

Fall 2003 - Syllabus

THE CATASTROPHE OF KNOWLEDGE:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE FAUST LEGEND
Mark Danner

General Class Requirements: This is a seminar. The class will stand or fall depending on the students' care in preparation and eagerness to take part in discussion. Therefore the main requirements of this class are:

1. Do the reading
2. Attend class
3. Express your opinions

If you do the foregoing, you will do well in the class. In addition, a written examination will be given in class at the middle of the term and a short final paper will be required at the end of the term. The better part of the grade will depend on class participation.

Reading List

September 8: Introduction

Plan of the Course. Knowledge and its Dangers. The literature of the ancient Middle East. A look at the risks of knowledge in Gilgamesh and Genesis.

September 15: Braving the Serpent

Required Reading:

“He Who Saw the Deep” (The Standard Version of the Babylonian Epic) in *The Epic of Gilgamesh: A New Translation* (Andrew George, translator), pages 1 - 101

“Genesis” in *The Five Books of Moses: The Schocken Bible*, Everett Fox, translator.

Recommended Reading (Reserve Web – RW):

Kant, *Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History*, pages 221-234 (RW)

Ziolkowski, Theodore. *The Sin of Knowledge: Prelude & Chapter 1*, pages 3-17 (RW)

Ricoeur, Paul. *The Symbolism of Evil: Part 2, Chapter 3*, pages 232-260. (RW)

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization & Its Discontents*, pages 82-88 (RW)

Callahan, Tim. Secret Origins of the Bible, Chapter 2, pages 30-56 (RW)

September 22: From Ur to Athens – The Classical Faust

Required Reading:

The Book of Job (Stephen Mitchell, translator), pages 5 - 88

Hesiod, The Works and Days and Theogony (Richmond Lattimore translator), pages 18 – 186

Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound (James Scully and C. John Henington, translators), pages 29 – 97

Recommended Reading:

Nietzsche, Friedrich. The Birth of Tragedy, Chapter 9, pages 53-58. (RW)

Ziolkowski, Theodore. The Sin of Knowledge, Chapter 2, pages 25-42.(RW)

September 29: Faust: The Man and the Legend

Required Reading:

Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus (edited by Sylvan Barnet), pages 2- 83

Anon., The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus (excerpts), in Barnet, pages 93 – 145

Recommended Reading:

Ian Watt, Myths of Modern Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe (Cambridge, 1996), pages 3 _ 48.

E.M. Butler, The Myth of the Magus (Cambridge, 1948; 1993), pages 21 _ 44.

E.M. Butler, The Fortunes of Faust (Penn State Press, 1952; 1998), pages 3 _ 52.

October 6: Goethe's Everyman

Required Reading:

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust: A Tragedy (translated by Walter Kaufmann), First Part, pages 57 – 421

Recommended Reading:

Walter Kaufmann, "Introduction," Faust: A Tragedy, pages 3 – 61

October 13: Fall Break (No Class)

October 20: Mid-term Examination (In Class)

The Catastrophe of Knowledge

Please answer these questions in short essays. Refer specifically to the reading we have done – both assigned and recommended - and to the discussions we have had. Draw short quotations, if you like, from any of the primary texts used in the class – Gilgamesh, Genesis, Job, Theogony, Works and Days, Prometheus Bound, Doctor Faustus, and Faust. Make sure to offer specific examples to support your arguments.

1. Describe and contrast the attitudes toward knowledge – its advantages, its risks, its costs; its relation to the divine – in Gilgamesh and Genesis.
2. In the differing conceptions of Hesiod and Aeschylus, what leads Prometheus to do what he does? Where does each myth of Prometheus come from and what does it explain?
3. Does the story of Job reaffirm or contradict the vision of justice found in Genesis?
4. In adapting the story he found in the English Faustbook, was Marlowe faithful or unfaithful to the character and the “moral” depicted there?
5. Compare and contrast the “Faustian bargains” struck by the respective heroes in Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus and in Goethe’s Faust, and describe how each man represents, or contradicts, the age that produced him.

October 27: Goethe Returns to Faust

Required Reading:

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust: A Tragedy, (translated by Walter Arndt), in Faust: A Tragedy: Interpretive Notes, Contexts, Modern Criticism (Walter W. Arndt, translator), pages 135 – 344 (Second Part)

Recommended Reading:

“Interpretive Notes” in Faust: A Tragedy: Interpretive Notes, Contexts, Modern Criticism (Walter W. Arndt, translator), pages 514-549

“Goethe on Faust” in Faust: A Tragedy: Interpretive Notes, Contexts, Modern Criticism (Walter W. Arndt, translator), pages 514-549

“Survey of the Faust Theme” by Stuart Atkins in Faust: A Tragedy: Interpretive Notes, Contexts, Modern Criticism (Walter W. Arndt, translator), pages 573-585

November 3: Goethe and the Faustian Life

Required Reading:

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: A Tragedy*, (translated by Walter Arndt), in *Faust: A Tragedy: Interpretive Notes, Contexts, Modern Criticism* (Walter W. Arndt, translator), pages 135 – 344 (Second Part)

Recommended Reading:

“The Composition of Faust” in *Faust: A Tragedy: Interpretive Notes, Contexts, Modern Criticism* (Walter W. Arndt, translator), pages 505-514

November 10: The Faust of the Romantics

Required Reading:

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (edited by Paul J. Hunter), pages 3 – 156

Recommended Reading:

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, “Introduction to *Frankenstein, Third Edition*,” in *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (edited by J. Paul Hunter), pages 169-173

Ellen Moers, “Female Gothic: The Monster’s Mother,” in *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (edited by J. Paul Hunter), pages 214-224

George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Manfred*

Percy Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*

November 17: A Victorian Faust

Required Reading:

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (edited by Katherine Linehan), pages 7 – 62

Recommended Reading:

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Letters on Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (edited by Katherine Linehan), pages 80- 86

Robert Louis Stevenson, “The Dream Origin of the Tale,” pg. 87.

Robert Louis Stevenson: “A Chronology,” pg. 215.

Vladimir Nabokov, “A Phenomenon of Style,” pg. 184.

November 24: Symbolist Faust

Required Reading:

Oscar Wilde, "The Picture of Dorian Gray" in *The Picture of Dorian Gray and Other Writings* (edited by Richard Ellmann), pages 1 – 195

Recommended Reading:

Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* and *The Importance of Being Ernest*

December 1: Stalin's Faust

Required Reading:

Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita* (translated by Diana Burgin and Katherine Tiernan O'Connor), pages 3 – 335

Recommended Reading:

"Commentary" & "Afterword" in *The Master and Margarita* (translated by Diana Burgin and Katherine Tiernan O'Connor)

Master & Margarita website:

http://cr.middlebury.edu/public/russian/Bulgakov/public_html

December 8: Faust and the Collapse of Nazi Germany

Required Reading:

Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus : The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn As Told by a Friend* (John E. Woods, translator), pages 5 – 534

Recommended Reading:

Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*
Thomas Mann, *Mario & the Magician*

Thomas Mann, *Autobiography* (Nobel Prize)

<http://www.nobel.se/literature/laureates/1929/mann-autobio.html>

December 15: Concluding the Faustian Bargain

Required Reading:

Thomas Mann, Doctor Faustus, the Life of the German composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend

Required: Final paper - an essay of ten to fifteen pages examining a single work of literary art and its relationship to the development of the Faust legend.