

## Brief Course Outline

**Course Title:**

**Backgrounds & Foundations**

**Course Number and Section:**

ENGLISH

2695E 550

**Instructor Name(s):**

Dr. Amanda Di Ponio

**Instructor Email(s):**

adiponi@uwo.ca

Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

### Course Description:

This course introduces students to some of the more famous texts, myths, and models from the early Judeo-Christian and classical Greek, Roman, Middle Eastern, and Asian literary and cultural traditions. Authors and texts to be studied include selections from Homer's *The Iliad*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Euripides's *Medea*, Virgil's *The Aeneid*, Dante's *Inferno*, Lady Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The One Thousand and One Nights*, select African folktales, and *The Old and New Testament*. In addition, we will also consider select instances of later writers who turn to these foundational texts as inspiration for their own literary, philosophical, or theoretical works including adaptations and remediations.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Develop an understanding of narrative structures and vocabularies present in the different foundational traditions and genres covered in the course
- Understand and explain intertextual relationships with theory provided by Gérard Genette
- Gain an understanding of the oral and textual traditions connected to the various works on the course
- Participate in experiential learning opportunities to see adaptation in action
- Place individual texts in their sociohistorical and geographical contexts
- Communicate ideas effectively through readings, reflections, classroom discussion, creative composition, and persuasive essays
- Research and engage with scholarly/critical texts
- Write logically and persuasively in fluent, standard English using the appropriate conventions for scholarly-critical writing

- Construct strong thesis statements and structured arguments in persuasive writing which incorporates evidence, from both primary, secondary, and critical theory texts in essay writing to support arguments that logically and persuasively present complex and debatable arguments
- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, including those obtained through the Internet
- Integrate outside research materials (not generated by AI) and references to the original text through use of summary, quotation, and paraphrase using correct MLA documentation

### Textbooks and Course Materials:

The following Norton Editions (3 texts in total) are packaged together at a discount of 25%. Cost \$53.38 (note that students are welcome to purchase digital copies of the more affordable Norton Library texts directly from Norton):  
Homer, The Iliad. Translated and Edited by Emily Wilson. Norton Critical Edition.  
Euripides, Medea. Translated by Sheila Murnaghan. Norton Critical Edition.  
Dante, Inferno. Translated by Michael Palma. Norton Critical Edition.

Erin Shields, Ransacking Troy. Playwrights Canada. Cost \$18.95  
Christa Wolf, Cassandra. Translated by Jan van Heurck. Farrar Straus & Giroux. \$27  
Nelson Mandela, Editor. Favorite African Folktales. Penguin. Cost \$18.95

Online editions of listed texts will be made as available through Course Readings.

While second-hand or older editions are permitted, I ask that students refer to the translations listed.

Course texts available only through Course Readings:  
The Epic of Gilgamesh. Translated with an Introduction by Andrew George. Penguin.  
Homer, The Odyssey. Translated and Edited by Emily Wilson.  
The World on the Turtle’s Back  
Ovid, Metamorphoses. Translated and Edited by Charles Martin. Norton Critical Edition.  
Genesis. Translated with Commentary by Robert Alter. Penguin.  
Virgil, The Aeneid. Translated and Edited by Sarah Ruden. Revised Edition. Yale UP.  
The Book of Revelations  
The One Thousand and One Nights  
Virgil, The Aeneid. Translated and Edited by Sarah Ruden. Revised Edition. Yale UP.  
Lady Murasaki Shikibu, The Tale of Genji. Translated and Edited by Dennis Washburn. Norton Critical Edition.

This course has a required field component that costs \$80.

### Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Performance Analysis	10/22/2025	10
Adaptation Assignment: Creative Remediation or Analog/Digital Archive	11/19/2025	10

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Midterm	12/08/2025	10
Research Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography	02/10/2026	5
Research Essay (2,00-2,500 words)	03/18/2025	20
Final Exam: Oral 10% (in class April 6 & 8) + Written (TBD) 15%	TBD	25
Attendance, Participation, Discussion, In-class writing tasks 20%	various throughout the year	20

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Monday, August 18, 2025