Voices from Antiquity” analyzes race, racecraft and the possibility for anti-racism in ancient myths such as the *Odyssey* and *Argonautica*. This lecture will be revisited as an assignment later in the course, but in this early week I will draw upon Murray’s “Continuum of Sameness and Difference” (see fig. 1). This continuum acts to assist the class in expanding our understanding of the construction of race in ancient Greco-Roman myth as a way to

alienate and dehumanize those deemed ‘different’ (Murray 2021). On one side of the continuum, there is the dominated race which is viewed as most different, alienated, and with precarious or negotiable humanity. Whereas, on the other side, we see the dominating race, which is bound together by feelings of sameness and an inalienable humanity. This continuum helps to see how both a racial hierarchy can be imposed in service of the dominating race, but also that the terms which demarcate the dominated from the dominating race exist on a spectrum. Murray articulates that it is the dominating group which decides which groups are most like them, which are most different, and from whom they can withhold humanity (Murray 2021). Indeed, this continuum is used to help students work with Medea’s position as a racialized subject because she is not Greek—with Greek subjects primarily being the dominating group in her myths.



(Figure 1. Continuum of Sameness and Difference. A screenshot on Youtube from Jackie Murray’s lecture at the University of Tennessee, April 5th, 2021.)

Following this lecture day, the next meeting for Week Two will incorporate more work with representations of gender and gender difference. This will include a brief lecture guided by materials from Brooke Holmes' *Gender: Antiquity and its Legacy*. In particular, I will want to draw the students' attention to Holmes' discussion of the story of Phaëthusa and Nanno from the Greek medical treatise *Epidemics VI* from the Hippocratic Corpus:

“In Abdera, Phaëthusa, the wife of Pytheas, a woman who kept to the house, having given birth at an earlier time, stopped getting her period for a long time after her husband had been exiled. Later, pains in the joints and redness. After these things happened, her body was made male (*endrothe*) and became hairy all over; she grew a beard, and her voice became harsh. Despite the fact we did everything possible to draw down the menses, they didn't come, but she died after surviving only a little while longer. The same thing happened as well to Nanno, wife of Gorgippus, on Thasos. It was the opinion of all the physicians that I met that the sole hope of her becoming female (*gynaikothernai*) was if the menses would come. But with her, too, this wasn't possible, although we did everything, and she died without delay ([Hippocrates] *Epidemics VI* 8.32, Littré 5.356) (Holmes 14).

Although this is just one passage, it is an interesting one to get the class thinking about “what does it mean to have the body of a man or the body of a woman?” (Holmes 14). As Phaëthusa and Nanno seem to embody some physical, ‘masculine,’ features while still maintaining a ‘female’ body, we can start to think about the potential for fluidity and instability regarding gender, sex, and the body. Of course, here it will be important to acknowledge the difficulties in thinking about ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ in the ancient Mediterranean given our contemporary preoccupation with the gender/sex binary. This binary insists that the biological body is fixed and determined by nature while gender is mutable and vulnerable to cultural and social practices; however, the text above exemplifies the idea that “matter is slippery” (Holmes 16). While this Hippocratic example is not a wholesale inversion or rejection of the

contemporary gender/sex binary, it does offer a sense inconsistency to the dominate, normate understand of the gender/sex binary today. Holmes notes that this case study prompts “an embodied gender identity that is fluid *and* fixed, covering a continuum of traits ranging from the contingent to the essential” (16). It is with this understanding of the complexity and ‘slipperiness’ that coincides with analyzing a category such as gender that our class can turn to the mythic representation of the first woman, Pandora. Here, through Hesiod, we witness the construction of the first woman by the gods and her placement on the earth as an alleged punishment for mankind. Bearing in mind our discussion from the Hippocratic text, I will ask the class to think about what we are seeing going into Pandora’s construction. What features and characteristics does she receive from the gods? What does Pandora do? Where do the constructions of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ seem strongest or weakest?

Lastly, I hope to bring in a brief portion from Euripides’ *Medea* to culminate our study of intersectionality, race, and gender in a moment from Medea’s myth. If there is not enough time for this activity on the Wednesday of Week Two, it could be moved to the following Friday before the community building activity. Although there is still one more week to go before we dive into Medea, I bring in this notable moment from Medea’s myth where she addresses the women of Corinth as a foreign woman who has been wronged by Jason:

“Women of Corinth, I have come outside to you
 Lest you should be indignant with me; for I know
 That many people are overproud, some when alone,
 And others when in company. And those who live
 Quietly, as I do, get a bad reputation.

For a just judgment is not evident in the eyes
When a man at first sight hates another, before
Learning his character, being in no way injured;
And a foreigner especially must adapt himself.
I'd not approve of even a fellow-countryman
Who by pride and want of manners offends his neighbors.
But on me this thing has fallen so unexpectedly,
It has broken my heart. I am finished. I let go
All my life's joy. My friends, I only want to die.
It was everything to me to think well of one man,
And he, my own husband, has turned out wholly vile.
Of all things which are living and can form a judgment
We women are the most unfortunate creatures.
Firstly, with an excess of wealth it is required
For us to buy a husband and take for our bodies
A master; for not to take one is even worse.
And now the question is serious whether we take
A good or bad one; for there is no easy escape
For a woman, nor can she say no to her marriage.
She arrives among new modes of behavior and manners,
And needs prophetic power, unless she has learned at home,
How best to manage him who shares the bed with her.
And if we work out all this well and carefully,
And the husband lives with us and lightly bears his yoke,
Then life is enviable. If not, I'd rather die.
A man, when he's tired of the company in his home,
Goes out of the house and puts an end to his boredom
And turns to a friend or companion of his own age.
But we are forced to keep our eyes on one alone.
What they say of us is that we have a peaceful time
Living at home, while they do the fighting in war.
How wrong they are! I would very much rather stand
Three times in the front of battle than bear one child.
Yet what applies to me does not apply to you.
You have a country. Your family home is here.
You enjoy life and the company of your friends.
But I am deserted, a refugee, thought nothing of
By my husband—something he won in a foreign land.

I have no mother or brother, nor any relation
 With whom I can take refuge in this sea of woe.
 This much then is this service I would beg from you:
 If I can find the means or devise any scheme
 To pay my husband back for what he has done to me—
 Him and his father-in-law and the girl who married him—
 Just to keep silent. For in other ways a woman
 Is full of fear, defenseless, dreads the sight of cold
 Steel; but, when once she is wronged in the matter of love,
 No other soul can hold so many thoughts of blood.”

Euripides, *Medea* 214-266, transl. Rex Warner

Reading this passage aloud is not only a fun way to engage with the text as it was meant to be performed, but also a way to get the class thinking about how Medea conceptualizes herself, and how that conceptualization often ties into multiple aspects of her identity. Indeed, here we see Medea grapple with the expectations of her as a mother and wife, as well as a foreigner in this Greek world who might be tempted to assimilate for better treatment by the dominating group—thereby initiating the intersectional lens for the myth of Medea.

The final day of Week Two will focus on establishing classroom community norms. By this time, the class will have met several times and hopefully the anxieties and hesitancy which accompanies the first week of class will have mostly subsided in order to facilitate this discussion. Throughout this discussion, there will be a shared Google document displayed for the classroom where we will craft our community values together, and everyone will have access to the document to add to it after this initial community building meeting.

The goal in creating community norms is to generate and then uphold a set of values to inform how we want to work together and treat each other throughout the semester. The success of this course depends on all students feeling supported and encouraged to share

their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and perspectives. The necessity for community values comes from my engagement with the work of Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens on ‘brave spaces’ as well as from transformative justice practices. Although the notion of the ‘safe space’ in the classroom might have had its origins in protecting students that are part of typically marginalized groups, Arao and Clemens articulate a “conflation of safety with comfort” when evaluating activities important to social justice and diversity learning (135). This co-option of safety is pernicious in how dominating groups are able to wield safety in the service of their own dominance. For instance, Arao and Clemens draw on the work of Tim Wise concerning white people’s “insistence on safety as a condition of their participation in cross-racial dialogue about racism...as “the ultimate expression of White privilege” (15)” (Arao and Clemens 140). By controlling what is and is not ‘safe,’ a dominating group in the classroom can then control what information is and is not ‘appropriate’ for them to engage with. Thus, Arao and Clemens see their employment of the ‘brave space’ as a way to “emphasize the importance of bravery...to help students better understand—and rise to—the challenges of genuine dialogue on diversity and social justice issues” (136). The goal of establishing ground rules, then, is to encourage students to lean into the possibilities of risk and vulnerability when engaging with course topics, and that the classroom community will have values in place to address how we want to navigate challenges and show respect to one another. In establishing community norms in the classroom, Arao and Clemens encourage taking a prolonged, “protracted dialogue” in which to define, for instance, what something like respect will look like in the classroom community and acknowledging that that definition might look different to everyone (142).

