**MAGIC IN THE ANCIENT GRECO-ROMAN WORLD**

Required Texts:

* Apuleius, Lucius, *The Golden Ass* (trans. P. G. Walsh)
* Gager, John G. edt , *Curse Tablets & Binding Spells from the Ancient World*
* Ogden, Daniel, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds*

Optional Texts:

* Betz, Hans D. edt trl , *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (PGM)
* Faraone, Christopher A., *Ancient Greek Love Magic*
* Faraone, Christopher A. edt , *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic & Religion*
* Graf, Fritz , *Magic in the Ancient World*
* Luck, Georg , *Arcana Mundi: Magic & the Occult in the Greek & Roman Worlds*

Course Description:

Bindings and curses, love charms and healing potions, amulets and talismans - from the simple spells designed to meet the needs of the poor and desperate to the complex rites of professional magicians, the people of the Greco-Roman World made use of magic to try to influence the world around them. In this course we shall examine the magicians of the ancient world and the techniques and devices they used to serve their clientele. We shall consider ancient tablets and spell books as well as literary descriptions of magic in the light of theories relating to the religious, political, and social contexts in which magic was used.

Course Requirements:

Class participation:

Participation, of course, includes attendance, since you cannot participate if you are not in class. If, for some reason, you cannot attend class, please inform me in advance. Each student should be prepared to discuss and answer questions on the material covered in the lesson for the week. Coming prepared with questions on the material is even better than coming with answers to the basics. If, for some reason, you cannot prepare for class, please attend anyway - you will be better prepared for the next class.

Written Assignments:

There will be two short written assignments designed for the students to demonstrate their understanding of specific materials covered in class. These projects may require some out of class research in addition to the readings assigned for the class.

Examinations:

There will be take-home Midterm and Final Examinations for this class. Each of these examinations will require students to apply the analyses and definitions discussed throughout the course to primary materials.

**Grade Distribution:**

* Class Participation 25%
* Written Assignments 40%
* Midterm Exam 15%
* Final Exam 20%

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week I: Introduction – Definitions and the World of Ancient Magic**

**Week II: Curses – Binding Spells for All Occasions**

**Week III: Love Charms**

**Week IV: Healing and Protection**

Defixio Assignment: Using the texts we have studied in the collections of Gager and Betz as examples, create a curse tablet or erotic charm and then provide a commentary on the features of the spell. You should explain the context of the magic, the agent and the victim, and the means by which the magic operates (i.e., the standard What, Who, Where/When, Why, and How questions we have explored for the readings).

**Week V: Prayer and Magic**

**Week VI: Professional Magicians**

Midterm Examination

**Week VII: The Portrait of a Magician I: Wonder-workers, Weirdos, and Quacks**

**Week VIII: The Portrait of a Magician II: Greek and Roman Witches**

**Week IX: Magical Creatures**

**Week X: Divination**

**Week XI: Astrology**

**Week XII: Alchemy**

Astrology Assignment: Charite, daughter of the wealthy and prominent Androtion, comes to consult you about her upcoming marriage. When you cast her horoscope you come up with the provided chart. What response will you give to Charite? You should explain your response as though you were telling your apprentice, who is learning your profession. How did you move from the horoscope to the response? What sources did you consult to determine the meaning? You should cite Ptolemy, Dorotheus Sidonius, and (probably the most useful) Firmicus Maternus to explain your reasoning. The purpose of the assignment is for you to demonstrate your familiarity with and understanding of the primary texts and secondary interpretations we have studied, particularly the relation of the magical practices to the social contexts in which they take place.

**Week XIII: Accusations of Magic**

**Week XIV: Conclusions**

Final Exam