

# Classics Day Workshops List

## Session 1

1. *Hero Worship in Ancient Greece* - Heroes in ancient Greece were first and foremost objects of religious devotion, personages of the distant and recent past. What divine aid did they provide to those who worshiped them? Under what circumstances were people heroized? The Greek cult of heroes reveals important differences between the original and modern uses of the term "hero." **Prof. Mark Alonge, Professor of Classics, Boston University**

2. *Polybius of Megalopolis: Collaborator or Mediator?* - The Romans relied heavily on the support of local upper classes, but what was it like to be caught in the middle? Polybius, who was suspected of anti-Roman sentiments in the course of Rome's conflict with Macedon in the early 2nd century BCE, wrote his history of Rome as a Greek who had been befriended by Rome's elite and ultimately entrusted with serving the Roman empire. Was Polybius a collaborator or a mediator, and should we follow his example? **Prof. Emma Dench, Professor of Classics, Harvard University**

3. *Lessons on Compromise from Sophocles' Antigone* - Students of Sophocles' *Antigone* have long debated the merit of the actions of the two main characters: Creon and Antigone. Rather than continuing the debate over who is the true hero(ine) of the play, this workshop will discuss what motivates each character and what each loses by the end of the tragedy. Would a compromise have been better? Today, the U.S. is deeply divided on several issues. What can we learn about compromise from *Antigone* and Creon? **Dustin Dixon, Boston University Classical Studies Graduate Student**

4. *Myth, Legend, and Your Life Journey* - Gods and goddesses are the characters of myths; Heroes and heroines are the subjects of legends; and you are the author of your life story. Explore the similarities and differences of these three kinds of stories, and find out just what kind of hero or heroine you are! **Jeffrey Nelson, Public Radio Producer**

5. *Satyrs: A Different Kind of Hero* - After every Greek tragic trilogy there was a satyr drama, where lewd and mostly drunk satyrs encountered the great heroes and villains of the mythic world. Although this is not our idea of a contribution to the seriousness of Greek tragedy, it was the how the great tragic playwrights, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides closed their trilogies. With help from some not always dated illustrations on Greek vases we will look at why satyr drama helped make Greek tragedy great. **Prof. Stephanie Nelson, Professor of Classics, Boston University**

6. *The Rocky Road to Scientific and Technological Advancement* - Once a civilization advances science and technology, what are the ways in which it is preserved or forgotten as time passes by? We'll look at the heroes who preserve and the villains who lay waste to a civilization's knowledge and capabilities. How were the Babylonian astronomical observations preserved for the Greek scholars? How was the Antikythera Mechanism, arguably the first analog computer, forgotten for 1000 years? **Phil Rossoni, Physics, MIT**

7. *Julius Caesar in Colonial America* - Julius Caesar was regarded as both hero and villain: a charismatic, quasi-divine leader to his followers, a dangerous would-be monarch to the senators who conspired to assassinate him. In the America of colonial times, where Roman history felt almost as vivid as contemporary events, Caesar aroused a similarly ambivalent set of responses. How did Caesar make his mark on early America? **Prof. Richard Tarrant, Professor of Classics, Harvard University**

8. *Virgil and his Ideologies* - What impact did the *Aeneid* have during the time it was written? What impact did the *Aeneid* have in the modern era? What can Virgil tell us about our own times? **Prof. Richard Thomas, Professor of Classics, Harvard University**

9. *Augustus: Hero or Villain?* - Augustus, the first emperor of Rome has sometimes been seen as a great hero who brought peace to Rome after civil war, and who brought back traditional Roman values. Others from the ancient world onward have seen Augustus as a power-hungry manipulator who never won a battle without help and who committed crimes while claiming to bring peace. What do these two images teach us about the ancient and the modern world? **Prof. Zsuzsanna Varhelyi, Professor of Classics, Boston University**

10. *Homer's Odyssey: The Model Hero* - Everyone has heard of the story of Odysseus, one of the most remembered heroes of Greek mythology. This workshop will explore how Odysseus, although a man of many faults, is still a model hero by all standards. **Prof. Emily McDermott, Professor of Classics, UMass Boston**