Indeed, I saw this need for a prolonged dialogue to coalesce with transformative justice in asking the classroom community to think through how to address harm in the classroom when it inevitably occurs. For instance, how will we hold ourselves responsible for our intentions and our impacts? What mechanisms can we put in place to repair harm when it occurs and support those involved? How will we treat each other in a way that “values everyone’s inherent worth and dignity?” (Shalaby, “Imagining “Classroom Management” as an Abolitionist Project” from *Lessons in Liberation* 110). The above questions are just a couple examples that may be offered to the students, but the rest of the community norms will be drawn up by the classroom as a community. Indeed, it is this kind of activity that requires the kind of imagination work necessary to see “well-being as safety, healing as liberation, and love as praxis...dreaming up and creating the alternative we want, need, and deserve” (Shalaby 105).

Week Three (3): Working with Ancient Greco-Roman Myth

The third week of the course is designed to steep the classroom in the tradition of ancient Greco-Roman myth. The first day of this week the students will read Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Works and Days* as one version of the origins of the Greek cosmos. This Monday lecture will go over the basics for working with myth—what is myth? What is its function? How do you “read” myth? What can myth tell us about the society it comes from? Keeping that in mind, we can practice interacting with Greek myth by working our way through Hesiod’s depiction of the creation of the world. Indeed, it is an understatement to say that Hesiod is a lot to take on for folks who might be completely unfamiliar with Greek

mythology. That being said, this Monday of Week Three (and potentially that Wednesday) will be dedicated to walking the class through this story, and working through our reactions to the text. Although Medea is not a ‘main character’ in this myth, she is mentioned briefly, and I felt it was important for the students to have some kind of foundational understanding as to how Greek myth conceptualized the world (and how that might replicate something of the myth-teller’s world). Indeed, Hesiod’s work could prove a useful reference for the students later down the line as we are introduced to more mythological figures. In fact, there are various family trees within the anthology that contains Hesiod’s work which are quite helpful in keeping track of how all of these figures are related and connected.

On the Wednesday of Week Three we will tie up loose ends from our Hesiod discussion and then move on to Apollodorus’ account of Medea. Apollodorus is an accessible resource to read our first, summarizing account of Medea’s myth because of his penchant for brevity and being concise. Through our study of Apollodorus’ account, we will engage in a group discussion of our initial reactions to Medea’s full story and how she is depicted in the myth alongside other figures. Here, I will offer students’ Emma Griffiths’ three-layer framework for interacting with Medea’s myths, as it can help frame our discussion of Apollodorus as well as the other iterations of Medea we will meet. The first layer is “the all encompassing ‘Greek myth,’” which includes every story and iteration that Medea is in or to which she is linked in some way (6). The second level is the myth of Medea involving, perhaps contradictorily, “a story made up of incidents told in different ways in different time periods” (6). Lastly, on the most ‘micro’ scale, is the particular “‘instantiations’” of a whole retelling or even one part of Medea’s myth. This three-layer model is an insightful tool to

help us conceptualize how Medea's myth does not exist or operate in 'isolation' but is in constant contact with other moments in Greek myth (and, later, Roman myth).

The Friday of Week Three we will begin by taking time to sign-up for which week the students would like to lead a Mini Lecture + Class Discussion. Rather than doing this process online, I want to make sure it is done in person (or synchronously on Zoom if necessary) in order to field questions about the assignment and allow students to pick who they want to work with for this assignment. After that, our class activity will revolve around the discussion board post for that week in which the students were asked to reflect on the categories of difference we have seen represented so far in Hesiod, Apollodorus, or the one Hippocratic text. Although on the syllabus I have provided some examples in a binary format as would be presented on the discussion board prompt (mortal/divine, man/woman or masculine/feminine, Greek/foreigner, etc.) this class discussion will allow the students to explore collectively the places where these definitions/boundaries/categories become blurred.

Week Four (4): Euripides' *Medea* Part I

At long last, in Week Four we will begin our reading of Euripides' *Medea*! Although the content of this play is not the chronological, mythological beginning of Medea's story, I wanted to begin with this work and spend two weeks on it since it is one of (if not) the most influential tellings of the myth this course will read. Monday will begin with a primer lecture on the basic characteristics of Greek Tragedy and who Euripides was. I will also offer some information for the historical context of the play and its audience as well as a refresher on the mythological events leading up to the events in Euripides' *Medea*. This is also an

opportune moment to review Medea's own family tree and a map of the Aegean / Black Sea region to visualize Medea's journey. I have asked the class to read just about one-fourth of the play for this first day, because most of our discussion will be an introduction to Greek Tragedy. So, any time leftover from my lecture will be dedicated to reactions and observations from this first fourth of the play.

On Wednesday we will be halfway through *Medea*. However, instead of diving into a discussion about the first half of the play, we will do some work with different translations of Medea. The class will be provided with a selection of passages from both our translation and a couple others. Then they will split into groups to compare/contrast the passages, and we will regroup after a while to discuss our observations. While the focus of this course is not translation work, I wanted to take at least one class period to address translation as an active, conscious process; indeed, to remind ourselves that translation is never a neutral act. During this day we will discuss how we have arrived at the copy of Euripides we have today, and what we think goes into the process of translation. How can the difference in a singular word or phrase change the meaning of someone's translation? How might a translator try to stay objective? How might their personal biases sap into the act of translation? The goal of this activity is to deepen our analytical skills even to the point of working on a single word and its effect on the story. Also, I will bring to the students' attention that although we will only spend one 'official' day on comparing translations, that this kind of intertextual study is something they could consider for a final project.

The Friday of Week Four will feature our first student-led Mini Lecture + Class Discussion. Because we will spend Wednesday on translation comparisons, this group will

guide us through our discussion of the entire first half of Euripides' *Medea*. Since this is our first group to present and lead discussion, I will ask and encourage this group to reach out to me about forming topics for their lecture and discussion questions. Indeed, I will repeat this practice for each student group to enact transparency about their plans, so I can plan the rest of class accordingly. Although there is no physical rubric for this assignment, the expectations for these student groups is to demonstrate their collective, critical analysis of the course material, and to be able to relate it in some way to our overarching discussions about race, gender, class, power, oppression, intersectionality, etc. Then, they are expected to engage the classroom community with 2-3 discussion questions based on their lecture. The student groups are also more than welcome to devise a classroom activity of their own, but the discussion questions are the suggested option with which to engage their peers.

Week Five (5): Eur. *Medea* Part II

On the Monday of Week Five we will have finished *Medea* and begin our discussion of the second half of the play. Some of the guiding questions I choose for Monday will be decided based on the focus of the student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion for Wednesday. That being said, one topic I would like to explore on this day with the class is Medea's relationship with both anger and love. The conclusion of the play bears witness to Medea's anger towards Jason and the people around her alongside her love for her children: the combination of which results in the horrific murder of Creon's daughter, Creon, and Medea and Jason's two sons. To bolster this discussion I will ask the class to reflect on some brief passages from Audre Lorde's "Uses of Anger" from *Sister Outsider*. Lorde's essay situates

itself specifically in the experience of American Black women and women of color. She asserts the use of a woman of color's anger for change and liberation, and inserts the lines "*Everything can be used / except what is wasteful / (you will need / to remember this when you are accused of destruction)*" (Lorde 127). Thus, how could this passage affect our analysis of Medea's anger and actions? While it is certainly obvious that Medea causes destruction (and is accused of it) through the murders of several people, Lorde's quote here might ask us to think through who is accusing Medea of destruction, and what is their understanding of the destruction and violence compared with Medea's. How do we see Medea 'using up' different parts of herself and emotions to achieve her desires? Furthermore, the class could investigate Lorde's distinction that "[h]atred is the fury of those who do not share our goals, and its object is death and destruction. Anger is a grief of distortions between peers, and its object is change" (129). If our class were to imagine Jason as the figure enacting Lorde's notion of 'hatred' towards Medea, we can see how his disavowal of her leads to an attempt to bring about a premature social death (indeed a kind of death/destruction) for Medea through exile. With Medea, however, does she share the kind of peers in her anger that Lorde refers to? And what kind of change does Medea enact/want to enact through her anger, and how does that change hold up to or diverge from Lorde's notion of change in favor of the liberation of women? Although Lorde's work here is specific to the experience of American women of color, it will be interesting to employ this work with our intersectional study of Medea's myth as well as to situate this thinking on anger, love, loss, and violence as we will return to it with our study of *Beloved*.

