

The Odyssey: Adaptations, Afterlives, and Female Agency

Student Conference, 23 October 2026

Interdisciplinary Call for Student Papers

Homer's *Odyssey* is one of the most important, influential, and surprisingly modern texts of Greek literature. The protagonist Odysseus has become an established iconic figure that is referenced well beyond the realm of classical literature, and his quest to return home to Ithaka and his beloved wife Penelope has become a **symbol of perseverance, undying love, and (masculine) heroism**. Over the course of his journey, he encounters a range of female characters that all have an impact on him and on the plot: the goddess Athena, the nymph Calypso, the king's daughter Nausikaa, and the sorceress Circe, for example – but also less central figures such as the seductive sirens or the monstrous Skylla and Charybdis. While Odysseus has occupied center stage in modern interpretations of the epic for the longest time, it is in the early 2000s with works such as Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* (2005) that an **interest in a feminist literary and cultural reinterpretation of Homer's classic** was generated. More recent publications such as Madeline Miller's *Circe* (2018), Sabine Scholl's *O.* (2020), Claire North's *Ithaka* (2022), and Ulrike Draesner's *penelopes sch()iff* (2025), too, **foreground the perspective of the women in the Odyssey, questioning Odysseus's dominance** over the text and presenting reimagined stories centering queer, feminist, and intersectional perspectives on the myth. Beyond the pages of a book, the *Odyssey* and its core themes have been subject of visual, artistic, and political texts that demonstrate the narrative's reverberance right up to Christopher Nolan's *Odyssey* (2026).

Developed from an **interdisciplinary seminar** with students from Greek, German, and English studies in the summer term 2026, this student conference aims to **strengthen female voices in an androcentric narrative, and marginalized perspectives against the backdrop of an elite-oriented society**. At the same time, it highlights the **ongoing centrality of ancient narratives in a modern world**, often conveyed through revitalizing adaptations that introduce alternative focal points and address the loose ends and blind spots in the 'classical' original.

To this end, topics may include, but are not limited to:

- **Representations of gender** in *The Odyssey* and/or modern adaptations
- **Female agency** in *The Odyssey* and/or modern adaptations
- **Classical reception and gender**, esp. in the tradition of *The Odyssey*
- **Interdisciplinary perspectives** on *The Odyssey* and its afterlives
- **Adaptation theory and gender studies**: theoretical and/or practical
- **Feminist literary criticism and queer theory**; motherhood and sisterhood in myth and/or afterlives

We invite students from all disciplines who are interested in both *The Odyssey* and its cultural, historical, social, and literary afterlives to submit an abstract for a presentation or a poster. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this conference, talks can be held in both **German** and **English**. Please find further information on how to submit below.

Abstracts	Abstracts for papers proposed (15 minutes) should be around 150–250 words. For posters (with 5-10 minutes short presentation) , please give a short overview over the structure and layout (max. 200 words). Both should be accompanied by a preliminary primary works list and some contact details (Name, Fachsemester, e-mail address, subject(s) of studies).
Deadline	25 July 2026
Contact	Send abstracts and queries to alicia.fuchs@uni-bamberg.de , marie.kluge@uni-bamberg.de , jakob.lenz@uni-bamberg.de .
Committee	Alicia Fuchs (Neuere deutsche Literaturwissenschaft), Marie Kluge (Anglistische und Amerikanistische Kulturwissenschaft), Jakob Lenz (Gräzistik)