

DEPARTMENT OF ANCIENT STUDIES / DEPARTEMENT ANTIEKE STUDIE
Ancient Cultures 2/3 modules 2026

AK 211/311: Ancient Greek Drama (Dr S Masters and Dr U Westwood)



Of all the genres in ancient Athens, drama had the most public face: it was written to be enacted, and up to 15 000 spectators attended a production. Mythology provided most of the subjects for tragedy. In the case of fifth-century "Old Comedy", the plots were derived from fantasy, but contemporary society was also heckled. Inasmuch as drama provides a mirror image of reality, a spectator or reader can learn from the accumulation of human relationships and emotions that over the ages have become embedded in dramas.

AK 221/321: Graeco-Roman Mythology (Ms AL Daniels and Dr S Masters)

If the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung was right, we all have an unconscious need both for myth and for an accompanying frame of reference for dealing with myths. The course acquaints students with some of the best-known myths of the Greeks and the Romans in treating aspects like: the world where myth originated; archaeology and myth; modern theories on the nature and function of myth; the role of mythology in ancient literary works; the depiction of mythological scenes on ancient vases; myth as a reflection of worldview; myth as propaganda. Some attention will also be given to modern receptions of this body of mythology. This module dovetails well with Ancient Cultures 211/311.

AK 241/341 Roman Women (Ms A Daniels, Mrs K. Kara-Bhana and Prof. J. Klooster, University of Freiburg)

From the average Roman *matrona* to the mistress, to mothers of fishermen or wives of emperors and mythical *exempla*, this course focuses on the women of ancient Rome from the Republican to the Imperial ages. Through literary, historical and visual representations, we aim to deconstruct how Roman women were depicted and provide a holistic view of women's lives and roles in the Roman world.



AK251/351 Ancient Western Asian Mythology (Dr RM van Dijk-Coombes)

Dating back around four thousand years, the myths and epics of the cultures of ancient Western Asia are some of the oldest in the world. Myths and epics are important in understanding any culture because they "explain" the origin of the cosmos, the society, the world view and the political ideologies of that culture. In this module, students will read the ancient myths and learn more about the cultures in which they were created. This module is the perfect companion to Ancient Cultures 221/321, despite the myths and societies being so utterly different.

!!! NB: Students who need to repeat a second-year module must contact the department ASAP !!!