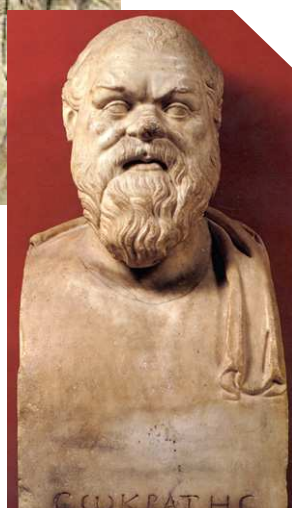


# AEG 5212 Teaching Humanities 2

## Assessment 2 - VCE Unit

# CLASSICAL STUDIES



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## **VCE Study**

Classical Studies Unit 2

### **Unit Outcome**

#### AREA OF STUDY 2

##### Classics through time

In this area of study, students explore the ways in which classical works are reference points for later ages to aspire to or react against. Elements of classical Greek and Roman culture have endured to the present day. They have exerted a powerful influence on the art, literature, philosophy and science of Western society. This legacy has been mediated by artists, writers, philosophers and scientists who throughout the centuries have emulated, adapted or rejected exemplars from classical culture. In this way, classical culture is reinterpreted in different periods. This shapes the transmission of the classical heritage with the result that classical studies itself has been reinvented in different times.

### **Components of Knowledge**

Key knowledge includes:

- key ideas and techniques of particular classical works;
- the relationship of the classical works to their socio-historical contexts;
- concepts, ideas and narratives from classical works that demonstrate ongoing cultural significance;
- classical influences on a work from a later historical period;
- the relationship between a work from a later period and its socio-historical context.

### **Components of Skills**

Key skills include the ability to:

- explain the key ideas and the relationship between classical works and their socio-historical context;
- explain concepts, ideas and narratives that demonstrate ongoing cultural significance;
- discuss the classical influences on a work from a later historical period;
- discuss the relationship between a work from a later period and its socio-historical context.

## Learning Activities

### Activity 1: Pericles, patriotism and the art of speech-making

This activity looks at the key themes and concepts in the Funeral Oration of Pericles as recorded by Thucydides in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, and compares them with important political speeches of the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries. Students will identify common themes and motifs used and explore whether the modern speeches have any discernable classical influence.

Suggested approach:

1. Read Pericles' Funeral Oration in [\*The History of the Peloponnesian War\*](#) by Thucydides (Book II, 34 to 46).
2. Describe Athens as Pericles sees the city-state, referring to the character of the people, their way of life, their values and principles, their power and possessions, form of government, rivals and enemies, economy, openness to foreigners and the world, monuments, intellectual and cultural life, and treatment of women.
3. Debate the reliability of Pericles' vision as a portrait of Athens and its people. Do you think it is an accurate representation? Why or why not? What factors can you identify that might contribute to its credibility or lack thereof?
4. Read Abraham Lincoln's [\*Gettysburg Address\*](#), extracts from Winston Churchill's speeches such as '[\*This was their finest hour\*](#)', Martin Luther King's '[\*I have a dream\*](#)' speech, Kevin Rudd's '[\*Apology\*](#)' and Barack Obama's [\*acceptance speech\*](#).
5. What might these speeches have in common with Pericles' speech, and in what ways are they different? Identify any themes or motifs that are common to all or most of these speeches.
6. It has been argued that the Gettysburg Address consciously drew from Pericles' Funeral Oration. Research and explore the arguments for and against this notion and examine all of the speeches for classical references or influence.
7. Compare Athenian patriotism with modern forms of patriotism.

## Activity 2: Mythology then and now

### Part 1: Epics

Choose one or more contemporary epics (can be film or book) and compare with one or more classical epics. The contemporary epic/s should be chosen in consultation with the students as their interest in, knowledge of and engagement with the material will dictate the quality and depth of the study. It will also dictate which excerpts to provide for comparison. Classical texts can be chosen from:

[\*Iliad\*](#) by Homer

[\*Odyssey\*](#) by Homer

[\*Aeneid\*](#) by Virgil

[\*Argonautica\*](#) by Apollonius Rhodius

[\*Metamorphoses\*](#) by Ovid

Possible films	Possible books
2001: A Space Odyssey Avatar Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon Harry Potter (sequence) The Hunger Games Lord of the Rings (sequence) Star Wars (sequence)	Belgariad (sequence) by David Eddings The Dark is Rising Sequence by Susan Cooper Earthsea Saga by Ursula Le Guin Elenium (sequence) by David Eddings Ender's Game (sequence) by Orson Scott Card Harry Potter by JK Rowling The Hunger Games (sequence) by Suzanne Collins Lord of the Rings (sequence) by JRR Tolkien

Example focus questions:

- What are the key ideas and techniques of epics? Can they be observed in the contemporary material as well as the classics?
- What are the concepts, ideas and narratives that are present in both the classical and contemporary epics? Do these illustrate a continuity in cultural significance? If not, how do you explain the similarities?

