

# The Superhero in Literature

Spring 2016  
HONORS 440 section 1005  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:00 p.m.— 2:15 p.m.

## Contact Info

Instructor: Dr. XXXXXXX XXXXXXX

Office: RLL #Xxx

Hours: T/Th 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. & by appt.

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## Course Description

This course is designed to explore “heroes” in society (myth, literature, print media, and film). We will read a range of texts (including more modern “texts” like the graphic novel and movie/television depictions) from the ancient world through the twentieth century and focus on how these texts reflect their relation to historical, cultural, racial, gender, civil, and political contexts.

We will begin with the ancient world and the concept of the hero/warrior, discussing the social, familial, and military conceptions of the hero in classic texts from the ancient Greeks’ the demi-god/warrior archetype to the medieval warrior/knight. We will consider the evolution of the hero in light of the advances in society and technology, examining concerns like race, civil rights, gender (female independence, trans-gender issues, etc.), social responsibility, criminal justice, and culture. Texts from the twentieth century will include new mediums like the graphic novel and television series.

Please note that the readings and issues will be spread out as evenly as possible, and will often be supplemented by slide shows, short film clips and other media to facilitate a full appreciation for the visual and documentary supplements available. You are expected to come to class prepared, having read the day’s text closely, and ready to discuss your ideas. We will spend our time in class, as a group, correlating and exchanging ideas about themes or passages in the stories. Everyone is expected to participate. You will learn to establish your arguments and the methods used in order to articulate them into several short papers.

## Required Texts\*

**\*You are welcome to use e-texts (in print or on devices) or alternative translations/editions, with the understanding that you may have difficulty finding specific passages in class due to format differences. You MUST have the text scheduled for discussion with you in class each day.**

**\*Excerpts are indicated with an asterisk, and are provided in PDF for you on WebCampus.**

*The Greek Myths*, Robert Graves

*Beowulf*, Gareth Hinds

*The Ring*, Heilan Yvttte Grimes

\**Superhero: The Secret History of a Genre*, Peter Coogan (PDF provided via WebCampus)

\**The Power of Comics*, Duncan, Smith & Levitz (PDF provided via WebCampus)

\**The Wonder Woman Chronicles*, Vol 2 (PDF provided via WebCampus)

*Ms. Marvel Vol. 1 No Normal*, G. Willow Wilson

### Assignments

**1) Response papers** will be a minimum of 5 full pages in length. If papers do not meet the length minimum, they will not be graded. Their purpose is to help collate the assigned articles and your background readings, and to show that you are able to make connections to the ideals of heroic qualities in each historical period and evaluate each era's heroes according to the standards of the day. Feel free to react honestly in your papers, but please remember to support what you write with quotations from and references to your primary texts.

All responses will use academic, formal English, avoiding first and second person, and use follow MLA format for citing passages from the work(s) on which your essay is written, as well as any outside sources. These papers must be typed and BOTH uploaded on WebCampus & submitted hard copy in class. There are a total of 4 for the term. For each major unit, you will connect the ideals and conventions of the heroic ideal to contemporaneous real life exploits, successes, social developments, etc. For example, for your first essay on the ancient world, you will distill the essential characteristics of a hero in antiquity, provide examples from the text, and then connect those ideals to concerns of the modern day. Do we still care about honesty? Heritage? Nationality? This practice will develop your critical thinking skills by looking at a single issue/trait from multiple angles. I am always happy to help you with planning or draft stages of the writing process; you only need ask. Due dates are on the schedule; no late papers will be accepted without prior arrangements.

### Course Grading

Response papers	(4)	80%
Presentation	(1)	20%

\* You are expected to speak up and show you are involved in the reading workload and classroom discussion process. Remaining aloof will affect your overall grade at the end of the semester. Active participation ensures the highest possible assessment at semester's end.

### Grade Scale

A	94-100	B-	80-83
A-	90-93	C+	77-79
B+	87-89	C	74-76
B	84-86	C-	70-73

**R is assigned for anything below a C-. Note that your paper does not pass if you receive an R. An R means that you must REWRITE to pass the assignment.** If you do not rewrite the paper, it will be assigned a zero.

### Class Conduct

Everyone should respect the class as a place for learning, both for us individually and for everyone else. Personal computers may not be used during lectures or discussions – nor should phones. NO TEXTING. If you do, you may be asked to leave class for the day, and you will be marked absent for that day.

No food is allowed in UNLV classrooms. Please eat before class – outside of the room. Coffee and other drinks are fine, but if you spill something, you will clean it up.

Demonstrating respect for your peers is absolutely essential to a good group learning process. This includes tolerance of differing opinions, using your listening skills (in addition to your talking skills), and refraining from personal attacks.

### **Ethics and Plagiarism**

You are expected to do your own original work, no matter how minor. Whenever you borrow graphics, quote passages, or use ideas from others, you are legally and ethically obliged to acknowledge that use, following appropriate conventions for (MLA) documenting sources. To borrow someone else's writing without acknowledging that use is an act of academic dishonesty, whether you borrow an entire report or a single sentence. An act of plagiarism will result in an F for the course and you will be reported to the University Committee of Student Ethics.

