Panel Title: Popular Media in the Classics Classroom

As courses in reception studies become increasingly common, this panel will describe approaches to teaching popular media in the Classics classroom. The courses that will be presented are ones that have been taught at the undergraduate level, but the pedagogical elements will be relevant for teachers of younger students as well. The panel will consist of four multi-media presentations that will include two broad survey courses (one on Greece and Rome, one on Greece alone) and two topics-based approaches (one on the Golden Age and another on Homer). While there has been much scholarly output on Classical reception in popular media and there are a few texts that one may follow to teach a film course (such as Cyrino's *Big Screen Rome* or Blanshard and Shahabudin's *Classics on Screen*), there has still been relatively little written on the pedagogy of teaching popular media and Classics. Individual presentations are summarized below.

Presentation 1: "Teaching Ancient Greece on Screen"

In this presentation, I will discuss a course on films and television about ancient Greece that I created and have taught four times in the past seven years. This course teaches students how modern American society relates to the classical past by comparing and contrasting ancient and modern value systems. We accomplish this first by reading an ancient version of a particular subject, as, for instance, the Battle of Thermopylae according to Herodotus' *Histories*. Then we watch two films or TV programs on that same subject that were produced in different eras, like *The 300 Spartans* (Maté 1962) and *300* (Snyder 2007). Afterwards we discuss the intersections and clashes between ancient and modern value systems as well as how history shapes adaptations within the same culture, as evidenced in what we watched.

Presentation 2: "Reading the Visual Text: Teaching Aspects of Cinema in the Ancient World on Screen Classroom"

This presentation will address a broad survey course on the ancient Greeks and Romans in film and television. It will focus on one aspect of the course: how the introduction of methodologies from film studies courses can enhance the teaching of an Ancient World on Screen course. It will discuss how the teaching of short modules on cinematic aspects, such as sound, lighting, object placement, costumes, and marketing can help students become better readers of visual text, while introducing them to the ancient world. The presentation will provide specific examples of exercises done in the classroom setting, such as studies of onscreen objects and of opening film credits.

Presentation 3: "Using Classically-Inspired Films to Animate the Politics and Processes of the 'Golden Age'"

The concept of the "golden age," while remarkably widespread in the Western cultural tradition, originally referred to specific mythological periods as constructed in Greek and Roman literary texts. The most common modern use of "golden age" transfers that mythological construct to certain historical periods, which has exercised a (de)formative effect on modern accounts of the ancient Mediterranean world. To students, this process can seem abstract, yet it is fundamental to the field of Classics and classical antiquity's place in the grand narrative of the Western cultural tradition. This paper demonstrates how a no-prerequisite undergraduate survey course can employ select films (e.g. *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* [2000], *Never on Sunday* [1960], and *Gladiator* [2000]) to vividly present the significance and stakes of this phenomenon.

Presentation 4: "Homer & Hollywood: Teaching Homeric Epic Narrative through Film"

This presentation introduces a reception studies course that uses Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to familiarize students with ancient Greek narrative and generic themes, while drawing on a cinematic approach of interpretation. The course builds on student reading of the Homeric poems by exploring how epic themes and images have been used as modern popular culture entertainment in several films: Petersen's *Troy* (2004), Eastwood's *Unforgiven* (1992); Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982); Konchalovsky's *Odyssey* miniseries (1997); and the Coen brothers' *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000). Students consider how the films "adapt" the epic poems, either by attempting to tell the same story in the same context (*Troy, Odyssey*) or by using the tropes and plots of the epics in a different environment (*Blade Runner*, *Unforgiven, O Brother*).

Word count: 689

AV Requirements: LCD digital projection & sound cables for PPT with embedded video clips.

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