## ***Part 2: Descent into Hell***

Explore elements of the film *Aliens* and compare with the theme of descent into the underworld in mythology (notably Orpheus and Herakles).

Orpheus and Eurydice in:

[\*The Georgics\*](#) by Virgil

[\*The Metamorphoses\*](#) by Ovid

[\*The Library\*](#) by Apollodorus

Heracles:

*Alcestris* by Euripides

The Twelfth Labour of Heracles in [\*The Library\*](#) by Apollodorus

See also [\*The Homeric Hymn to Demeter\*](#)

Suggested approach:

- Read and analyse excerpts of the above texts and identify key themes and recurring motifs.
- View *Aliens*, especially Ripley's rescue of Newt from the alien queen.
- Using the analysis from the classical texts done previously, identify elements in the film that use the same themes and motifs.
- Compare and contrast the way those key concepts are handled in the different stories and mediums.
- Think about the film in a wider context. Are there other aspects that refer to classical mythology or narratives?

### **Part 3: Xena, Hercules and the mythic tradition**

This activity compares the representation of myth in Xena: Warrior Princess and Hercules the Legendary Journeys with extracts from mythology. The students will read excerpts from relevant classical materials and then view related video clips of the two shows. As a class discuss the similarities and differences, what themes have been emphasised, and other questions as appropriate.

Example episodes and focus questions:

#### **Xena: Warrior Princess, Season 1 Episode 12 *Beware Greeks Bearing Gifts***

This episode is a representation of the end of the Trojan War. Xena is summoned to Troy by Helen. Compare with the [\*Iliad\*](#) by Homer.

- What key elements of the narrative have been retained?
- In what aspects does it deviate the most? Why do you think this is the case?
- How have modern sensibilities influenced the portrayal of Helen?

#### **Xena: Warrior Princess, Season 2 Episode 4 *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun***

A representation of Dionysus/Bacchus and the women known as Bacchae. Compare with [\*The Bacchae\*](#) by Euripides. Also refer to Theocritus [\*Idyll XXVI\*](#).

- What, if any, key elements of the narrative have been retained?
- How has modern mythology been conflated with the classical?

#### **Hercules: The Legendary Journeys Season 3 Episode 7 *The Green-Eyed Monster***

Representation of the story of Cupid and Psyche. Compare with *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius, Book Five. Also refer description of Eros in Hesiod's [\*Theogony\*](#), [\*Orphic Hymn LVII\*](#).

- What key elements of the narrative have been retained?
- Which elements of the Greek and Roman mythology have been blended? Are the characters really interchangeable?

Class discussion about why classical mythology is still being represented today, e.g. what about it is relevant/interesting/engaging. Possible use of Rick Riordan (author of the Percy Jackson series) interview podcast to initiate topic.

### **Activity 3: Socrates and contemporary prisoners of conscience**

This activity will explore the imprisonment, trial and execution of Socrates as recorded in Plato's *Apology*, and compare the circumstances with those of other prisoners of conscience.

- Read Plato's [\*Apology\*](#).
- Summarise the case presented by Socrates in his defence and research the outcome of his trial. Could Socrates have used a different defence to change the outcome of the trial or would it not have made a difference? Why do you think he used the defence that he did?
- Where do you place the blame for Socrates' execution?
- What aspects of Socrates' teaching revealed in this text have been influential down to modern times?
- Historical and contemporary prisoners of conscience. Research and explore the stories of one or more of the following figures who have been imprisoned for following their beliefs:
  - Nelson Mandela
  - Aung San Suu Kyi
  - Benazir Bhutto
  - Mohandas Gandhi
  - Martin Luther King Jr
- What similarities and differences can be identified between Socrates and the contemporary figures? What factors shaped their experiences and led to their imprisonment? Can you identify other historical or contemporary figures who would be considered to be prisoners of conscience?
- David Hicks: prisoner of conscience? Discuss what factors lead us to label one person a terrorist or criminal and another a prisoner of conscience.

## Assessment Tasks Including Rubrics

### Written analysis

Using the work done in **Activity Two: Mythology then and now**, prepare a written analysis of a contemporary work with respect to classical mythology or a particular classical narrative. The contemporary material may be:

- a film or series of films
- a book or series of books
- one or more episodes from a tv show
- a graphic novel or comic
- a piece of artwork or series of pieces

The written analysis should consist of three sections.

1. A discussion of the key concepts, ideas and narratives of the classical work
2. A discussion of the key concepts, ideas and narratives of the contemporary work
3. A discussion of the links between the two. This should not only examine similarities and differences but should also consider reasons for these, such as the influence of modern attitudes and perspectives.

The written analysis should be between two to three pages, and include detailed references.

