

COURSE OUTLINE

**Humanities 115
World Mythology**

I. Catalog Statement

Humanities 115 is an interdisciplinary course in which students analyze ancient myths in the context of the cultures from which they arose. It provides a basis for increased understanding of art forms from all over the world, including literature, painting, sculpture, and architecture. Students explore the role myths play in answering the ultimate questions of human life and in expressing the values of the societies which developed and/or perpetuated the stories. Students see the impact of psychology, oral transmission, and environment (social, geo-political, and economic) on belief systems. Most importantly, students relate myths to questions and issues of the present day, relevant to their own lives and the lives of those with whom they share the country and the planet.

Total Lecture Units: 3.0

Total Course Units: 3.0

Total Lecture Hours: 48.0

Total Faculty Contact Hours: 48

Prerequisite: Eligibility for English 101.

II. Course Entry Expectations

Skills Level Ranges: Reading 6; Writing 6; Listening/Speaking 6; Math 1

Prior to enrolling in this course, the student should be able to:

1. organize and write thesis-based essays;
2. use detailed examples, facts, logical explanations, and other appropriate support for thesis statements;
3. critically analyze selected prose works dealing with important contemporary issues;
4. summarize, analyze, and synthesize information, express and apply standards for judgment, compare and contrast, and evaluate evidence in order to form and state reasoned opinions;
5. gather and organize information through library research; demonstrate a command of grammar, diction, syntax, and mechanics sufficient for college level work as specified by the English 120 rubric.

III. Course Exit Standards

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

1. define “myth” and assess the various roles myths have played in human culture;
2. explain the relationships between each myth and the context in which it arose or was perpetuated, including such elements of context as geography, climate, politics, subsistence strategies, migration, and trading patterns (diffusion);
3. compare and contrast the various answers given by myths to the ultimate questions of human life, separating that which is specific to one culture from the universally valid, or true;
4. identify the cultural and human values underlying each myth or mythology;
5. explain the role of myth in enculturation/socialization;
6. explain the relationships between ancient myths and modern-day religions, beliefs, and values;
7. form and support hypotheses regarding the relationships between myth and gender roles;
8. trace the interrelationships among world civilizations, past and present, using interpretation of both text and artifacts;
9. explain the effect various elements of oral transmission have had in shaping world belief systems;
10. add “Summarize the main precepts of such theorists in the field as Eliade, Levi-Strauss, Campbell, Raglan, Freud, Jung, and Keene
11. identify key mythological figures and concepts which have had an impact on various art forms, including literature, drama, music, dance, painting, sculpture, architecture, and film;
12. read critically and write analytical, thesis-based essays.

IV. Course Content**Total Faculty Contact Hours = 48 hours**

Instruction in each unit of study includes discussion of reading assignments completed outside of class and evaluation of writing assignments. Both experiences encourage students to analyze, criticize, and synthesize major themes and issues linking history and literature to internal events in Ireland and their international ramifications.

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| A. Introduction | 6 hours |
| 1. define myth; | |
| 2. describe the relationship between myth and religion; | |
| 3. describe the role of myth or religion in a culture or society; | |
| 4. list benefits to be gained by studying world mythology; | |
| 5. theorize about the forces that led ancient peoples to develop myths | |
| 6. view early burial sites, cave art and figurines as early signs of mythological thinking | |
| B. The source and function of myth | 10 hours |
| 1. relate myths of Sumer/Babylonia, Egypt, Canaan, and Judea to their environments and to one another | |