If you are ever unsure about how to properly cite a source, you need only ask, or visit the UNLV Writing Center's web page for instructions. There is also informational material available on BB illustrating how to integrate quotes, format a Works Cited page, and how to properly cite quotes in-text. Reference material on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it are also available. Use it!

In addition to following the basic principles of fair use of others' work and honesty and forthrightness in crediting the contribution of others to your work, you are expected to adhere to this basic professional and academic principle: treat others with the respect that you would wish them to grant you.

**Academic Misconduct** – Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at:  
<http://studentconduct.unlv.edu/misconduct/policy.html>.

**Copyright** – The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at:  
<http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)** – The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such.

To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

**Religious Holidays Policy** – Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the end of the first two weeks of classes, **September 4, 2015**, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit:

<http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

**Incomplete Grades** - The grade of I – Incomplete – can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

**Tutoring** – The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring and academic assistance for all UNLV students taking UNLV courses. Students are encouraged to stop by the ASC to learn more about subjects offered, tutoring times and other academic resources. The ASC is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Students may learn more about tutoring services by calling 702-895-3177 or visiting the tutoring web site at: <http://academicsuccess.unlv.edu/tutoring/>.

**UNLV Writing Center** – One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student’s Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

**Rebelmail** – By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students’ Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV’s official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students’ e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always [@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:@unlv.nevada.edu). **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

### **Attendance & Absences**

If you miss class for any reason, you are still responsible for the material and content of the class and for any assignment given for the next class. It is your responsibility to contact me and to pick up (from my office) any handouts or essays.

If you miss more than three classes, your final grade will reflect your absences (based on the above guidelines). If you miss more than the equivalent of three weeks of classes (6 classes), you will not pass the course. There is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. You are present, or you are not. Life happens. The only absence exceptions are as follows (according to university policy):

### **Absences Due to Religious Holidays and University Activities**

Students who represent UNLV at any official extracurricular activity shall also have the opportunity to make up assignments, but the student must provide official written notification to the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).

**Final Examinations** – The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

### **Reading Schedule (subject to change as issues arise):**

#### **Week 1**

Jan 19            *Introductions*, course overview  
Jan 21            Campbell excerpt (PDF provided via WebCampus)

#### **Week 2**

Jan 26            *The Greek Myths*, pp. 443-550 (Heracles)  
Jan 28            *The Greek Myths*, pp. 314-363 (Theseus)

#### **Week 3**

Feb 2            *The Greek Myths*, pp. 664-745 (Achilles)  
Feb 4            *The Greek Myths*, pp. 581-626 (Jason & Argonauts)

#### **Week 4**

Feb 9            *Beowulf* (all)  
Feb 11           *The Ring*, pp. 3-47

#### **Week 5**

Feb 16           *The Ring*, pp. 48-104  
Feb 18           *The Ring*, pp. 105-150  
**\*\*Response Paper 1 Due – Greek Heroes**

#### **Week 6**

Feb 23           *The Ring*, pp. 151-194  
Feb 25           *The Ring*, pp. 197-226    \*Assign topics for indiv. presentations (ILL)

#### **Week 7**

Mar 1            \**Superhero: The Secret History of a Genre*, Peter Coogan (PDF via WebCampus) &  
                     \* *The Power of Comics: History, Form, and Culture*, Duncan ((PDF via WebCampus)  
Mar 3            \**Justice League, Vol 1: Origins*, Geoff Johns, et al. (PDF via WebCampus) - BROWSE

#### **Week 8**

Mar 8            \*Wonder Woman (historical background and first two issues) (PDFs via WebCampus)  
Mar 10           Guest Speaker: Dr. Jarret Keene – Race, Class, & Gender in Comics (1960s-1980s)

#### **Week 9**

Mar 15           TBA -

Mar 17 TBA -  
**\*\*Response Paper 2 Due – Nordic Heroes**

**Week 10 SPRING BREAK --- NO CLASS**

**Week 11**  
 Mar 29 Presentations  
 Mar 31 Presentations

**Week 12**  
 Apr 5 Presentations  
 Apr 7 Presentations

**Week 13 Modern Superheroes**  
 Apr 12 *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*  
 Apr 14 *Firefly* (videotext, Season 1 Pilot)  
**\*\*Response Paper 3 Due - Comics**

**Week 14 Modern Superheroes**  
 Apr 19 *Buffy, The Vampire Slayer* (videotext, “The Gift” S 5 E 22)  
 Apr 21 *Ms. Marvel: No Normal*

**Week 15 Vigilantism**  
 Apr 26 *Watchmen*, Moore and Gibbons (first half)  
 Apr 28 *Watchmen*, Moore and Gibbons (second half)

**Week 16 Vigilantism**  
 May 3 *Dexter* (videotext, Season 1 Pilot)  
 May 5 *Leverage* (videotext, Season 1 Pilot)  
**\*\*Response Paper 4 Due – “Modern” Heroes**

**May 9-14 FINAL EXAM WEEK**