

Mythologies

MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT

Due Monday, April 4, at the beginning of class. This essay should reach five to six pages in length. Double-space everything. Use a standard-sized font, regular margins, and a staple. Title your essay, creatively if possible. If you wish to include critical sources, you will need to append a bibliography; otherwise, it is not necessary.



*If we make enquiry,
We may touch things that otherwise escape us.*
– Creon, *Oedipus Rex*

The task for this assignment is comparison and contrast. Choose one of the following pairs of texts: Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Plato's *The Republic*, Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and *The Gospel of John*, Sophocles' *Antigone* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, or *The Gospel of John* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Rather than discuss the entirety of both texts, this assignment asks you to choose a single passage from each, to read those focus passages very closely, and to compare and contrast them. Through this comparison, you should develop the outlines of a broader interpretation of mythology, without worrying about accounting for everything in the text or in mythology.

It is crucial to find passages saturated with significance that have something important in common with each other, as well as interesting differences. I would highly recommend passages of manageable size; roughly the equivalent of a medium-sized paragraph should work for a five-page analysis..

The successful essay will be framed by a comprehensive thesis with a definite point to make *concerning myth*. The body of the essay, in addition to reading the focus passages very closely, will cite and analyze other brief passages that support the argument. The conclusion, rather than just reiterating points already made, will explore some of the wider implications raised by the discussion. The successful essay will be creative.

You are welcome to consult with me about your essay, in any stage of its development, whether in my office, or through email.