

# **Syllabus (revised) for 090:292:03 “Homer’s Odyssey: Mythology, Psychology and Politics”**

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Week 1 (9/6): Introduction. Initiation and Transformation (see sheet)

Week 2 (9/13): *Odyssey* I-IV. Short preparation (SP): “Initiation /Transformation of Telemakhos”

SP: “The Two Faces of Helen”

Week 3 (9/20): *Odyssey* V-VII + *Midlife* Chapter 1. SP: “Nausikaa’s Initiation/Transformation”

SP: “The Two Faces of Kalyпсо”

Week 4 (9/27): *Odyssey* VIII-XI + *Midlife* Chapter 2 SP: “The Disguises of Athena”

Project papers chosen and assigned (see sheet).

Week 5 (10/4): *Odyssey* XII-XIV + *Midlife* Chapters 3 + 4 SP: “Two Faces of Kirke”

Week 6 (10/11): *Odyssey* XV-XVI + *Midlife* Chapter 5 SP: “Why Odysseus needs transformation”

Week 7 (10/18): *Odyssey* XVII-XXI + Sophocles, *Ajax* SP: “Ajax” \* SP: “Athena” \* SP: “Odysseus” \*  
(\*all three preparations: compare Sophocles’ vs. Homer’s representations of the three characters)

Week 8 (10/25): *Odyssey* XXII-XIV SP: “The Initiation and Transformation of Penelope”  
Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* + SP Penelope in *The Penelopiad* ; SP The Maids in *The Penelopiad*

Week 9 (11/1): *Odysseus in America* 1-163; 236-241 + Review: bring in questions.

Week 10 (11/8): In-class examination

Weeks 11 (11/15), 12 (11/29) 13 (12/6): project presentations (30 minutes, including 10 minutes for discussion). The 10+ page project paper is due a week after presentation; see the **project sheet** for topics and schedules.

Week 14 (12/13): project presentations + 5-10 page personal response paper “My Odyssey” (due in class today for discussion)

**Please note:** this course fulfills the Core curriculum Requirement of for Writing and Communication in a Discipline for goals t, u and v.

**Required Books: PLEASE NOTE:** In order to facilitate class discussion, it is imperative that everyone have **the same book (hard copy only)** in hand (that is, same publisher, same translator) and **bring it to class** when it is being discussed.

Books are available at the Rutgers Bookstore (Barnes&Noble) Please let me know immediately if any book is missing or unavailable. ([sfw@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:sfw@rci.rutgers.edu)) Buy all books as soon as possible, since the bookstore will be sending unbought copies back to the publisher by mid-semester.

1) Homer, **The Odyssey**, translated by Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998)  
ISBN 9 780374 525743

2) Margaret Atwood, **The Penelopiad** (New York: Canongate, 2005) ISBN 9 781841 957982

3) Sophocles, **Ajax**, translated by Shomit Dutta (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press , 2014)  
ISBN 9-780521 655644

4) Steven F. Walker, **Midlife Transformation in Literature and Film: Jungian and Eriksonian Perspectives** (London and New York: Routledge, 2012) ISBN 9-780415-666992

5) Jonathan Shay, **Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming** (New York: Scribner, 2002) ISBN 9 780743 211574

**Grading:** attendance and participation: 20%; project presentation and paper: 40%  
response papers: 10% examination: 30%

**NB:** attendance is presumed to be perfect, except in cases of excused absences. Please do your best to arrive on time (= 9:50AM). Feel free to bring in coffee etc. You may leave the room for a few minutes at any time without asking for permission.