Kwantlen
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

Department: **Creative Writing**

Course Acronym and Number: **CRWR 3301**

Former Acronym and Number:

Credits: **3**

Descriptive Title: **Mythological Narratives**

Calendar Description

Students will learn about the mythological traditions that are the foundation of almost all world literatures. Students will develop the writing skills necessary to adapt mythopoetic strategies to their own compositions, will contextualize their own work within the contemporary, multicultural streams of mythopoetic writing, and will broaden their understanding of the roots of creative writing.

Required for the following credentials:

Recommended for the following credentials:

Bachelor of Arts in General Studies, Associate of Arts Degree in Creative Writing, English, General Studies, Music, or Philosophy.

Prerequisites: 30 credits of university-level transferable courses

Corequisites:

Transferable (Yrs 1 and 2)**:** Refer to the BCCAT Transfer Guide   _____

Transferable (Yrs 3 and 4 or other)**:** Individual articulation agreements   _____

Not Transferable: __X___

Implementation date: **September 2007**

Course to be reviewed by (mth/yr):   **September 2011**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

A student who successfully completes the course will have reliably demonstrated the ability to:

- Read selected cultural, literary, historical and mythological texts and to discuss their origin, development, and contemporary relevance
- Interpret multicultural literary traditions within the context of mythopoetic origins
- Demonstrate knowledge of mythology as both an ancient and a current mode of transmission of important cultural, political, and psychological knowledge
- Evaluate diverse perspectives on the nature and role of myth
- Write a research-based essay on a topic related to mythology
- Compose a creative writing essay using mythopoetic narrative strategies

CONTENT

Content will include, but is not restricted to, the following:

The Nature of Myth

- Definitions of mythology (a body of myths) and mythopoetic (the making of myths)
- Clarifications of common misunderstandings about myth (e.g. that myths are false, or that myths obfuscate factual information)
- An introduction to myths as carriers of cultural knowledge in the arts and sciences
- Consideration of myths as versions of truth and as effective containers for sacred, social, political, or scientific information (e.g. in ancient astronomy and contemporary religion)
- Examination of myth-making as a fundamental and necessary function of human nature
- Consideration of the persistence of the myth-making function and its role in the contemporary world (e.g. the mythologies evolving around 9/11)
- Examination of the relationship between myth and truth

Western Origins: Myths of Ancient Sumer and Egypt

- Introduction to the historical background of the origins of Western mythology and literature
- Explication of Sumerian and Egyptian world views, with particular emphasis on spirituality, mythological concepts, and approaches to the imagination
- Reading of excerpts from core Egyptian and Sumerian texts, with particular emphasis on myths that form the foundation of the literatures of the West
- Examination of the ways in which science and mythology were entwined in the practices and perspectives of the ancient Egyptians and Sumerians
- Introduction to Egyptian hieroglyphic, the most elaborate writing system ever developed, and the role of hieroglyphs in the transmission of myth
- Exploration of the transmission of Sumerian and Egyptian mythological ideas into the contemporary world (e.g. the eye on the American dollar bill)

Greek Influences

- Exploration of the transmission of myth from the Sumerians and Egyptians to the Greeks
- Explication of Greek adaptations of and contributions to myth, with emphasis on the traditions of philosophy and theatre
- Reading of selected Greek literary and mythological texts
- Examination of the ways in which science and mythology were entwined in the practices and perspectives of the Greeks

- Examination of the ways in which Greek texts subsequently influenced the development of European literatures

Asian Origins: Myths of China, Japan, and India

- Introduction to the historical background of the origins of Eastern mythology and literature
- Explication of ancient Chinese, Japanese, and Indian world views, with particular emphasis on spirituality, mythological concepts, and approaches to the imagination
- Exploration of the possible connections between ancient Indian myths and those of ancient Egypt and Sumer, with particular focus on Kundalini yoga
- Reading of excerpts from ancient Chinese, Japanese, and Indian mythological texts, with particular emphasis on myths that form the foundation of the broader literatures of Asia
- Exploration of the transmission of ancient Chinese and Indian mythological ideas into the contemporary world (e.g. Confuscianism and Taoism in modern Asian business practices, and the Tibetan world view)

Aboriginal Origins: Shamanic Myths and Cultures

- Introduction to the mythologies of ancient aboriginal cultures from Canada, Australia, Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America
- Introduction to the mythologies of contemporary aboriginal cultures from Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America
- Explication of the shamanic world view, with particular emphasis on spirituality, mythological concepts, and approaches to health and healing
- Reading of excerpts from transcriptions of ancient and contemporary shamanic myths, poems, and songs
- Exploration of the transmission of ancient shamanic myths, by means of epic poems and songs, into the contemporary world (e.g. the art of the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest)

European and Middle Eastern Influences and Contributions

- Introduction to the transmission and adaptation of ancient myth in the European cultures of the Common Era
- Exploration of the the Hermetic traditions, the rediscovery of ancient texts, and the influence of these developments on European art and literature after 1500 CE
- Examination of the integration of science and mythology in the development of the intellectual and political traditions of Europe and North America (e.g. the Washington Monument and the ground plan of the Mont-Royal neighbourhood in Montreal)
- Introduction to the Grail mythologies and their foundation role in Western literature from 1500 CE to the present
- Reading of excerpts from the mythological texts of Europe and the Middle East
- Examination of European myths and their relevance to contemporary politics, sports, entertainment and pop culture in Canada

The Psychology of Mythology: Twentieth Century Contributions

- Introduction to the tradition of twentieth century myth scholars (Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Mircia Eliade) and their attempts to integrate all myths into a single continuum of human inquiry and expression
- Reading of selected texts by Jung, Campbell, and Eliade
- Examination of the relationship between myth and personal psychology (e.g. dreams)
- Exploration of the psychological models used by scholars to describe the underlying impulses and functions of myths (e.g. the collective unconscious)