Work to be assessed using the criteria following:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
Analysis of classical work includes discussion of key concepts, ideas and narratives.	Some effort at identifying key concepts, ideas and/or narratives.	Reasonable effort at identifying key concepts, ideas and narratives with discussion.	Exhaustive list of key concepts, ideas and narratives with comprehensive discussion and justification.
Analysis of contemporary work includes discussion of key concepts, ideas and narratives.	Some effort at identifying key concepts, ideas and/or narratives.	Reasonable effort at identifying key concepts, ideas and narratives with discussion.	Exhaustive list of key concepts, ideas and narratives with comprehensive discussion and justification.
Discussion of links between classical and contemporary work.	Some effort at compiling list of connecting elements.	Reasonable list of connecting elements with some effort at justification.	Exhaustive list of connecting elements with clear justification.
Discussion of reasons for similarities and differences between classical and contemporary work.	Some effort at identifying reasons for similarities and differences.	Reasonable attempt at discussing reasons for similarities and differences.	Comprehensive discussion of reasons for similarities and differences with explanation of opinions.



## Multimedia Presentation

When reflecting on the material covered in **Activity 1: Pericles, patriotism and the art of speech-making** you should have noticed that these speeches were all given by men, and that women are only barely acknowledged if mentioned at all.

You are to research a political speech given by a woman and analyse it using the framework from Activity 1. You should:

1. Identify themes and motifs that are present.
2. Compare and contrast the themes and motifs with those found in Pericles' speech.
3. Discuss the social and historical context of both Pericles' Athens and your chosen speech.
4. Address if and/or why the social and historical context has led to similarities and differences between the two speeches.

Your research and conclusions should be presented as a multimedia presentation. You may choose the media used. The presentation must address the four points listed above but should also be engaging and interesting. Dense slabs of text on a series of slides will not be accepted as a multimedia presentation. Part of your presentation should include the reading of an excerpt from your chosen speech. This may be done while you present to the class, or may be recorded on audio or video and embedded into the presentation itself.

You must provide a list of references used in your research to be handed in with a copy of your presentation (digital or hard copy).

Work to be assessed using the criteria following:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
Identification of relevant themes and motifs in chosen speech.	Some effort made at identification of basic themes.	Reasonable effort made at identifying and clarifying themes and motifs.	Comprehensive identification of themes and motifs with justification for inclusion.
Comparison of themes and motifs with justification.	Basic statements made outlining differences and similarities.	Reasonable effort made at comparing and contrasting the two with some justification of reasoning.	Comprehensive comparing and contrasting with clear justification of reasoning.
Discussion of socio-historical context of Pericles' speech.	Some effort made at identifying socio-historical context.	Reasonable identification of socio-historical context linked to the speech.	Comprehensive discussion of socio-historical context with explicit links to speech.
Discussion of socio-historical context of chosen speech.	Some effort made at identifying socio-historical context.	Reasonable identification of socio-historical context linked to the speech.	Comprehensive discussion of socio-historical context with explicit links to speech.
Analysis of socio-historical contexts as a factor of influence or difference.	Some effort made at identifying common factors and differences.	Reasonable identification and discussion of parallels and differences in socio-historical contexts.	Comprehensive identification and discussion of parallels and differences in socio-historical contexts with justification.

## Resources and References

(where not already linked in activities)

### Books

- *Alcestis/Hippolytus/Iphigenia in Tauris* by Euripides, translated by Philip Vellacott, Penguin Books, London 1974
- *The Bacchae and Other Plays* by Euripides, translated by Philip Vellacott, Penguin Books, London 1973
- *The Greek Myths Complete Edition* by Robert Graves, Penguin Books, London 1992 edition
- *The History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides, edited in translation by R.W. Livingstone, Oxford University Press, London 1946 edition
- *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* translated by Helene P. Foley, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1994
- *The Nature of Greek Myths* by G.S. Kirk, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1983 edition
- *The Odyssey* by Homer, translated by E.V. Rieu, Penguin Books, London 1991 edition
- *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Greece* by Robert Morkot, Penguin Books, London 1996
- *The transformations of Lucius: otherwise known as The Golden Ass* by Lucius Apuleius, translated by Robert Graves, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1950

### Online Resources

- Works of Homer on Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/h#a705>
- Works of Virgil on Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/v#a129>
- Podcast - Interview with Rick Riordan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art <http://www.metmuseum.org/metmedia/audio/kids/068-episode-for-families-percy-jackson--the-olympians-the-lightning-thief-at-the-met>

### DVD/video

- *Aliens*, directed by James Cameron, executive producers Gordon Carroll, David Giler and Walter Hill, Twentieth-Century Fox, 1986
- *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* by Robert Tapert, Sam Raimi (Executive Producers), Renaissance Pictures/Universal
- *Xena: Warrior Princess* by Robert Tapert, Sam Raimi (Executive Producers), Renaissance Pictures/Universal