Wednesday of Week Five will largely be determined by what the second student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion decides to focus on. Then, on the Friday of Week Five we will examine ancient, visual depictions of Medea as well as live adaptations of the play. In particular, we will at least look at the vase which depicts the flight of Medea, surrounded by the sun on her chariot drawn by dragons. As for live adaptations of the play, a 1982 production of *Medea* featuring Zoe Caldwell can be found on YouTube, and we could watch various scenes such as the opening of the play with the Nurse, the Chorus, and Medea, or the ending of the play when Jason confronts Medea about her actions. Admittedly, the live adaptation I would most like to use for this day in the course is the recent *Medea* short film created by Khameleon Productions and directed by Riffy Ahmed. The short film is currently being showcased through an *Uprooting Medea* tour at various colleges and universities. This production purports to focus on themes of race, belonging, and identity with a BIPOC cast and drawing on other forms such as spoken word and music in the short film (University of Wyoming Classics Program event description, 2022). Although the choice of a live adaptation is somewhat up in the air depending on what is available online, the main goal of this day is to expose the class to visual depictions of Medea. This activity will also serve to show students that the study of the visual arts could also be a possibility for their Final Research Project.

Week Six (6): Medea in the *Argonautica*, Apollonius of Rhodes Part I

In Week Six we transition to Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*. My justification for moving to the *Argonautica* and 'back in time' to Medea's life as a maiden on Colchis *after*

reading Euripides' *Medea* is attuned to historical chronology of writing *Medea's* stories—seeing how Apollonius of Rhodes wrote the *Argonautica* after Euripides' *Medea* and therefore assuredly had Euripides in mind when writing his account of the young *Medea*. So, the Monday of Week Six will discuss this justification for reading the *Argonautica* at this moment. Similar to our beginning with Euripides, I will provide a brief lecture on the historical context for the *Argonautica* in the Hellenistic Period and Apollonius of Rhodes. I will also summarize the main events from Books 1-2 and part of Book 3 that we will not be reading. This summary will also be made available on Canvas before this class meeting in order to aid the students' reading of the *Argonautica*. The last portion of this Monday will involve a group discussion of the portion of Book 3 in which we see *Medea* as a young maiden, fretting over her newfound love for Jason and her decision to help him and betray her family / country. Students will also be reminded at the start of this Monday that they must arrange a meeting with me within the next two weeks to discuss ideas for their Final Research Project.

The Wednesday of Week Six will feature our third student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion. This student group will lead us through a portion of Book 4 of the *Argonautica* when *Medea* escapes with Jason and the Argonauts. This passage also notably sees *Medea* accost Jason for contemplating leaving her behind; indeed, a moment that seems to look back (and forward) to Euripides' *Medea*. Thus, the Friday of Week 6 will be dedicated to mapping out the “*Medeas*” we have met so far in this course. From the brief mention of *Medea* in Hesiod, to her account by Apollodorus, to Euripides, and to Apollonius. This exercise will serve not just to compare/contrast the different narrative approaches to *Medea's*

myth, but also offer the students a chance to clear up any confusion they might have about which author said what and about whom. Indeed, it can be tricky to keep track of the authors and set of mythological figures we encounter. So, this particular moment is meant to pause and take count of all the iterations of Medea we have encountered thus far.

Week Seven (7): *Argonautica*, Part II: A few Key Episodes

In Week Seven we will return to Book 1 of the *Argonautica* to analyze a few key episodes and their representations of gender, race, class, and ability. These episodes, the encounters with the Lemnian Women, the Earth-born people, and the Doliones will also prepare us for Wednesday's discussion of Jackie Murray's work on these episodes. The *Argonautica* is perhaps most notable for its ethnographic depiction of the Argonauts' journey, and we will see this through Monday's discussion. The first episode involves Jason and the Argonauts meeting the women of Lemnos, who killed all of the men (and it seems all of the enslaved girls) on the island out of anger and jealousy—save for Hypsipyle their ruler who spared her father. Indeed this episode is an interesting one to consider in conjunction with Medea and violence enacted by women. The next episode which follows is the Argonauts arrival on an island that is inhabited both by seemingly monstrous earth-born people as well as the more 'civilized' Doliones people. Apollonius here sets up a notable contrast between these two groups, which we as a class can analyze to see the racialization of the earthborn people and the uplift and privileging of the Doliones. Indeed, as we will see in Jackie Murray's talk on Wednesday, the Argonauts slaughter the earth-born people without so much of a blink of an eye, but when they accidentally slaughter the Doliones men, the

Argonauts are overcome with grief and perform funeral rites and games for the fallen. Furthermore, this description of the earth-born people is also a chance to address disability in ancient Greco-Roman myth.¹³ Drawing on the work of Marchella Ward and Hannah Silverblank, I will raise to students the notion that the earth-born people do not seem to fit in the construction of a “normate body” that is “a body constructed as normal” and how that affects their treatment by the Argonauts (Ward and Silverblank 504). Thus, here and in conjunction with Murray’s lecture on Wednesday, we might be able to construct an intersection between (dis)ability, race, and even indigeneity to interrogate the violence against the earth-born people.

On Wednesday of Week Seven, our fourth student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion will lead us through the assigned portions of Jackie Murray’s lecture “Listening to Anti-racist Voices in Antiquity.” The two portions I ask the class to view are Murray’s initial discussion about race as a social construction and her Continuum of Sameness and Difference which was discussed earlier in the course. The second portion is Murray’s specific engagement with the *Argonautica* and the earth-born people episode we encountered on Monday. While Murray’s lecture is fascinating, it also could be a bit more difficult for this week’s student group, due to its more theoretical content compared to other weeks. So, I will make sure to remind the students for this week that they are not expected to be able to cover every single minute from this assigned lecture within their own Mini Lecture. Again, as discussed above, Jackie Murray’s work on race and racecraft in ancient Greco-Roman mythology is insightful

¹³ Admittedly, disability is not as prominent of a focus in this study of Medea, and I wish to give disability and disability studies even more attention in future projects. Just because I did not incorporate a strong disability studies focus in this course does not mean that such a focus is impossible, and I will admit that is a shortcoming of a proclaimed intersectional project such as this one.

and will help us to develop our understanding of race and its representations in the course texts. More specifically, her investigation into the earth-born people in the *Argonautica* can help facilitate an intersectional analysis of this episode through ability, race, and the colonial subject. Indeed, although the episodes from this week do not explicitly focus on Medea, they do, however, open up the *Argonautica* as an even more interesting text that could bolster our intersectional lens. Depending on the goals of the student-led group for this day, I would like to ask our classroom about how we might use what we learn from Murray in our analysis of Apollonius' Medea and the other Medeas we have already met.

The Friday of Week Seven will be devoted to research practice. The goal of this day is to get students comfortable using university research databases such as JSTOR and Project MUSE. We will go through how to use an advanced search to search for a resource based on the author, title, or keyword. Then, working together as an entire class, we will look through an article of our choice and discuss strategies for finding the thesis statement or main argument of a paper. We will also practice checking the bibliography of a resource to see if that can lead you to another, more helpful source. After going over some of these research strategies as a group, I will split up the class into small groups and ask them to repeat this exercise in their group. The group can decide whether to choose their own research topic, or they will be able to choose from an idea list I created. Then, on a piece of paper, one student will keep track of what the group wanted to learn about, the search terms they used, their results, and the main argument/thesis of a chosen resource. Once this activity is complete, we will regroup and discuss as a class what successes and failures we encountered in trying to search for a specific topic in mind in a research database. While students might vary in their

familiarity and comfort level with research databases, this class meeting will highlight for students the databases and strategies that will likely be most useful for this course. This activity will alert students to the expectations regarding research for their final project and allow them to start thinking about how to format an annotated bibliography. Furthermore, by the end of the day on Friday of Week Seven, all students are expected to have met with me to discuss their final project, unless granted an extension by me.

Week Eight (8): Ovid and Medea

We're going Roman in Week Eight! This week we will transition to our first Roman author, Ovid. On Monday there will be a brief lecture on Ovid, his historical context, and the themes of his work the *Metamorphoses*. For Monday we will read selections from Book VII of the *Metamorphoses* on *Medea and Jason*. This discussion of Medea will be unique for a multitude of reasons. First, Ovid is writing with the tradition of the Greek authors we have previously read and their versions of Medea's myth. Second, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in particular will offer us a chance to delve deeper into Medea's role as a witch/sorceress. Given the theme of metamorphosis and transformation, Ovid affords a lot of focus to Medea's ability to transform plants, animals, people, the weather, etc., through her magical capabilities. One topic that might be useful to address here (if it has not received much attention by now) is how Medea teeters on the border between mortal and divine—given both her divine ancestry and her magical abilities.

On Wednesday of Week Eight, our fifth student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion will lead us in our analysis of Ovid's *Heroides* XII—a letter from Medea to Jason. This imagined

letter raises several interesting questions about authenticity, identity, and the voice as Ovid writes from the perspective of Medea writing to Jason to voice her complaints and frustration. Depending on the focus of the student group, I would like to ensure that again we investigate a kind of intersectional thinking in this work, as Medea addresses her multiple roles as mother, wife, foreigner, goddess, and so on. Our Friday activity will act as a moment to recap and reconcile what we have learned about Medea from these two Ovidian sources. As a creative exercise, I would then like to have students work either alone or with a group to craft their own letter in the style of Ovid. It could be from sender and recipient could be whomever they desire, as long as it is a letter of complaint and incorporates some of the traits we observed in our class discussion: such as grappling with one's identity and positionality while voicing grievances with someone in power. After some time to construct the letters, we will regroup and hold space for students to share their letters if they desire. Or if folks are too shy to share them aloud in class, I will open up a Canvas discussion board for the letters to be posted there.