2. explore parallel myths and trace their sources
 3. discuss the views of such theorists as Eliade, Levi-Strauss, Campbell, Freud, Jung, and Keene
 4. compare and contrast beliefs about creation, the nature of divine beings, the purpose of life, the roles of men and women, and the nature of life after death
 5. describe the relationships between these ancient stories and beliefs and attitudes prevalent in modern-day American society.
- C. The cause and effect of human suffering; the role of symbol in myths and religion 8 hours
1. compare and contrast the myths of India, China, and Japan, including stories from Hindu, Buddhist, Ainu, Shinto, Taoist, and Confucian texts
 2. discuss theories of migration, diffusion, separate creation (including language families and the Prouto-IndoEuropean myth)
 3. discuss the ways in which the myths of India, China, and Japan as opposed to the societies of Sumer/Babylonia, Egypt, Canaan, and Judea helped individuals understand and respond to human suffering
 4. discuss the role of symbols in expressing complex abstract ideas through concrete images
 5. describe the impact of beliefs on a variety of behaviors and customs still practiced by modern-day Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists, and adherents of Shinto
- D. The individual and society; the ancient vs. the modern hero 8 hours
1. relate the myths of Greece and Rome to one another, to the myths of other cultures, and to the various schools of philosophy begun in ancient Greece and Rome
 2. trace the impact of Greek and Roman ideas on modern-day American society
 3. discuss the views of ancient societies on the responsibility of the individual to himself and his society
 4. compare and contrast the views of ancient societies with regard to free will and predestination
 5. describe the role of myth in enculturation/socialization
 6. compare and contrast the heroes of Greek and Roman myths and legends with heroes of other cultures, including modern-day America
- E. Life and death; loyalty to others vs. loyalty to self 8 hours
1. compare and contrast the myths of various Northern European areas: Scandinavia, Ireland, England, Wales, France, and Germany
 2. discuss the ways in which the various cultures viewed the afterlife and the effects of these views on behaviors in this life
 3. describe the impact of codes of loyalty on individuals
 4. discuss the impact of medieval values on modern-day American society and gender roles
- F. The role of ritual and sacrifice; humankind and the natural forces 8 hours
1. compare and contrast a variety of myths from North, Central,

- and South America, and Western Africa
2. discuss the relationship/interrelationship between humankind and the forces of nature as seen by a variety of American Indian and West African cultures
 3. discuss the role of ritual or sacrifice in perpetuating life
 4. distinguish between magic, witchcraft, and religion
 5. explain rituals practiced by modern-day Americans during ceremonies within Santeria or the religion of such American-Indian groups as the Hopi, Navajo, Zuni, Haida, or Tlingit.

V. Methods of Instruction

The following methods of instruction may be used in the course:

1. lectures and directed class discussions;
2. team teaching (one instructor from English and one instructor from an additional discipline);
3. student group activities (including discussions, debates, writing assignments and presentations);
4. conferences may be included (individual and group);
5. multimedia materials may be used to support lectures, discussion and readings;
6. guest speakers from related disciplines may be invited to present special topical material;
7. visits and tours to sites related to course material.

VI. Out of Class Assignments

The following out of class assignments may be used in the course:

1. essays of analysis, evaluation and argumentation;
2. additional writing assignments may include journal entries, reading responses and field notes;
3. preparation for presentations and group projects;
4. research activities including gathering and evaluating material from a wide variety of sources.

VII. Methods of Evaluation

The following methods of evaluation may be used in the course:

1. essay examinations or other writing assignments (both in and outside of class);
2. peer review activities;
3. oral Presentations or debates.

VIII. Textbooks

Sproul, *Primal Myths: Creation Myths Around the World*. New York: HarperOne, 1991.
14th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: # 978-0060675011.

Rosenberg, *World Mythology (text only) 3rd (Third) edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001.

14th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: # B004H6UWP6.

Bierlein, *Parallel Myths*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1994.

14th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: # 978-0345381460.

IX. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion the student will be able to:

1. understand how elements of physical environment, culture, economy, politics, psychology, propaganda, language, and oral transmission of narratives apply to the interpretation of myths;
2. write thesis-centered essays which reflect analysis and interpretation of relevant aspects of physical environment, culture, economy, politics, psychology, propaganda, language, and oral transmission of narratives in Creation, Fertility, Hero, Love, and Apocalypse myths;
3. write thesis-centered essays based on research into aspects of physical environment, culture, economy, politics, psychology, propaganda, language, and oral transmission of narratives in Creation, Fertility, Hero, Love, and Apocalypse myths;
4. compose original myths which demonstrate an understanding of aspects of physical environment, culture, economy, politics, psychology, propaganda, oral transmission of narratives in Creation, Fertility, Hero, Love, and Apocalypse myths.