11. *Polybius of Megalopolis: Collaborator or Mediator?* - The Romans relied heavily on the support of local upper classes, but what was it like to be caught in the middle? Polybius, who was suspected of anti-Roman sentiments in the course of Rome's conflict with Macedon in the early 2nd century BCE, wrote his history of Rome as a Greek who had been befriended by Rome's elite and ultimately entrusted with serving the Roman Empire. Was Polybius a collaborator or a mediator, and should we follow his example? **Prof. Emma Dench, Professor of Classics, Harvard University**

12. *Penelope in Homer's Odyssey: The Power of One* - Composed 2700 years ago, this epic adventure tells the tale of the trickster famed for sacking Priam's mighty city with his Trojan Horse, blinding the man-eating one-eyed Cyclops, refusing the offer of immortality from sexy Calypso, visiting the ghosts of the dead, and finally, after 10 years, finding his way home to Penelope on the island of Ithaca. But why in the world does she wait 20 years for him, even though she thinks he's long dead? Is it possible that SHE is just as much of a hero as her more famous husband? **Prof. Stephen Esposito, Professor of Classics, Boston University**

13. *Myth, Legend, and Your Life Journey* - Gods and goddesses are the characters of myths; Heroes and heroines are the subjects of legends; and you are the author of your life story. Explore the similarities and differences of these three kinds of stories, and find out just what kind of hero or heroine you are! **Jeffrey Nelson, Public Radio Producer**

14. *A Christian Nation? Julian the Apostate and the Backlash Against Christianity in the Empire* - We all know that Constantine paved the way for the Christianization of the Empire. But one emperor fought to restore the old religion, earning the admiration of many, but the hatred of the new Christian elite. Hero or villain? Discover the facts about this fascinating and controversial figure in the Imperial Roman 'culture wars', and decide for yourself. **Dr. Gerol Petruzella, PhD, Mount Greylock Regional HS**

15. *The Rocky Road to Scientific and Technological Advancement* - Once a civilization advances science and technology, what are the ways in which it is preserved or forgotten as time passes by. We'll look at the heroes who preserve and the villains who lay waste to a civilization's knowledge and capabilities. How were the Babylonian astronomical observations preserved for the Greek scholars? How was the Antikythera Mechanism, arguably the first analog computer, forgotten for 1000 years? **Phil Rossoni, Physics, MIT**

16. *Seers and Other Ancient Diviners: Friends or Foes?* - Seers, prophets, and oracles were often consulted in the ancient Greek world for advice of all kinds. Although in many cases, diviners were highly respected and viewed as heroes by their consulters, we can find on the other hand instances where those who seek help question, challenge, or deny the advice of these religious figures, calling them criminals. See how dividedly people in the ancient world thought of diviners and their practices. **Kenneth Yu, Boston University Classical Studies Graduate Student**

17. *Cleopatra in Film and Television* - Throughout the last two years Cleopatra has been interpreted in many different ways, as tragic heroine and wicked temptress. This seminar will explore the characterization of Cleopatra from silent pictures through to HBO's series "Rome." **Dr. Anne Nelson, PhD, Abby Kelley Foster Charter School**

18. *Step into the Light, Please... I can't tell if you're a hero or a villain!* - All too often we snap photos without much care or setup. In this workshop, JCLers will get the 'inside scoop' on how to take breathtaking pictures that 'capture the moment'; the building blocks to better scrapbooks, newsletters, bulletin boards and websites will be shared. **Susann E. Low, Professional Photographer**

19. *Medea: Victim or Villain?* - We will examine one of mythology's most complex characters, Medea, the infamous princess, sorceress, wife, mother... and murderer. We will explore the idea of justice in her world, and whether Medea makes a legitimate case for her actions. How is she received, both by ancient and modern audiences? **Sophie Klein, Boston University Classical Studies Graduate Student**

20. *Judging Early Rome* - Are these men as virtuous as our sources would lead us to believe? How do these men measure up as heroes by modern standards? Students will briefly present their own reevaluation of these Romans' heroic status. **Michael Vincze, Graduate of Classical Studies, Boston University**