Week Nine (9): Medea and Dido

In Week Nine we turn to one of Ovid's older contemporaries: Vergil. This week we will read Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, which notably depicts Aeneas and Dido's love affair which ends in Aeneas' desertion of Dido and Dido's suicide. Monday will begin with a lecture on Vergil, the *Aeneid*, the characteristics of ancient epic, and the events leading up to Book 4. Students will also be reminded that their annotated bibliography is due next Friday (Week Ten). I chose to study Dido this week because she shares a somewhat similar experience to

Medea: she is a foreign woman jilted by a man who belongs to the dominating group in their story (Jason as Greek hero and Aeneas as the soon to be founder of the Romans). Thus, the focus of this week will be to discuss Dido's account in the *Aeneid*, but also to do so in conjunction with what we know about Medea's mythology. Depending on the focus of the student group for this week, I will likely ask the class to think back to our discussion about anger, love, and violence committed by women. Although Dido kills herself rather than other people, we do get a sense of the political-historical violence that extends from this moment. Because of Aeneas' desertion of Dido to go found Rome, Dido's death at Carthage acts as the origin point for the conflict between Rome and Carthage, which will come to manifest in the Punic Wars. Indeed, there is a way in which Dido is not only propped up as a foreign woman, but as a potentially hostile 'other' who will come to haunt Rome for centuries.

Week Ten (10): Begin Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Week Ten of the course sees us transition out of ancient source material and into our prolonged reading of Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*. While this moment is most assuredly a transition in source material, I also view it as a culminating moment of the course. All of our previous discussions about intersectional thinking, social constructions, the ability to render someone's humanity alienable, and evaluating how we tell stories (to name a few topics) have prepared our class for an analysis of Morrison's incredibly rich and moving novel. There is no reading assigned for this first day of Week Ten so as to hold space for this transition to our final 'unit' of the course. Monday will involve a lecture with a background on Toni Morrison, the historical influence for *Beloved*, and the institution of slavery in the United

States. I will also take this time to make a more explicit content warning that *Beloved* contains perhaps the most graphic, disturbing content we will encounter in the entire course, so students will be encouraged to meet with me if they anticipate any problems and reminded that they may take a break from classroom discussions as needed without penalty.

I chose to end this course with *Beloved* because it offers our class a prolonged period of time to focus on one text and investigate some themes and topics that have been present throughout the entire course. While this course clearly sees a value in discussing the mythology of Medea, *Beloved*, and the accompanying themes of racism, sexism, trauma, 'othering,' etc., in concord, I still want to make clear to students that *Beloved* cannot be read as simply a 'reception' of Medea. *Beloved* is inspired by the historical account of the escaped enslaved woman Margaret Garner in 19th century Ohio. Thus, it is imperative that our study takes into consideration the horrors of American slavery and reorient ourselves with more contemporary constructions of race such as those described in Jackie Murray's lecture. My goal in this first lecture is to situate our study of *Beloved* as building off of our work with Medea, and to do so in a way that encourages an interdisciplinary analysis of *Beloved* as well as further develops our interdisciplinary approach and intersectional lens with ancient Greco-Roman myth. What I mean by this is that I want to assert that just as our study of *Beloved* is bolstered by our previous work with ancient Greco-Roman myth, so too can *Beloved* retroactively influence our engagement with ancient Greco-Roman myth. Although the structure of a university semester and syllabus require a kind of linear progression of time, I seek to encourage students to disrupt this linear pattern in our study of *Beloved* to reflect on how our discussions about *Beloved* can shape our understanding of previous

materials. Indeed, I do realize that the majority of this course focuses on ancient material, and so to say that I do not want the model of ancient Greco-Roman myth to be privileged on a pedestal might sound paradoxical. That being said, it is my hope that the interdisciplinary use of feminist theory and other critical race and gender studies throughout this course exemplifies the need for Classics course to incorporate other fields to avoid the elitist and exclusionary assumption that the field of Classics itself has all the tools and frameworks necessary to analyze a work such as *Beloved*.

The seventh student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion this week will lead us through the opening sections of *Beloved*. On the Friday of Week Ten, alongside discussing the reading for that day, we will begin our character sheet activity which will occur on each Friday during our study of *Beloved*. Similar to the myths we have encountered, *Beloved* contains a whole host of characters that go through innumerable shifts and changes in their personalities in reaction to the action of the novel. The goal of this character sheet is to recognize and build our understanding of each character in the book and to track the characters' development as we read. While brainstorming for the character sheet will likely be drawn up on a white board in class, I will upload a shared Google document at the end of each Friday for students to view our tracking of each character. Indeed, this activity is mostly aimed at the novel's main four characters: Sethe, Denver, Beloved, and Paul D. However, we will encounter many other characters throughout the novel, and this character sheet will help us keep track of everyone's development and how their stories connect with one another. Additionally, the annotated bibliography is due at the end of Friday on Week Ten.

Also, it should be noted that the reading schedule for *Beloved* becomes quite demanding as we are working through an almost 300 page book in 3-weeks. So, I will make sure on the first day of Week Ten to address this workload with the students, and encourage them to develop reading plans or talk to me about best practices to read and work through a complicated text such as this one. For instance, I often recommend finding a way to listen to a book on tape while also reading the book to facilitate consistent engagement, and oftentimes you can adjust the playback speed of the recording to help you read faster.

Weeks Eleven (11) and Twelve (12): *Beloved* cont.

I have grouped Week Eleven and Week Twelve together because they will operate in a similar fashion. Monday and Wednesday will involve a discussion of that day's readings from *Beloved*, with Wednesdays being led by a student group. I will orient my guiding of the classroom discussions based on the focuses of the student groups. My strategy for each class meeting will be to first ask students to work together in a large group discussion to go over the plot of that days' reading. From that point, we can answer questions about the plot and then guide our discussion based on where we have questions and what moments in that day's reading sparked interest. I will emphasize to the classroom community that this is their chance to take hold of the text and imagine ways to both engage with *Beloved* and connect it to previous course work. Then, on Fridays we will take time to reflect upon, develop, and add to our character sheet before moving into that day's discussion. On the Friday in Week Eleven, students will also have an opportunity to sign up for a time to present on their final project in the last two weeks of the class.

Week Thirteen (13): “The Modern Medea” Painting, Recap and Rest Week:

Upon finishing *Beloved*, we will take a moment on the Monday of Week Thirteen to analyze Thomas Noble’s painting “The Modern Medea” and discuss an accompanying article by Leslie Furth. This painting depicts the discovery of Margaret Garner by slave catchers the moment after she has killed one of her children. Furth’s article offers a unique telling of how Margaret Garner’s story ‘swept the nation’ when it occurred, and inspired Noble’s art piece. After this Monday, the goal of the rest of the week will be to recap and rest. Meaning, I do not have a reading planned for the tenth student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion. It will be up to that student group what we discuss for that day (pending approval from me), and they can make the choice whether or not to assign a short reading. This student group can decide whether they want to do more with Noble’s painting, Margaret Garner, and *Beloved*, or they can draw on topics from previous weeks. Whatever time is leftover will be spent on recapping major themes of the course reflecting collectively on the progress made and skills learned throughout the course. In recognizing that we will have just come out of three weeks of an in-depth study of *Beloved*, the Friday before class presentations will be reserved as a rest day. Depending on the general sentiment of the classroom community, I will either hold class and we can use it as a general work day on final projects and asking questions for the good of the group, or the class meeting that day will be canceled.

Weeks Fourteen (14) and Fifteen (15): Final Project Presentations

Weeks Fourteen and Fifteen are grouped together because they are identical in their construction. Each day will feature several Final Project Presentations, lasting a maximum of

15 minutes and allowing for just 2 minutes of questions. The reason there is such little time for questions is because each student will be required to upload their visual aid (whether that be a powerpoint, brief write up, etc) to a Canvas discussion board where they will receive direct feedback from their peers. By Sunday night for both weeks, students will be required to thoughtfully respond to at least four of their peer's project presentations. They will be encouraged to distribute their responses, so that one person does not receive twenty responses and another two. Indeed, the purpose of this discussion board is to guarantee that each student receives thoughtful and varied feedback from their peers. The use of the discussion board will also help ensure that, in class, everyone gets an equal amount of time to share their work without the Q & A portion of another person's presentation encroaching on their own time. Following the project presentations, the expectation is that their Final Projects will be turned in by sometime the following week when the university registrar has determined the course's final examination due date.

