

## Heroines and Heroes:

### Admiration, Identification, Seduction

(German 298, Comp Lit 200, Lit 298)

Professor Ellwood Wiggins  
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Office Hours (Denny 338):  
 M 3:30-4:30, W 10-12, or by appt.

Class Meetings:  
 M/F 2:30-3:20 Thomson 125  
 W 2:30-3:20 Nan 181

“I need a hero!” These lines from Bonnie Tyler's 1984 torch song echo the sentiments of both ardent searchers and despairing cynics. In this course, we explore the characteristics of heroes in literature and film from antiquity to today. The formal and psychological structures of heroism will be analyzed under the rubrics of admiration, identification, and disillusionment. We will interrogate how both genre and gender impact the representation of heroes. Scholars including Judith Butler, Hannah Arendt, and Joseph Campbell will provide critical departures for our examination of different classes of heroes. Beginning with the basic templates in Ancient Greece, we will examine the transformations of heroic ideals across a variety of times, cultures, and human endeavors.

Students will write a critical essay on their evolving relationship with heroes in their own lives in three installments. They will work in groups on creative projects to create heroes of their own. Readings and discussion in English.

### Learning Goals

By the end of the quarter, you will be able to:

- Critique heroes according to the rubrics of admiration, identification, and disillusionment
- Understand heroes and hero fandom as a function of *choice*: interrogate what is involved in decision making *by* heroes and *of* heroes by people
- Analyze literary works as a way of exploring specific questions about heroism
- Describe the important features of different modes of creative production for representing heroes: epic poetry; rhetoric; drama; melodrama; narrative; comics; and film
- Identify the characteristics and functions of heroes in Ancient Greek culture
- Describe the transformations of heroes in later European and American cultures
- Discuss the transcultural impact of representing minority heroes in terms of colonialism, orientalism, and cultural appropriation
- Assess heroic representations in terms of gender dynamics
- Use theoretical claims about heroism to understand specific heroic characters
- Evaluate theoretical claims about heroism based on the evidence of heroic representations
- Critically examine your own evolving relationship with heroic models from childhood onwards

### Required Texts

1. Sophocles, *Antigone* (trans. Ruby Blondell)
2. Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (trans. D. Constantine)
3. Hesse, *Siddhartha* (trans. S. Appelbaum)
4. Brecht, *Mother Courage* (trans. Tony Kushner)

All four books are available at the UW bookstore. If you borrow them through the library or procure them elsewhere, please be aware of the recommended translations.

All further readings and films will be made available via Canvas.

### Grading

- Discussion Posts for Readings: 25%
- Three Essays: 45%
- Participation (including peer eval): 10%
- Three Group Projects: 20%

### Course Components

#### Individual Learning

There are no tests or exams in this course. I don't care about what facts and dates you may or may not be able to memorize. Instead, I care about how you engage with the materials and think critically about the issues they raise. To assess this, you will post responses to questions about the texts and films we read and view and write an essay in three installments analyzing your own relationship with heroes.

1. **Discussion Posts:** Before class on designated days (see syllabus and canvas), you should post your response to the question on canvas. This written answer should demonstrate your active engagement with the text or film at hand. It should be a minimum of 100 words, but no more than 200. There are 23 posts during the quarter. As long as you satisfactorily complete 20 of them, you will receive an 'A' on this assignment for the course. If you complete all of them satisfactorily, and/or if you give several particularly interesting and perspicacious responses, you will receive an 'A+'. If you do not receive a comment on your post, you may assume that it was satisfactory.
2. **Essays:** Over the course of the quarter, you will work on an extended essay on your own personal hero. This essay will be completed in three installments. In the first, you will write about why we should admire your childhood hero. In the second, you will explore ways that you identify with your hero. In the final installment, you will think critically about the potential negative implications of your hero and discuss ways that your hero is problematic. You will receive detailed assignment descriptions in due time.
  - **Optional:** If you wish to take this course for Writing (W) Credit, sign up after the first essay. We will schedule a paper conference following the second paper, and you will turn in a draft of the final paper in week 9. Then you will rewrite the entire essay based on feedback, and submit it during finals week.

