

This is a new course, which may need some adjusting as to length of time spent in the various parts of the course.

A lecture and discussion course, MYTH AND RITUAL should provide a broad introduction to the study of religion, and to the study of myths and rituals within religions. It includes methodological components--how myth is to be defined, what types of analysis are most fruitful; study of particular myths from several cultural traditions; and themes within myth and ritual--initiation, the heroine and hero, human relationships, the human and the divine, etc.

Students should learn how to approach mythological and ritualistic materials from a broad perspective and with insights of several disciplines, relating symbolic elements to aspects of the social and cultural settings. The research paper provides an opportunity to study in depth some part of the course that particularly interests you...or to apply some of what we do together to a particular topic, theme, myth, or ritual.

(This course will be followed in the second semester by MYTHIC IMAGES OF SELFHOOD, designed as a seminar course, with longer and deeper focus upon a few myths that especially raise questions about the organizing and developing of the personal self. Among the myths and themes to be studied there: Hermes and Herakles, Narkissos, Dreams and Archetypal Psychology, the Trickster/Clown, Shamanism and the Vision Quest, Fairy tales, and Metamorphosis.)

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Readings will come from three sources:

a) Four paperback books (ordered at Another Roadside Attraction only):

Mircea Eliade, RITES AND SYMBOLS OF INITIATION: THE MYSTERIES OF BIRTH AND REBIRTH

Herbert Mason, GILGAMESH: A VERSE NARRATIVE

Erich Neumann, AMOR AND PSYCHE: THE PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEMININE

Gary Snyder, HE WHO HUNTED BIRDS IN HIS FATHER'S VILLAGE: THE DIMENSIONS OF A HAIDA MYTH

b) A photocopied collection of essays/etc.: ~~READER A~~ M+R READER A, available only at Kinko's.

c) Reserve desk, Main Library: a number of books (see the Reserve Room card catalogue); and READER B, another series of photocopied essays.

Requirements: In addition to readings in preparation for class sessions (read the assigned materials before the sessions in which they are relevant), there will be one hourly examination at the beginning of Week 6 (mostly to defuse anxiety about "what are we supposed to be learning?" and to help you review what

distribution #1: Syllabus

you have learned); a brief paper due the beginning of Week 11; and a research paper of about 20 pages, due at the beginning of Exam Week. There will be no final examination.

Note: the total number of required pages of readings is considerably smaller than I normally require in my classes, but many of the materials require concentration and repeated study. The myths assigned, for instance, should be studied until you can retell them in your own words.

I would strongly recommend keeping part of your notebook for this course as a sort of personal academic journal: jot down your reactions to the materials read, to lectures and presentations; include notes on discussions of the topics of the course, contemporary parallels you note in your own life, etc. The journal can be a ~~xxx~~ sort of "lab" for the course: a place to reflect on personal mythological themes (in dreams, for instance), and to wrestle with some of the ideas to be presented. It may also be an aid to reviewing readings and other materials.

CAPS

### Provisional Syllabus

(subject to additions and changes, but this will give you an overview):

Weeks 1-2

THE STUDY OF RELIGION/S AND MYTHOLOGY

read: Comstock, pp. 3-27 in M&R Reader A:1

recommended: Long, Introduction to ALPHA, in M& R Reader B  
Doty, "Mythophiles' Dyscrasia", ~~xxx~~ A:8  
Ellul, in B  
Kluckhohn, ~~in~~ B

Week 3

LEAVE-TAKING AND HOME COMING

read: The Hymn of the Pearl, A:2  
Campbell, "Mythological Themes," A:3

Week 4

RITUAL, AND MYTH-AND-RITUAL

read: Freud, "Obsessive Acts", A:4  
Brautigan, "Kool-Aid Wino" A:5  
Comstock, pp. 28-55, A:1

rec: Lapham, in B; Leach, in B

Week 5

INITIATORY RITUALS

read: Eliade, RITES AND SYMBOLS OF INITIATION

first monday of Week 6: hourly examination (questions on interpretation and comprehension of materials read and presented in lectures, weeks 1-5).

Weeks 6-7

THE BUDDY SYSTEM AND CIVILIZATION: GILGAMESH

read: Mason, GILGAMESH: A VERSE NARRATIVE  
Maranda, "Seven Interpretations", A:6

Weeks 8-9

EMERGENCE/ORIGIN/CREATION MYTHS

read: Navajo Emergence Myth, A:7

rec: Dundes, in B; Moon, in B.

Week 10

DEFINING MYTH

read: Snyder, HE WHO HUNTED BIRDS...  
Doty, "Mythophiles' Dyscrasia," A:8

rec: Comstock, pp. 56-72 (book on reserve)

due first Monday of week 11: brief paper (4-5 pp., typed):  
discuss a heroine/hero or origin myth of your choosing in  
light of two or three methodological concepts for understanding  
mythology, chosen from Comstock, Campbell, Snyder, Doty,  
Maranda, or elsewhere.

Weeks 11-12

THE HEROINE AND THE HERO

read: myths of Herakles, Demeter-Kore, A:9 & 10  
Hoaglund, "Where Have All the Heroes Gone?" A:11

rec: Campbell, THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES (on reserve)

beginning of week 12: topic for research paper must be  
cleared with instructor

Week 13

EROS AND PSYCHE

read: Neumann, AMOR AND PSYCHE (note A:12, additional  
bibliography). STUDY the myth, pp. 3-53; SCAN  
the commentary, pp. 57-161.

Weeks 14-15

MYTHIC IMAGES IN/OF AMERICA

rec: Cherry, Warner, Sykes, Bailey: all in Reader B

research paper: due by noon, Monday of Exam Week. About 20 pp. long, to demonstrate your ability to use research tools in the field as well as your critical ability to ~~x~~ apply a method (or methods) to a particular myth, ritual, theme, or other subject. [Note that the topic for the paper is to be cleared with the instructor no later than the beginning of the 12th week.] While a number of topics will be suggested, students almost invariably select a topic that interests them directly, and the choice remains your own.

Final grades will be determined by this weighting: hourly exam 25%, brief paper 25%, reeseach paper 45%, subjective evaluation~~x~~ of instructor (class participation, etc.) 5% or more.