

Will Hamlin  
Professor of English  
Honors 280  
Spring Semester 2024

***Twice-Told Tales: Classical & Biblical Stories in Later Retellings***

This class will explore several important narratives from the Hebrew Bible and the Greco-Roman classical tradition, investigating how they were altered or transformed during the European Renaissance and later. In a unit called “Journeys and Homecomings,” for instance, we’ll start with Homer’s *Odyssey* and then follow it with Margaret Atwood’s novel *The Penelopiad*, which offers a very different perspective on the Trojan War and the wanderings of Odysseus: the perspective, that is, of Penelope, his long-suffering wife. Similarly, in “Coping with the Fall” we will read the Book of Genesis and then move to such literary retellings as John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Andrew Marvell’s “The Garden.” Finally, our unit entitled “God + Suffering = The Problem of Evil” will start with the Book of Job and then turn to two English tragedies, Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* and Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. Students in this class will be expected to participate vigorously in many discussions (both in class and online through Canvas), to take a number of reading quizzes, to write a research-based argumentative essay of roughly 10-12 pages, and to complete a take-home comprehensive exam.