### Team Learning

This class adopts the approach of team-based learning. Students will join groups of 5-7 members who work together as a **cohesive learning team** throughout the quarter (teams will be formed at the beginning of the quarter to achieve a balance of skills and learning styles). Students are expected to attend each class period, have all assignments completed by the beginning of class, and be ready to engage in discussing the topic of the day. In this course, team activities will take three main forms: discussions, workshops, and group projects. A fourth feature of team learning is peer evaluation.

1. **Workshops and Discussions:** Every Wednesday, we will meet in an active learning classroom (Nan 181) where groups can sit together either for a workshop or discussion. In discussions, students will converse about central questions prompted by our readings in order to come to a better understanding of the texts and the issues they bring up. In workshops, students will be given specific tasks to collaborate on together.
2. **Group Projects:** Your team will create its own superhero character. Each group project will develop and present this hero in a particular direction: admiration; identification / hero's journey; disillusionment. More detailed instructions will be distributed in due time.
3. **Peer Assessment:** At the end of the quarter, team members are given the opportunity to evaluate one another's contributions to the activities of the team in a peer assessment process. There will also be a mid-term peer assessment in week 4 so that students can receive feedback about their group work and improve their cooperation. This mid-term peer evaluation will not affect students' grades.

**Nota bene:** teams are responsible for self-management. The instructors will not supervise student activities outside of class, or mediate in the case of differences of opinion. Team's self-management is part of the pedagogical goals that we strive for in this class and a great modeling exercise to prepare students for real-life professional contexts.

### **Course Policies**

- **ATTENDANCE:** In-class work is essential for this pedagogy (TBL). Participation is a key component of the grade.  
**Always bring your reading to class!** Group conversations and lecture discussions will be closely tied to your (preferably marked-up and commented-on) reading of the text at hand.
- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** The University of Washington is a community dedicated to learning. Students belonging to the community adhere to the ethical obligations outlined in the student conduct code. Plagiarism, cheating, and disruptive behavior in class violate the code, and harm everyone's learning. Any violations of the code in connection with the course will result in referral to the university administration for appropriate action. Plagiarism of any sort will automatically result in a grade of 0.0 for the assignment, and possible referral to the University administration.

- **GRADES GRIEVANCE POLICY:** If you disagree with the grade you have been awarded and wish to appeal your grade, you must follow the policy outlined below. We will make no exceptions to this policy, and reserve the right to refrain from considering your complaint if you do not follow the policy.
  - Wait twenty-four hours from the time you receive the grade.
  - Deliver a written statement explaining your complaint to the instructor: Prof. Wiggins (Box 353130). (No emails or telephone calls will be accepted.)
  - Make an appointment with the instructors to discuss your written complaint in person (email is fine for making an appointment).
  - We will indicate our final decision to you by email within twenty-four hours of our meeting.
  - If you disagree with our final decision, please file a written request to meet with the instructors and the Chair of Germanics, Prof. Brigitte Prutti.
- **ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATIONS:** It is crucial that all students in this class have access to the full range of learning experiences. At the University of Washington, it is the policy and practice to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Full participation in this course requires the following types of engagement:

- the ability to complete 20-40 pages of reading in preparation for each class;
- the ability to attend lectures of 50 minutes with other students;
- the ability to work in a learning team with 5-8 other students on group discussions and projects (creative and analytical);
- the ability to write discussion posts and reflective essays.

If you anticipate or experience barriers to your learning or full participation in this course based on a physical, learning, or mental health disability, please immediately contact the instructor to discuss possible accommodation(s). A more complete description of the disability policy of the College of the Environment can be found [here](#) (see syllabus on canvas for links). If you have, or think you have, a temporary or permanent disability that impacts your participation in any course, please also contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) at: [206-543-8924](tel:206-543-8924) V / [206-543-8925](tel:206-543-8925) TDD / [uwdss@uw.edu](mailto:uwdss@uw.edu) e-mail / <http://www.uw.edu/students/drs>.

#### **Roles & Responsibilities for Academic Accommodations:**

- *Student:* inform the instructor no later than the first week of the quarter of any accommodation(s) you will or may potentially require.
- *Instructor and TA:* maintain strict confidentiality of any student's disability and accommodation(s); help all students meet the learning objectives of this course.

