

Course Abstract

If you need accommodations due to a disability, contact Disability Services in Edison Hall Room 100, 732.906.2546.

To foster a productive learning environment, the College requires that all students adhere to the Code of Student Conduct which is published in the college catalog and website.

Course ID and Name: ENG 253: Mythology in Literature

Department: English

Chairperson or Course Coordinator: Michael Nester

Office Location: RH 236

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Prerequisites: ENG 122 or 125 or permission of the department chairperson

Co-requisites:

Course Description: Myths of ancient cultures from around the globe are read and discussed through some of their great epics, plays, poems, folktales and histories. Students study myths from diverse cultures and traditions, such as Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, African, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Nordic, Meso-American and Native-American. Students analyze, research, and write about the myths they read. Moreover, they examine the manipulation of myth by one culture to promote its own values over those of another. Myths are also studied from a variety of critical perspectives, including the literary, cultural, psychological, historical, religious, sociological, and anthropological. As part of their analysis, students explore the way myth can formulate ethical dilemmas, such as religious faith vs. reason; blood vengeance vs. trial by jury; pacifism vs. war & imperialism; women's rights vs. male hegemony; individual vs. community rights; family obligation vs. civic duty; etc. Attention is also given to the relevance of myths to contemporary cultural beliefs and practices.

General Education Status: Humanities, Diversity

Credits: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Lab Hours: 0

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the program or course, students will be able to:

1. Interpret and analyze literature and justify their responses orally and in writing.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the formal features of literary texts and a knowledge of contexts.
3. Demonstrate the ability to paraphrase, summarize, and respond to texts by composing, through a series of drafts, coherent, persuasive, developed, and grammatical essays; compose research papers demonstrating the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize source materials and to cite this information correctly.
4. Read and be able to discuss representative works of the world's classic literary myths

in translation.

5. Identify and discuss changes in writing style and content that accompanied cultural, religious, scientific and political changes, as appropriate to a survey course.
6. Discuss the importance of global perspectives and diverse peoples.

Course Content Areas:

1. Research and writing: Two research essays based on primary and secondary sources and using most recent MLA documentation style. A midterm and final examination requiring the writing of essays that make close reference to the literature studied.

2. Reading: Major literary myths (both excerpted and in their entirety) from ancient cultures around the world, such as: 1.) Greco-Roman (Hesiod's *Theogony & Works & Days*; Homer's *Iliad & Odyssey*; Homeric Hymns; Apollodorus' Library of Greek Mythology; Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; Virgil's *Aeneid*; Apuleius' "Cupid & Psyche") 2.) Judeo-Christian (Old Testament Books of Genesis; Job; etc.) 3.) Mesopotamian (*Gilgamesh*) 4.) Egyptian (Plutarch's account of Isis & Osiris) 5.) African (The Epic of Mwindo) 6.) Hindu (Valmiki's *Ramayana*; *The Bhagavad-Gita*) 7.) Buddhist, Taoist (Wu Ch'eng-en's *Monkey*) 8.) Norse (Sturluson's *Prose Edda*) 9.) Meso-American (Quetzalcoatl) 10.) Native-American (tales of Raven) and 11.) Celtic (Arthurian legends from Mallory, Chretien de Troyes, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Marie de France, et al.)

3. Lecture/Discussion:

- a. Major literary, intellectual, cultural and historical developments, movements, and trends.
- b. Genres, themes, character types, motifs, archetypes and/or other basic concerns important to a basic but adequate understanding and appreciation of the literature under consideration.
- c. Literary devices such as plot, theme, point of view, character development, tone, setting, prosody and/or figurative language to the degree that each affects the literature in which it is found.
- d. Myth theories, such as those by Freud, Jung, Rank, Levi-Strauss, Frazer, Turner, Nietzsche, Campbell, Propp, et al.