4. Syllabus: Medea at the Crossroads: Investigating Intersectionality in Ancient Greco-Roman Myth

Syllabus--Medea at the Crossroads: Investigating Intersectionality in Ancient Greco-Roman Myth

Schedule: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 11:00am-11:50am

Instructor Information:

Bridget Farahay (she/her)

bmbf6f@mail.missouri.edu ****this is the best way to reach me****

Student Hours: Thursdays 1-2pm or by appointment

Student hours will be held over Zoom because I do not have an office...unless you would like to meet in person we can find a place on campus to meet. I ask that you email me if you plan to drop in to my student hours, that way I can establish a “waitlist” if multiple people intend to drop by on the same day, based on when you notify me. These hours are specifically blocked off for me to offer my help and support to you, so please do not hesitate to reach out!

Course Description:

This course aims to investigate ancient myths about Medea with an intersectional lens. We will start our study with an introduction to intersectionality: the analytical framework with long-standing roots in Black feminism and articulated by professor and critical race theory scholar, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in the late 20th century. Intersectionality considers how identity categories such as race, gender, class, and ability constitute and change each other, how one’s positionality amongst multiple identities affects your relationship to oppression, privilege, and power. More traditional (though this has been changing) approaches to Medea have privileged her gender as a primary point of focus. Our use of an intersectional lens will allow us to evaluate not just Medea’s gendered experience, but also her potential racial formation as a foreign woman and her status as a royal (among other things) simultaneously—and thus afford the deserved and nuanced analysis to these intersecting identities and experiences.

In order to carry out our study effectively, we will need to grapple not only with what it means to be categorized as a certain ‘race’ or ‘gender’ (for example) in our contemporary moment, but also how these categories may manifest in ancient Greco-Roman myth. So, our course will contend with the following series of questions and whatever other critical questions we may raise as a class:

- What do “race” or “gender” mean to our class today? What does it mean to call these categories “social constructions?” How do these social constructions operate in our contemporary moment versus in ancient Greco-Roman myth? Does an identity category such as “race” even seem to function in ancient Greco-Roman myth, and if so, how and in what ways?
- How does intersectionality impact our contemporary understanding of identity, oppression, and privilege? In what ways could it be expanded or improved? Is it possible to apply contemporary theories like intersectionality to an ancient, mythological figure? How do we do so, and what is the effect? In what ways does intersectionality hold up in ancient Greco-Roman myth, and in what ways does it fall short?

We will conclude our study by reading Toni Morrison’s influential novel, *Beloved*. The novel is based on the historical account of the enslaved woman Margaret Garner who escaped slavery by crossing the Ohio river. But Margaret and her family were soon discovered by slave-catchers, and, rather than having her children be forced back into slavery, she killed several of them. Our grappling with intersectionality, social constructions, and ancient Greco-Roman mythology about Medea will inform, but not wholly occupy our study of *Beloved*. We will utilize the critical analysis skills we gain throughout the course to investigate this novel as potential Black classical reception, a commentary on the horrors of slavery, enslaved persons’ narratives, Black woman/motherhood, and more.

Learning/Course Objectives:

- Identify, Interpret, and Analyze several foundational ancient Greco-Roman myths about Medea.
- Develop and Apply critical thinking skills to a series of primary and secondary sources.
- Produce a Final Research Project using the research and analytical skills developed throughout the course.
- Demonstrate engagement with the texts, questions, and concerns of the course through a mini lecture and guided class discussion.
- Analyze intersectionality as a theory and methodological tool for engaging with contemporary and ancient (mythological) representations of identity, difference, power, and oppression.
- Develop and Maintain a “toolbox” of strategies, theories, and questions with which to scrutinize social constructions such as race and gender, as well as to identify, reject, and root-out oppression.

Instructor Objectives:

- Facilitate and Promote the course objectives listed above.
- Foster, and work to maintain, a classroom learning community grounded in trust, respect, inclusivity, and equity through the establishment of “ground rules” and check-ins.
- Establish mechanisms in the classroom community through which to address and repair harm and allow for self reflection. This course will examine an array of challenging topics, and it is important for our classroom community to have a clear understanding and plan of action for how to address harm (unintentional or not) if/when it arises. We all make mistakes, but we are also all here to learn, grow, reflect, and collectively hold ourselves accountable for our actions and our impacts.
- Frequently Assess and Reflect upon my efforts to support the success of every student.
- Approach every class meeting as an opportunity to collectively learn and grow with my students, recognize that our classroom is not a “one-way street” for knowledge.

Course Format:

As of right now, the course will take place in person. But, depending on the implementation of a mask mandate, the ability to social distance in the classroom, etc., the course will be moved to an online, synchronous Zoom format.

Covid-19 Protocols:

At the time I am writing this, there is still no university mask mandate. But I must remind you that this classroom is a community. So, while I cannot require you to wear a mask during our class meetings, I do ask and highly encourage that we all do our best to look out for each other and ourselves by wearing masks, getting vaccinated, getting tested when necessary and staying home if you are not feeling well. For more information about vaccination clinics and testing in and around the MU campus area, check out the University of Missouri Covid Dashboard.

Assignments:

40% – Weekly journal entries/discussion board posts, Participation, and Attendance

15% – Mini Lecture + Class Discussion Leader

10% Final Project Checkpoint Meeting

15% – Annotated Bibliography

20% – Final Research Project

Grading:

Final grades will be converted to letters, using the plus/minus grading scheme, as follows:

A+ = 100-97; A = 96-93; A- = 92-90

B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80

C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70

D+ = 69-67; D = 66-63; D- = 62-60

F = below 60

40% – Weekly journal entries/discussion board posts, Participation in class, and Attendance: As per the Course Learning Objectives, this course emphasizes critical thinking skills, reflection, and participation. So, the majority of your grade will be rooted in your engagement with the course material through weekly journal entries/discussion board posts. These posts will be made on Canvas, and are your chance to engage with the material from the week in a more informal setting. While there will be a prompt for each post, this is also your chance to work through some ideas that perhaps you could not get across in class discussion. You will have opportunities to both work through some ideas in a reflection that only I will read, as well as respond to your peers through a discussion board. Your attendance to class, and your participation in class are also a part of this section of your grade. See my attendance policy below for more information. As for in class participation, while I recognize that some learners are more quiet in class, it is my hope that we can foster a community where everyone feels comfortable speaking up, and this is also something we can address when drafting our community norms.

15% – Mini Lecture + Class Discussion Leader: Once this semester, you will help lead the class for the day. In groups of 2-4, your group will be tasked with creating a mini lecture on the material for that day (in communication with me on what you want to cover) that will last around 15 minutes. From there, you will lead a class discussion based on your mini lecture. We will sign up for what week you want to present at the end of Week 3. In recognizing that I am not the only one holding all the knowledge in this classroom, this mini lecture + class discussion is your chance to take a hold of how you want to learn and grow with your peers, in a way that is perhaps more formal/structured than what we do in everyday class discussions. Your mini lecture must feature a visual aid of some kind, and I would suggest having around 2-3 discussion questions for the class. This is all I will suggest for the mini lecture + presentation because I want your group to have many avenues available for how to approach your discussion lead day. A rubric for this assignment will be forthcoming.

**As a note, those who sign up for the last slot for a lecture + discussion will get to select the reading for the class for that day—after clearing it with me. So if this is something that interests you, look for that week. You are more than welcome to assign a

reading/video to watch/other source for the week you present, but you will have to keep in mind the other materials that are assigned for that day. For Week 13, however, I have specifically not yet assigned a reading.**

10% Final Project Checkpoint Meeting: In preparation for the final project, everyone must meet with me between Weeks 6 and 7 to discuss their ideas for a final project. There is nothing specific you must have prepared for the meeting, but I suggest having a couple ideas/topics you are thinking about, or even better a beginning source you might want to work with.

15% –Annotated Bibliography: In preparation for your final research project, during Week 10 of the course you will submit an annotated bibliography on Canvas. Later on in the course we will discuss research strategies and how to make an annotated bibliography. You should expect to have at least three (3) secondary sources on your annotated bibliography, accompanied by a small paragraph summarizing and detailing the use of the source.

20% –Final Research Project: The culminating assignment for this course will be a Research Project. While a rubric will be forthcoming, there are not many strict parameters for this project besides that it must relate to Medea and other course themes (such as intersectionality, race, gender, identity, oppression, etc.) in some way. It also must feature a research component, which we will practice throughout the course, and you will prepare for through the creation of an annotated bibliography. This final research project can take any form you want. It may be a traditional critical essay, in which case it should be between 7-10 pages. Any other method, such as a short film, podcast episode, art project, etc., shall be discussed with me and we will determine an appropriate length/need for an accompanying analysis/explanation of your project. This research project is your chance to seek out what is most interesting to you about this course. The more interested, excited, and curious you are about your project, the more fun and ‘easier’ it will be to complete! Not to mention, you will get to share your work with the class at the end of the course and receive feedback from your peers. Although your project does not need to be complete by the time you present it to the class, your presentation will be part of your Final Project grade.

Late Work/Extensions Policy:

I recognize that life happens and that sometimes it might not be possible to meet a deadline or request an extension. My policy for late work is as follows, please pay close attention to how it applies to each assignment:

→Discussion board posts/journal entries: these Canvas entries may be submitted

up to 3 days late, but late posts within this time frame will not be able to earn above a B grade (86%). After 3 days, you may still post/submit your entries to Canvas, but will not earn above an F grade (50%).

→ The Mini lecture + Class Discussion cannot be submitted late. If something comes up and you think you need to switch groups or switch the day that you present, tell me ASAP

→ The Final Project Checkpoint Meeting must happen before the end of Week 7, unless granted an extension by me.

→ The Annotated Bibliography may be turned in up to/within 3 days of the original due date with no penalty, after that time period it will start to drop half a letter grade per day late

→ The Final Research Project must be turned in by the listed final due date on myZou, unless you have been given an extension by me.

–If something comes up that affects your ability to present on your final project in the last two weeks of the course, try to switch with a peer or otherwise let me know ASAP.

→ Keeping all of this in mind, I would much rather you ask me for an extension than turn in rushed, subpar work. So, if you feel like you might need an extension, please do reach out to me as soon as you can (ideally 24 hours before the deadline) regarding your options.

Attendance Policy:

I realize that you each may face unique challenges this semester, and so I have adopted the following attendance policy. While I expect everyone to attend every class meeting when possible, I understand that this class meets often and asks a lot of you. For that reason, everyone has 3 excused absences, no questions asked, no explanation needed. After missing 3 classes without explanation, upon your 4th absence this will be factored into your grade, (Do remember that attendance is a portion of the 40% of your grade combined with weekly Canvas posts). Beyond these 3 excused absences, I just ask that you communicate with me if you are going to miss class, or as soon as you can, whether that be due to sickness, family emergency, etc. I ask that even if you miss an in person class, you participate in the online Canvas posts to the best of your ability, and if that will not work out, communicate with me that an extension might be necessary. Overall, my main policy with attendance (and participation) is that **communication is key**. While I do my best to help and support you, I sometimes cannot do so unless you tell me that there is a situation going on that requires an extension or some other option to be worked out.

Course Content Notice:

At various points this semester we will be discussing myths, topics, and historical events that may be challenging, unsettling, or even traumatizing to some students. If you anticipate that certain material will be emotionally difficult or triggering for you, I would be happy to speak with you about any concerns you have before we arrive at the subject in class, and/or to discuss your personal reactions to the course material. I encourage you to take care of yourself during class discussions (or lectures) if you need to step out of the room or otherwise tune out for a moment, you may do so without academic penalty.

Sexual Misconduct, Required Reporting, and Title IX

In the event that you choose to write or speak about having survived sexualized violence, including rape, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking Mizzou policies require that, as your instructor, I share this information with the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX. A staff member will contact you to let you know about accommodations and support services at MU as well as options for holding accountable the person who harmed you. You are not required to speak with them. If you do not want the Title IX Office notified, instead of disclosing this information to me, you can speak confidentially with the following people on campus and in the community. They can connect you with support services and help explore your options now, or in the future.

- MU Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center: rsvp.missouri.edu - (573)882-6638
- MU Counseling Center: counseling.missouri.edu - (573)882-6601
- MU Behavioral Health: studenthealth.missouri.edu/services/mental.html - (573)882-1483
- True North (24/7 crisis center and shelter): truenorthofcolumbia.org - (800)548-2480.

If you are a survivor or concerned about a survivor and need immediate information on what to do, please go to <http://RSVP.missouri.edu/get-help>

Chosen Names and Pronouns

This course affirms people of all genders, including trans, nonbinary, agender, intersex, gender nonconforming, and gender queer people. If there is a different name you prefer to be called than what is listed on the class roster, please let me know. Do feel free to correct me on your gender pronouns.

Student with Disabilities

I seek to support you all in ways that foster an inclusive, equitable environment that is accessible to everyone. If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the Disability Center (<http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on “Disability Resources” on the MU homepage.

NB: I recognize that each of you faces a unique set of challenges this semester. If you find yourself struggling, I encourage you to reach out to the MU Health Center and their mental health resources. And if you would like to speak with me about managing the course material, I am more than happy to talk strategies with you. I hope that through our time together this semester we can offer each other a sense of community and compassion. Best wishes!

Texts:

–*Anthology of Classical Myth: Primary Sources in Translation*, Trzaskoma et. al. Second Edition

–*Medea*, Euripides. Translation by Rex Warner, from *Euripides I with an Introduction by Richard Lattimore*, The Complete Greek Tragedies edited by David Grene and Richard Lattimore. The University of Chicago Press, 1955. 56-108. (This is my copy of the play, there is a more recent third edition from 2013 that would be suitable).

–*Jason and the Golden Fleece*, Apollonius of Rhodes. Translation by Richard Hunter. Oxford World’s Classics, OUP, 2009.

–*Beloved*, Toni Morrison. Plume Fiction, New American Library, 1987. (Students can acquire any edition of *Beloved*, as we will be reading based on the unlabeled chapters).

–All other readings will be provided on Canvas

SCHEDULE

Week One (1): Greetings–Syllabus Review + Intro to Intersectionality

Mon: Introduction to the Course

- introduction and greetings
- syllabus review, why we have it, why it is important, what it offers
- what to expect later on, assignments, topics, ground rules/ classroom community building → syllabus as a living document
- preface about giving self time to read Audre Lorde essay for Friday

Assignment: –Get to Know You Letter **due next Monday (week 2) start of class on canvas**

–First Canvas Discussion Board Post, Introduce Yourself, **due this Friday start of class**

Wed: What is Intersectionality?

- In-Class Activity: first, debrief pre-class activity, what did we think/learn?
 - In class, watch TedTalk with Kimberlé Crenshaw, “The Urgency of Intersectionality” (perhaps just the middle portion because of visually triggering content...) debrief with group discussion questions and then regroup, questions such as, how does this video expand upon the one you watched before class? Does this video make you want to change any of your responses to the pre class activity?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o> (total length, 18 minutes)

Assignment (due start of class): Watch: this video “Intersectionality 101” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2IyYjE> (length, 3 minutes)

After watching, journal or type up your answers to the following questions and bring it to class:

Thinking about intersectional identities, how would you define (in your own words) the terms “identity,” “privilege,” and “oppression”? How do you experience both privilege and oppression?

**credit to Disorientco. “Teaching Intersectionality: Activities and Resources” By Helena, 11/18/2020

<https://disorient.co/teaching-intersectionality-activity/#principled-space-not-safe-space> **

Fri: Audre Lorde and Intersectionality

- In-Class Activity: debrief pre class activity, going over some discussion questions from PBS website.

–Display Lorde quote: “There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives” (Lorde, “Learning from the 60s,” *Sister Outsider*, pg. 138).

Class discussion: knowing what we know about intersectionality, about Audre Lorde, what are our thoughts and reactions to this quote? Do we see examples of this today? → What struggle(s) today is framed as a ‘single-issue struggle,’ but likely is not? How might a framework such as intersectionality impact how we address things that are perceived as ‘single-issue struggles’? Are there limitations to this framework?

–Transition into small group discussion of Lorde’s essay “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” break into small groups, each tackle a different questions, write answers on shared google doc, regroup and recap...

Assignment (due start of class): watch: PBS video on Audre Lorde and check out the discussion questions offered on the website→ they are on a tab on the right side of the screen.

<https://kmos.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/fp19.lgbtq.lorde/audre-lorde/>
(length 6.5 minutes)

Read: “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” from *Sister Outsider* By Audre Lorde, pgs 114-123. On canvas

(due by midnight tonight): First Canvas Discussion Board Post: Introduce Yourself!

Week Two (2): Social Constructs, & Adding Antiquity to the Mix

Mon: Basic Definitions, and a Framework for Race

–Reiterate ground rules/community building to come at the end of this week, check in with folks,

–recap from last week, and moving forward..

–Lecture on Identity, Power, Oppression, and Social Constructs, more info tbd, but how do all of these things intertwine, talk about assigned Coates reading, offer framework for thinking about race (from Jackie Murray), not just today but when looking at ancient mediterranean sources...How will we address topics such as race, gender, sexuality, class, identity, power, etc., in ancient sources? Take frequent breaks for questions throughout lecture, will be continued/finished on Wednesday.

Assignment (due start of class): Read: Ta-Nehisi Coates, “What We Mean

When We Say ‘Race is a Social Construct’” from the Atlantic

<https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/05/what-we-mean-when-we-say-race-is-a-social-construct/275872/>

Submit: your Get to Know You Letter on Canvas by start of class.

Wed: Basic Definitions Cont. Gender, and Some Ancient Sources

–continue and finish up lecture from Monday, will also go more into discussion about gender, ‘ancient gender’ and how to reconcile the “distance” between those in this course, draw on examples from Brooke Holmes’ *Gender: Antiquity and its Legacy* like early Phaëthusa and Nanno story from Hippocratic texts. Discuss the story of Pandora they read from Hesiod.

