

**Apuleius' *Golden Ass*: Study Questions**  
**Hum 110, Reed College**  
**Prof. Laura Leibman**

1. Theme: Apuleius' *Golden Ass* is also called the *Metamorphoses*. How does the transformation in this book compare to that in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*? What other works have we read about transformation?
2. Theme/Moral: We have read a number of works that posit the value of affliction or at least tell their readers how to deal with affliction. (What works are these, what were their positions?) What stance does Apuleius take on affliction? What does one gain from affliction? What would the other authors that we have read say about Apuleius' presentation of affliction? Does the main character serve as an exemplar in any way? If so, of what?
3. Style: How would you characterize Apuleius' style? Does it remind you of any of the other authors we have read? What type of language does he use? Is it flat, evocative, ornate, or figurative? Pick one Roman or biblical author that we have read and critique Apuleius' work according to his aesthetic criteria.
4. Genre: The *Golden Ass* is usually called a "novel." What sorts of associations do you have with novels (i.e. how could you tell a novel from another type of writing)? Does the *Golden Ass* live up to your expectation from this genre? Does it lack anything you would expect in a novel? Does it remind you of any other pieces of literature that we have read this year that aren't "novels"?
5. Theology: What steps does Lucius have to take to arrive at the truth? How do these steps compare to the Hebrew and Christian narratives of salvation that we have read so far? (See the handout for St. Paul--it would be useful to diagram both narratives if you haven't done so yet.) What role does grace and the divine play in Lucius' salvation?