

Las Positas College  
3000 Campus Hill Drive  
Livermore, CA 94551-7650  
(925) 424-1000  
(925) 443-0742 (Fax)

## Course Outline for HUMN 28

### THE CLASSIC MYTHS

Effective: Fall 2010

#### I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

HUMN 28 — THE CLASSIC MYTHS — 3.00 units

Introduction to mythic themes recurring in literature, the visual arts, and music; gods, humans, heroes; their origins, variation, historical development, and full expression in classical times and continued presence in the arts.

3.00 Units Lecture

#### Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

#### Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
<b>Lecture Hours:</b>	54.00
<b>Total Hours:</b>	54.00

#### II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

#### III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

#### IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

**Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:**

- A. display recognition of the fundamental motifs universally present in myths;
- B. analyze the function of myths in world cultures;
- C. compare and contrast parallel myths from world cultures;
- D. identify commonly used symbols in myths;
- E. distinguish mythic sources in literature, the visual arts, and music;
- F. relate mythic tales to ones' personal life history.

#### V. CONTENT:

- A. Definition
  - 1. Language and myth
  - 2. Time and history in myth
  - 3. Morality and myth
  - 4. The civic myth
  - 5. Sense of the sacred and myth
- B. Motifs
  - 1. Creation
  - 2. Flood
  - 3. Love
  - 4. Journey
  - 5. Apocalypse
- C. Characters
  - 1. The immortals: gods and goddesses
  - 2. The mortals: heroes and heroines
  - 3. Monsters: non-human and animal
  - 4. Tricksters
  - 5. Lesser spirits
- D. Places
  - 1. Mountains
  - 2. Gardens and forests
  - 3. Rivers and oceans
  - 4. Heavens and underworlds
  - 5. Labyrinths
- E. Mythic sources for visual arts and music
  - 1. Decorative arts
  - 2. Sculpture
  - 3. Painting
  - 4. Music
  - 5. Film
- F. Mythic themes in literature

1. Oral tales
2. Epic poetry
3. Lyric poetry
4. Drama
5. Novels

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Instructor-guided discussions of reading
- C. Small group discussions
- D. In-class reading aloud
- E. Video presentations and follow-up discussions

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Reading 1. Read Chapter 1, "The Nature of Myth" from Classical Myths. Be prepared to identify the types of myth and to discuss examples of each that you think of in addition to those Powell gives. 2. Read Gilgamesh and be prepared to describe how the journey Gilgamesh takes after Enkidu's death follows the hero's journey motif. B. Writing 1. In your journals, trace moments in your experience which mirror each of the hero's journey steps. 2. Read the first chapter of The Iliad and analyze the argument between Agamemnon and Achilles. C. Collaborative learning 1. In your small group, create a contemporary version of one of the mythic heroes in your textbook. 2. Invite a participant who is not in your class to engage in a series of short dialogues in which you discuss the meaning of "hero."

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

B. **Frequency**

1. Weekly journal
2. Weekly post-discussion short writing assignment
3. One small group presentation of a hero from a contemporary film, television program, or video game
4. Two 4-5 page essays per term
5. Midterm and final examinations

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Morford, Mark P. O., and Robert J. Lenardon *Classical Mythology*. 8th ed., Oxford University Press, 2007.
2. Powell, Barry B. *Classical Myth*. 5th ed., Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007.
3. Spivey, Nigel *Songs on Bronze: The Greek Myths Made Real*. 1st ed., Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: