One of the most significant facets of the “rebirth” of antiquity during the early modern era was the renewed interest in the meaning of classical myths among philosophers, theologians, men of letters, and visual artists. Greek and Roman divinities and the lore associated with them could be studied through a variety of ancient literary sources. The most influential classical authority throughout this period, however, was the Roman poet Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso) whose fifteen-book poem *The Metamorphoses* served as a veritable “Pagan Bible” for painters and poets alike. This course explores the ways in which the stories contained in this “perpetual poem” were represented in the European visual arts between 1400 and 1700.

By the end of this course students will gain a deeper understanding about the main Ovidian themes in Renaissance and Baroque art and greater proficiency in “reading” paintings and sculptures in general. At the same time, by analysing different styles and symbolic meanings in visual renderings of pagan myths, they will become more conversant with the changing perspectives on the world of antiquity during the early modern period.