Helen of Troy, Dido, Olympus, Hades, Adam and Eve, Noah’s ark, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Trojan horse, Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, for starters. Many of the central stories and recurrent motifs in Western culture appear in three ancient texts—Homer’s Iliad, Virgil’s Aeneid, and the book of Genesis—that will be our first readings in the class. We begin with these texts because they are themselves great and moving works and because they are starting points for so many later writers, whose works respond to these early epics, and reshape them.

Epics examine the most profound conflicts and contradictions within a culture. Later writers—ranging from the 17th to late 20th century—will include John Milton, Henry Fielding, George Gordon, Lord Byron, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Derek Walcott, and Marilynne Robinson, all of whom pay tribute to the form they critique in their reinventions.

This course fulfills the pre-1860 requirement.
This course offers a close reading of the poetry of six American modernist poets: Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, William Carols Williams, Hart Crane, and Marianne Moore. Among the topics to be considered are: the nature of imagination, the definition of reality, poetry and religion, and poetry and music. The course also discusses critical prose of these poets as well as theoretical writings of their contemporary critics such as I. A. Richards and William Empson.

*This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.*

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**Prof. Ichiro Takayoshi**

**Fall 2020**

**MW 10:30-11:45 AM**