

Teaching Classical Reception: An Expansive Approach

This paper makes a case for the value of an expansive approach to the teaching of reception studies in undergraduate Classics curricula. Popular culture is replete with receptions of Greek and Roman antiquity, and students encounter instances of engagement with the Classical past in a wide range of media, including children's literature, popular novels, comics, art, television and cinema, video games, viral memes, and advertising. In undergraduate Classics programs, courses on cinematic receptions of Greek and Roman antiquity are now standard, but it is less common for other forms engagement with the ancient world to receive substantial treatment in the classroom—despite the growing body of scholarship concerned with Classical reception in popular culture (e.g., Lowe and Shahabudin 2009, Kovacs and Marshall 2011 and 2015, Jenkins 2015, Maurice 2015). This paper argues that there are significant benefits to exposing students to the diversity and complexity of the Classical tradition, especially at the introductory level. By exploring receptions of Greek and Roman antiquity in various media and contexts, students come to appreciate the enduring relevance of Classics as a discipline and are encouraged to engage in deeper study of the ancient world. By analyzing uses of the Classical past across different media, students also learn to think critically about the ideological work that cultural products perform—a skill that they can apply, in turn, to study of the literary and material cultures of the Greek and Roman worlds.

The paper includes a prospective syllabus for a course on Greece and Rome in popular culture. It surveys a selection of textual and visual materials that are well-suited for a course of this nature—from Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* novels to René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo's *Asterix* comics, from Talbot Mundy's pulp novel *Tros of Samothrace* to the syndicated television series *Xena: Warrior Princess*.

Bibliography

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