

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for HUMN 28

WORLD MYTHOLOGY

Effective: Fall 2019

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

HUMN 28 — WORLD MYTHOLOGY — 3.00 units

Introduction to world mythology, including classical mythology, and the mythic themes recurring in literature, the visual arts, and music. Introduction to the major theories used to evaluate mythology. Exploration of myths about creation, destruction, gods, humans, heroes, tricksters, as well as their origins, variation, historical development, and full expression in ancient times and continued presence in the arts.

3.00 Units Lecture

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

- Humanities

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

- Display recognition of the fundamental motifs universally present in myths
- Analyze the function of myths in world cultures
- Compare and contrast parallel myths from world cultures
- Identify major figures and elements of classical mythology
- Identify commonly used symbols in myths
- Distinguish mythic sources in literature, the visual arts, and music
- Relate mythic tales to ones' personal life history

V. CONTENT:

- Overview of the study of mythology:
 - Language and myth
 - Time and history in myth
 - Morality and myth
 - Legend and folktale vs. myth (Propp)
 - Sense of the sacred and myth
 - Ritual and myth (Turner)
 - Dreams and myth (Jung)
 - Contemporary myth
- Exploration and analysis of major mythic themes and motifs:
 - Creation and Destruction
 - Read and discuss major creation myths from Hesiod, Ovid, Genesis, Enuma Elish, as well as a selection from Native American, African, Norse, Chinese, and Mesoamerican creation myths.
 - Read and discuss major myths of destruction, such as the flood stories from Ovid and Genesis, and/or the Norse story of Ragnarok.
 - Love (Romantic and Familial)
 - Read and discuss primary texts such as, *Oedipus Rex*, *Medea*, the myth of Cupid and Psyche, *Ramayana*, stories from the Arthurian Holy Grail tradition.
 - Journey (Hero's journey and other adventures)
 - Jung, Rank, Campbell
 - Read and discuss primary texts such as *Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Ramayana*, *Star Wars* films, and the *Harry Potter* series.
 - Read and discuss the figure and adventures of the trickster in myths and stories (e.g. Prometheus stories, African American Anansi tales, or Native American coyote stories).
- Exploration and analysis of typical mythic characters:
 - The immortals: gods and goddesses
 - The mortals: heroes and heroines
 - Monsters: non-human and animal

4. Tricksters
5. Lesser spirits
- D. Exploration and analysis of common places in mythology:
 1. Mountains
 2. Gardens and forests
 3. Rivers and oceans
 4. Heavens and underworlds
 5. Labyrinths
- E. Exploration and analysis of mythic sources for visual arts and music:
 1. Decorative arts
 2. Sculpture
 3. Painting
 4. Music
 5. Film
- F. Exploration and analysis of myths in diverse literary forms:
 1. Oral tales
 2. Epic poetry
 3. Lyric poetry
 4. Drama
 5. Novels
 6. Film

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. **Discussion** -
- C. **Student Presentations** -
- D. **Projects** -
- E. **Classroom Activity** -
- F. **Audio-visual Activity** -

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading
 1. Read introductory chapters in textbook. Be prepared to identify the types of myth and to discuss examples of each.
 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/notebooks, 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:

Methods/Frequency

- A. Exams/Tests
 - At least two exams.
- B. Quizzes
 - At least two quizzes.
- C. Research Projects
 - At least one project involving minimal research.
- D. Group Projects
 - At least one in-class group project and one group presentation.
- E. Class Participation
 - Activities and discussion in class on a weekly basis.
- F. Class Work
 - Occasional note-taking, free-writing, and small group research and reports.
- G. Home Work
 - Weekly reading assignments, note-taking, and at least two short essay responses.

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Morford, Mark. *Classical Mythology*. 11th ed., Oxford University Press, 2018.
2. Spivey, Nigel. *Songs on Bronze: The Greek Myths Made Real*. 1st ed., Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005.
3. Powell, Barry. *Classical Myth*. 8th ed., Prentice Hall, 2015.
4. Thury, Eva, and Margaret Divinney. *Introduction to Mythology: Contemporary Approaches to Classical Myths*. 4th ed., Oxford University Press, 2016.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: