

CLASSICS 160B1 – 002

In the Beginning: Roots of Western Culture

MWF 9-9:50

Prof. Acton



A Quest – a hero undertakes a dangerous and exciting journey through a marvelous world in search of spiritual or material reward. The motif of the quest is a common one in the history of western literature, presenting us with a range of heroes, journeys, and rewards. This section will trace the development of the quest motif, starting with its early iterations in the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the Ancient Greek epic of the *Odyssey*, and the Roman epic of the *Aeneid*. We will use these examples as archetypes to help us understand the quest motif in modern literature, especially its appearance in the modern genres of fantasy (such as in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy), science fiction (such as *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and *Battlestar Galactica*), and interactive fiction (such as *World of Warcraft* and other quest-based games).

This course satisfies Tier One requirements.