Syllabus (Daily):\*

Date	Theme	Assignment	Due
<b>Week 1: The Choice</b>			
April 1	Intro: Admiration, Identification, Seduction		<b>Complete: Online Survey (by 10pm)</b>
April 3	<b>Workshop</b> The Choice: Superpowers	Listen: <i>This American Life</i> , ep. 178	
April 5	The Choice: Heroic Model	Read: <i>Ms Marvel</i>	Online Discussion Question (DQ)
<b>Week 2: Hero's Choice</b>			
April 8	The Choice: Achilles	Read: <i>Iliad</i> , selections	DQ
April 10	<b>Workshop</b> Hero Creation 1: Admiration	Read: <i>Odyssey</i> , selections	DQ
April 12	The Choice: Odysseus	Read: <i>Odyssey</i> , selections	DQ
<b>Week 3: Heroine's Choice</b>			
April 15	The Choice: Socrates	Read: Plato, <i>Apology</i>	DQ
April 17	<b>Workshop</b> Presentations	Read: <i>Antigone</i> (pt 1)	DQ Group Hero 1: Admiration
April 19	The Choice: Antigone	Read: <i>Antigone</i> (end); Hegel, Judith Butler	DQ
<b>Week 4: Religious Heroes</b>			
April 22	Christ: Divinity / Humanity	Read: Bible (selections)	DQ
April 24	<b>Workshop</b> Writing		1 <sup>st</sup> Draft: Paper 1
April 26	Satan: Seduction	Read: Milton & Blake (selections)	DQ; Final Draft: Paper 1
<b>Week 5: Romantic Heroes I</b>			
April 29	Sturm & Drang	Read: Goethe's "Prometheus"; <i>Sorrows of Young Werther</i> (pt 1)	DQ
May 1	<b>Workshop</b> Hero Creation 2: Identification	Read: Goethe, <i>Werther</i> (pt 2)	DQ
May 3	From Identification to Seduction	Read: Goethe, <i>Werther</i> (pt 3)	DQ
<b>Week 6: Romantic Heroes II</b>			
May 6	Superman	Read: Nietzsche, <i>Birth of Tragedy</i> , <i>Zarathustra</i> selections	DQ
May 8	<b>Workshop</b> Superman		Paper 2
May 10	Melodrama & Race	Read: Aldridge, <i>The Black Doctor</i>	DQ; Sign up for Paper Conference

<b>Week 7: Romantic Heroes III</b>			
May 13	Idealizing the Other: Native American	Watch: Karl May's <i>Winnetou</i> Read: Hesse, <i>Siddhartha</i> (Part One, 1-23)	DQ
May 15	<b>Workshop</b> Hero's Journey	Read: Campbell, "Hero's Journey" Read: Hesse, <i>Siddhartha</i> (Part Two, 24-46)	DQ
May 17	Idealizing the Other: Orientalism	Read: Hesse, <i>Siddhartha</i> (Part Three, 46-81)	DQ
<b>Week 8: Political Heroes</b>			
May 20	Revolutionary Heroes	Read: Arendt, "Rosa Luxemburg" Watch: <i>Rosa Luxemburg</i>	DQ
May 22	<b>Workshop</b> Heroes and Activism	Read: Brecht, <i>Mother Courage</i> (scenes 1-2) Watch: <i>Theater of War</i>	DQ Group Hero 2: Journey / Identification
May 24	War Heroes	Read: Brecht, <i>Mother Courage</i> (scenes 4-12)	DQ
<b>Week 9: Feminist Heroes</b>			
May 27	--- No Class (Memorial Day)		
May 29	<b>Workshop</b> Hero Creation 3: Going Dark	Read: Kleist, <i>Penthesilea</i> , selections	DQ [For W Credit: Paper 3 Draft]
May 31	Amazons & Feminism	Read: <i>Wonder Woman</i> comics	DQ
<b>Week 10: Your Heroes</b>			
June 3	Pop Feminism	Watch: <i>Buffy</i> (Season 1, ep 1; Season 7, ep 12)	DQ
June 5	<b>Workshop</b> Final Preparations	Presentations: Open to Public	Group Hero 3: Going Dark
June 7	Conclusions	TBA	DQ
<b>Finals Week</b>			
June 12	Final Essay Due		

\* Syllabus subject to change. All changes will be announced in class and posted on canvas.