–In-Class activity Read aloud Medea’s first long speech in Euripides’ play, lines 214-266. Give some context, will revisit this passage again. Reactions, what personal problems does Medea address here? If we were talking to Medea today, based on this passage how might she identify herself, what roles does she inhabit? How do these different experiences affect her? Are there ways we can use an intersectional lens on this passage? How might we do that? Any connections to Lorde’s essay from last week?

Assignment (due start of class): Read: selection from Hesiod’s *Theogony* in the anthology, lines 563–620 (Prometheus steals fire for man, Zeus creates Pandora) pg. 147-149.

And read from Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, “Why Life Is Hard” lines 58–128. In announcement to class, and in class today, **give disclaimer** about conscious choices made by translator to use ableist word such as “lame” to describe Hephaistos, and the contemporary word “bitchy” for Pandora. Offer students resource from Marchella Ward and Hannah Silverblank’s article about necessity for disability studies in classics.

–Sometime between now and Friday, remind students there is no reading due Friday, because longer reading from Hesiod due next Monday for Week 3.

Fri: Ground Rules/Community Building

–In-Class Activity: Community Norms/Community Building

–How do we want our classroom community to look/function? How do we do that? How do we support, accommodate, and hold each other accountable while honoring each other’s humanity and dignity? What does respect mean to you, and how do you demonstrate it to others? Shared doc will remain open for the next week for folks to add their ideas.

–With whatever remaining time, answer questions, let folks share from their reflection journal activity if they want.

Assignment (due start of class): First journal entry on Canvas. This one will involve a reflection on the past two weeks. One thing you learned that surprised you? One thing you learned that challenged you? What is one question you want to answer moving forward? Thinking about our discussions of intersectionality, name an example that could be analyzed with an intersectional lens and how intersectionality would help (or perhaps hinder) an analysis of identity, privilege, power, and oppression in this situation. I'd encourage your situation to be based off of a 'real-life' example, but if you cannot think of one, you may make one up—but do not use the examples we have already seen in the Intersectionality 101 video or Crenshaw's TedTalk. (250-350 words?).

Week Three (3): Working with Ancient Greco-Roman Myth

Mon: Intro to Myth

- Lecture about studying, reading, interpreting mythology. What is myth, what is its function? How are we 'supposed' to read it, what ways? Rooted in the oral tradition, etc. How much can myth tell us about the society at the time, benefits and limitations of this?
- Go over reading for today from Hesiod's *Theogony*, go over main parts, family tree, tips for remembering what is going on—tell them as stories to yourself and friends
- Why read this when class is about Medea? This is the “foundation” myth, one version of it, and Medea is briefly mentioned...

Assignment (due by start of class): Read: Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days* from the Anthology, pg. 131-167.

Wed: Hesiod Cont. and Overview of Medea's Myth

- finish Hesiod lecture, field questions
- Move on to Apollodorus' account of Medea within myth of Jason and the Argonauts, summarize and field questions.
- Group discussion, initial reactions to Medea's full story? Talk about how there are different versions/layers of myth (see Emma Griffiths' description of these 3 layers)

Assignment (due by start of class): Read: (if you did not finish all of Hesiod, have that finished today!!) Apollodorus from the Anthology G1, pg. 25 & G3-G5, pgs. 27-30.

Fri: Classroom Activity about Hesiod + Apollodorus

- In Class: Sign up for Mini Lecture + Class Discussion Week, discuss and field questions for this assignment, review its verbiage in the syllabus.
- In Class Activity: Relate it to Discussion board for this week, have students based into groups based on what categories of ‘difference/identity’ they brought up (depending on distribution, I may move some people) have them discuss with group how this is represented in the sources, then regroup, see if there are ways definitions in their groups become slippery, moments where they could interact, cause friction with, or intersect with other groups, what does/what might that look like?

Assignment (due start of class): Discussion Board Post on Canvas, identify one category of difference that is presented in Hesiod, Apollodorus, and/or the one Hippocratic text—thinking mortal/divine, man/woman or masculine/feminine or male/female(?), Greek/foreigner, etc, then give a brief explanation of how these categories are defined, thinking also, are there moments where these definitions/boundaries are blurred?

(due by Sunday at midnight) thoughtfully respond to at least two of your peers, preferably one who chose a different topic than you.

Week Four (4): Euripides’ Medea Part I**Mon:** Intro to *Medea*--Greek Tragedy

- Introduction to Greek Tragedy and Euripides
- Historical context for the play, who is the audience?
- Review reading for today, Medea’s family tree and events leading up to moments in this play

Assignment (due start of class): Read: first fourth (1/4) of Euripides’ *Medea* (lines 1-356, stop when Creon exits. Pages 59-halfway on 71).

Wed: Activity: Working with Translations

- Compare/Contrast passages from different translations of *Medea* with our own.
- Discuss effect, function, process of translation, and how we have the copy of the Greek texts that we have today.

Assignment (due start of class): Read: next fourth of *Medea*, now halfway through (lines 358-662 stop when Aegeus enters. Pages 71-halfway through 80).

Fri:

- First Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion**
- rest of class will be decided based off of what students decide to cover

Assignment (due start of class): Journal entry on Canvas

Week Five (5): Eur. *Medea* Part II

Mon: *Medea* continued

- second half of the play, the big finale
- thoughts, impressions, questions
- discuss ending of play with portions from Lorde’s “Uses of Anger”
- some of this will be decided based on students’ mini lecture + discussion on Wednesday

Assignment (due start of class): Read: finish *Medea* (second half, lines 663-end. Pages 80-108)

Wed: *Medea* continued

- Second Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion**

Fri: Activity: Visual Representations + Live Adaptations

- examine ancient, visual depictions of Medea
- Watch part/most of a filmed adaptation of *Medea* in class (source tbd)
- Remind students about scheduling Final Project Meeting with me in Weeks 6-7.

Assignment (due start of class): Discussion Board Post on Canvas
(due Sunday at midnight): thoughtfully respond to at least 2 of your peers

Week Six (6): Medea in the *Argonautica*, Apollonius of Rhodes Part I

Mon: The *Argonautica*

- Lecture: explain justification for reading this now, chronologically in history of publication this is accurate, but this part of the myth itself is anachronistic/earlier to what we just read
- go over some historical context for Apollonius of Rhodes, Hellenistic Period
- Go over events from Books 1-2 that aren't being read (also offer brief version of this on canvas for help when reading)

Assignment (due start of class): Read: Portions of Book 3 of the *Argonautica* (pages 72 starting at “Meanwhile Eros came unseen...”--85 stop at “which caused everyone to stir throughout the city”)

Wed: *Argo* cont.

–**Third Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion**

Assignment (due start of class): Read: Portions from Book 4 of *Argo* (pages 99-109 stop at “This is the next stage of my song.”)

Fri: Activity: Examine the “Medeas” we’ve met so far

Assignment (due start of class): Journal Entry on Canvas

Week Seven (7): *Argonautica*, Part II A few Key Episodes

Mon: Lemnian Women, the Earth-born People, & the Doliones

- Discuss these two accounts, Women of Lemnos and Earth-born people, their treatment vs Doliones

Assignment (due start of class): Read: selections from Apollonius’ *Argo* on the Women of Lemnos and events with the Doliones and Earthborn people (pages 17 starting near the end of the second full paragraph “All that day until the evening they were favored...”--28 stop at “...they always grind meal for the sacred cakes”).

Wed: Racecraft in the *Argonautica*

–**Fourth Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion**

Assignment (due start of class): Watch: Portions from Dr. Jackie Murray’s

talk “Listening to Anti-racist Voices in Antiquity,” (required viewing: 14:15-34:50 & 53:09-57:25) or can watch the whole thing!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgSlibn-cjs&t=745s>

Fri: Research Practice

–Practice using research databases (JSTOR, Project MUSE) to search for secondary sources, how to search, looking for thesis statements, etc.

Assignment (due start of class): Discussion Board Post on Canvas
(due by end of day Friday): by now you should have met with me to discuss your Final Project
(due by Sunday at midnight) thoughtfully respond to at least two of your peers

Week Eight (8): Ovid and Medea

Mon: Switching to a Roman Author!--Ovid

--brief historical context on Ovid and *Metamorphoses*

Assignment (due start of class): Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* Book VII (7) *Medea and Jason*, will be posted on Canvas.

Wed: Ovid cont. *Heroides XII* (12)

–**Fifth Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion**

Assignment (due start of class): Ovid *Heroides XII* (12), from Anthology pgs. 281-287.

Fri: Activity

–Recap, (depending on what covered by student mini lecture) what does Ovid focus on with Medea, how does the account of Medea in the *Met* ‘speak to’ Medea’s perspective in *Heroides 12*? Thoughts on perspective of woman from a male author, what does that do? How might Medea play into overall themes about metamorphoses and transformation.

–if time, activity, have students write their own short letter in style of *Heroides*, in groups?