- Consideration of the myths of individuality, the psychological functions that derive from these, and the interplay between personal and social mythologies
- Consideration of the necessity of myths and of the development of new myths

Mythopoetic Approaches in Contemporary Arts and Literature

- Examination of the many ways in which myths pervade contemporary literary and creative traditions
- Reading of selected contemporary and mythological texts from the genres of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry
- Consideration of the ways in which myths are conjoined, truncated, and adapted for contemporary readers
- Introduction to the artist as a mythological figure (the trickster), and to the mythological role of the artist in contemporary society
- Exploration and application of mythopoetic writing strategies

Mythology in the Contemporary World

- Consideration of current personal myths, familial myths, cultural myths, and world myths (e.g. myths of apocalypse, myths of the United States as the gunslinger, the myth of Canada as the North)
- Examination of popular myths, controversial myths, and myths which have persisted for hundreds or thousands of years essentially unchanged
- Reading of excerpts from contemporary mythological texts in the political and social spheres
- Exploration of the contemporary role of myth in world politics, religion, and spirituality
- Consideration of the future directions of myth in literature, culture, and human nature

ESSENTIAL SKILLS
A student who successfully completes the course will have reliably demonstrated the following essential skills:

Creative thinking and problem solving skills
- Facilitating creative inquiry, analysis, and evaluation
- Developing problem-solving and synthesis skills in relation to history, culture, and the contemporary world
- Practicing the skills required to integrate diverse intellectual and cultural traditions and to develop a critically informed world view
- Developing cross-cultural and interdisciplinary thinking skills
- Developing greater flexibility in contextualizing and synthesizing information

Oral skills
- Participating in discussions on diverse topics
- Asking questions to synthesize and evaluate information
- Practicing active listening
- Developing greater skills with regard to verbal and non-verbal cultural communication

Interpersonal skills
- Participating in a diverse multicultural environment
- Responding with clarity, sensitivity, and cultural awareness

- Collaborating with other students in enhancing the collective learning experience
- Demonstrating the ability to separate ideas from persons
- Demonstrating the ability to offer and receive appropriate feedback from other students and the instructor

Teamwork and leadership skills
- Leading discussions
- Establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with other students
- Demonstrating self-management within a collaborative environment

Personal management and entrepreneurial skills
- Taking responsibility for actions and decisions
- Maintaining attitudes of respect and sensitivity toward others
- Taking initiative for project topic selections and completions

Writing skills
- Demonstrating proficiency in English composition
- Demonstrating effective revision and editing skills

Reading and information skills
- Demonstrating the ability to read on a wide range of topics
- Demonstrating the ability to search for, synthesize, and articulate ideas from readings
- Using standard reference materials

Mathematical skills
- Demonstrating the ability to track and place historical dates on a timeline

Intercultural skills
- Demonstrating sensitivity to the multicultural dimensions of the course materials
- Developing a multicultural point of view with regard to the course content and to contemporary issues influenced by the course content
- Demonstrating the capacity to suspend cultural biases so as to fully understand and be informed by the course content

Technological skills
- Using a computer
- Using the World Wide Web to search for and locate information
- Demonstrating the ability to participate in online discussion when required

Citizenship and global perspective
- Demonstrating an understanding of diverse cultural, historical, literary, and religious perspectives
- Participating in a learning environment of global diversity
- Tracing the origin and development of key cultural and global movements
- Understanding the diverse and often divergent ways in which cultures understand themselves and their environment

LEARNING ACTIVITIES
   Activities may include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Attending lectures and taking notes
- Watching videos and films
- Listening to songs and poems
- Reading materials from a variety of genres and historical periods
- Participating in group discussions
- Researching and writing academic essays and creative writing compositions
- Collaborating with other students on group projects and presentations

- Presenting the results of assignments and research projects

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Grading system used   **X**   **LETTER GRADE**   ___   **MAS**   ____   **EXP**

Assessment plans comply with Kwantlen policy and resemble the following:

Assessment methods include projects, assignments and presentations. (sample)

Research essay	40%
Creative writing composition	30%
Group project and presentation	30%
TOTAL	100%

METHODS FOR PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT
The following PLA methods will be used:

- Challenge exam
- Standardized test
- Products/portfolio
- Demonstration
- Interview
- Worksite assessment
- Self-assessment
- External Evaluation

TEACHING MODES

	Hours per Week	Class Size	Duration (in weeks)
A. Classroom-Related Instruction (Lecture)	4	35	15
B. Simulated Learning Environment (Lab)			
C. Individual Learning Environment (Lab)			
D. Practicum Supervision/Field Experience			
E. Reality Learning Environment			

LEARNING RESOURCES

Required Textbooks, Lab or Shop Manuals, Equipment, etc., such as:

Hyde, Lewis. *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art.* San Francisco: North Point Press, 1999.

Course packet of selected readings

Recommended Textbooks, Lab or Shop Manuals, Equipment, etc., such as:

Laird, Ross. *A Stone's Throw: The Enduring Nature of Myth.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2002.

BIBLIOGRAPHY ATTACHED? (For suggested library acquisitions)

Yes   X   **No**   __

Do library resources in this area need more development?

Yes X **No** __

APPROVAL PROCESS SIGNATURES

This Course Outline complies with the relevant Kwantlen policies. It follows the guidelines set out in the Kwantlen Course Outline Manual. *Department or program learning objectives/outcomes and employability skills that have been identified in this Course Outline can be reasonably achieved through this Course.*

Course developer(s): _____ Date: _____

Department chair: _____ Date: _____

Divisional Dean:_____ Date: _____

Chair, Education Council: _____ Date: _____
                               Takashi Sato