Assignment (due by start of class): Journal Entry on Canvas

Week Nine (9): Medea and Dido

Mon: Dido from Vergil's *Aeneid*

- Brief lecture on Vergil, the *Aeneid*, what happens leading up to Book 4
- Reminder about annotated bibliography due next Friday (week 10).

Assignment (due start of class): Read: first half of Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, on Canvas

Wed: Dido cont.

–**Sixth Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion**

Assignment (due start of class): Read: second half of Book 4 of *Aeneid*, on Canvas.

Fri: Activity

- depending on student lecture, do something comparing/contrasting Medea and Dido→ how do they deal with betrayal, love, anger? Roles as “foreign” women? Also consider here reading Lorde’s work on anger...

Assignment (due start of class): Discussion Board Post on Canvas
(due Sunday at midnight): thoughtfully respond to at least 2 of your peers

Week Ten (10): Begin Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Mon: Background on Morrison and *Beloved*

- content warning/topic shift (?)
- Lecture on transition to more recent literature, background on Toni Morrison, influence for *Beloved*, discuss this transition and how we can use what we have discussed so far
- reminder about annotated bibliography due Friday.

Assignment (due by start of class): none

Wed: *Beloved* cont.

–**Seventh Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion**

Assignment (due by start of class): Read: *Beloved* pgs. 3-42. Ch. 1-3.

Fri: *Beloved* cont. Character Sheet Activity.

Assignment (due by start of class): Journal Entry on Canvas. Read: pgs. 43-73. Ch. 4-7.

(due by midnight Friday): Submit: Annotated Bibliography to Canvas

Week Eleven (11): *Beloved* cont.

Mon: *Beloved* cont.

Assignment (due by start of class): Read: 74-124. Ch. 8-12.

Wed: *Beloved* cont.

–Eighth Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion

Assignment (due by start of class): Read: pgs. 125-165. Ch. 13-18 (end of Part One)

Fri: Activity

–sign up for Final Project Presentation day

Assignment (due by start of class): Discussion Board Post on Canvas. Read: pgs. 169-199. Ch. 19.

(by Sunday at midnight): thoughtfully respond to at least two of your peers

Week Twelve (12): *Beloved* Final Week

Mon: *Beloved* cont.

Assignment (due by start of class): Read: pgs. 200-235. Ch. 20-25 (end of Part Two).

Wed: *Beloved* cont.

–Ninth Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion

Assignment (due by start of class): Read: pgs. 239-262. Ch. 26.

Fri: Activity

Assignment (due by start of class): Journal Entry on Canvas. Read: finish *Beloved*, pgs. 263-275. Ch. 27-28.

Week Thirteen (13): “The Modern Medea” Painting, and Recap/Rest Week

Mon: Thomas Noble’s painting “The Modern Medea”

–view/analyze painting and discuss article

Assignment (due by start of class): Read: Leslie Furth’s “‘The Modern Medea’ and Race Matters: Thomas Satterwhite Noble’s ‘Margaret Garner,’” *American Art* 12.2 (1998) pgs. 36-57, posted on Canvas.

Wed: Recap

–**Tenth Student Mini Lecture + Class Discussion**

Assignment (due by start of class): this assignment (maximum 10 pages reading, or 15min max youtube video, or otherwise discuss with me) will be determined by the class discussion leads.

Fri: Activity / Rest

Assignment (due by start of class): Journal Entry on Canvas

Week Fourteen (14): Week One of Final Project Presentations

Mon: Project Presentations

Assignment (due by start of class): Post: If you present today, upload your presentation aid (powerpoint, brief write up, link, etc) to Canvas Final Project Discussion Board

Wed: Project Presentations

Assignment (due by start of class): Post: If you present today, upload your

presentation aid (powerpoint, brief write up, link, etc) to Canvas Final Project Discussion Board

Fri: Project Presentations

Assignment (due by start of class): Post: If you present today, upload your presentation aid (powerpoint, brief write up, link, etc) to Canvas Final Project Discussion Board

(due Sunday night, everyone): thoughtfully respond to at least four of your peers' projects→ make sure to distribute your responses

Week Fifteen (15): Week Two of Final Project Presentations

Mon: Project Presentations

Assignment (due by start of class): Post: If you present today, upload your presentation aid (powerpoint, brief write up, link, etc) to Canvas Final Project Discussion Board

Wed: Project Presentations

Assignment (due by start of class): Post: If you present today, upload your presentation aid (powerpoint, brief write up, link, etc) to Canvas Final Project Discussion Board

Fri: Project Presentations

Assignment (due by start of class): Post: If you present today, upload your presentation aid (powerpoint, brief write up, link, etc) to Canvas Final Project Discussion Board

(due Sunday night, everyone): thoughtfully respond to at least four of your peers' projects→ make sure to distribute your responses

****Final Version of your Final Project must be uploaded to Canvas by the due date marked for the final on myZou (tba)****

5. Conclusion:

One goal of mine with this project was to expand my personal imagination as to what is possible in the classroom. To say I achieved that goal would be an understatement. While I did not incorporate every single idea that crossed my mind for this project, I did learn a great deal about what it takes to create a course. Perhaps the most frustrating lesson I learned was the simultaneous feeling of regret that you had to leave out one source, all while knowing that you have still probably planned for too much material to begin with. Indeed, one major question I return to again and again with this course is the actual practicality of the course. Given that I had to operate on hypotheticals and assumptions, there was a fear that this course would spiral out of control or become unmanageable in an actual classroom. To try and mitigate this feeling, I tried to stick to strategies that had worked for me in the past as a student, as well as imagine aspects to the course that I as a student wished I had. Throughout this course, I worked to instill an importance on accountability and communication between the instructor and the students. In this way, if something about the course, in actuality, did become impractical or ineffective, this could be articulated—whether through a discussion about course and instructor objectives, the community norms, or perhaps a concern raised in a student’s weekly reflection writing activities. All of this being said, I will be the first to admit that this course does demand a lot of an introductory-level course. The course is designed to read a lot of material and to meet often, and I, like many others, have seen first hand how easy it is for a student to fall behind in a course once they miss even one class, one assignment, or one reading in a course that meets often and engages a lot of material. But once again here I return to the course's insistence on community values and communication.

Thus, when an aspect of the course becomes impractical or difficult for just one or a majority of students, they will have avenues through which to communicate these concerns with me. Not only that, but one of my instructor objectives is to reflect consistently on my ability to facilitate the course and support the students' needs.

Another major consideration of mine while making this course was how certain pedagogical aspects of this course could be adopted into a large lecture course typically demanded of introductory courses. Perhaps the biggest switch to a large lecture course is the shrunken ability for total classroom participation versus a smaller discussion-based course. That being said, frequent participation and reflection could still be incorporated into weekly discussion board posts or journal entries for a lecture course. While these reflections might not receive the same amount of detailed feedback and attention as they would in the course I have designed, the consistent reflections would offer instructors a look at the general attitudes of students towards course topics and materials—especially if the prompts for said assignments explicitly encouraged reflection on their progress and interest in the course. Furthermore, I believe that my pedagogical framing rooted in transformative justice and community building could still function in a lecture hall course. While it might be easier for an instructor in a small, discussion-based course to try and bridge the gap between instructor and students to form a community, the instructor of a lecture course could still work to articulate their desire to learn from and honor the presence of every student in the room. Indeed, it is difficult to combat the idea that the lecture instructor is the 'only one capable of distributing knowledge' when even the literal construction of lecture halls creates a divide between students and instructors with little room to facilitate more intimate discussion.

More work can be done to cultivate a classroom community when a large lecture course is able to split into smaller discussion sections and then regroup as a lecture to share their experiences with one another. However, discussion sections in a lecture course are not always available if there are not available Teaching Assistants. All of this is to say that while my course in its current iteration could not easily map onto a lecture course, this does not mean the strategies it encourages are not beneficial to all instructors of any size (Classics) course. Indeed, perhaps the most important takeaway from this work is the emphasis on using one's imagination to break the mold of what is possible in the classroom and envision radical possibilities towards liberation, community building, and repairing harm when it occurs.

At the start of this project, the prospect of not having the answer to every question about my course creation was frustrating and scary. And while those feelings still do resurface at times, I choose instead to see this lack of answers not as a shortcoming but as an exciting invitation about where this work can take me. By admitting that I do not have all the answers, this immediately prompts a need for collaboration and community to seek out answers together with folks in, around, and completely removed from my field. While I am not entirely certain where my next step is after the completion of this project, I am certain that it will be one that involves imagining a better future for Classics, education, and our world as a whole with an ever-growing community of folks invested in this work. Indeed, this is why the main action in the title of this project is “imagining:” the only way we as Classicists are going to make both Classics a more equitable field and work towards a

liberated world is through our collective imaginations working together to radically envision new questions, solutions, and possibilities.

Thank you. I cannot think of any way to 'end' this project besides with an encompassing sense of gratitude for the fortune I had in being able to craft a project such as this.

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