Spring 1-15-2013

ENG 3009G-002: Myth and Culture

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ENGLISH 3009
MYTH & CULTURE
PROFESSOR M. LEDDY
SPRING 2013

consider taking another course.

REQUIREMENTS
As with any worthwhile endeavor, “the effort is the prize,” as the jurist Benjamin Cardozo said. The course will require dedicated daily work (reading and talking), occasional writing (in-class and out-of-class), and a final examination.

ATTENDANCE
Be here, on time, every time. You’re responsible for all assignments, whether or not you’re here when they’re announced.

Frequent absences will affect your grade, not through a system of points and deductions but because not being here will make it difficult to do the work of thinking and learning that the course is meant to involve.

If you must miss a class, you should get in touch with me beforehand to find out what you will miss.

Photocopied pages to go with our reading will be available from an envelope on my office door.

LATE WORK, MAKE-UP WORK
Missed work cannot be made up. Late work is acceptable only if you have my approval in advance.

DISABILITIES
If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, contact the coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583).

OFFICE HOURS
Talking to professors is one of the smartest things a college student can do. Please, come in to ask questions and talk about your work in the class. If office hours don’t work for you, make an appointment.

If you feel uneasy about talking to professors, read “How to talk to a professor” for potentially helpful advice: goo.gl/YYSkv.

E-MAIL
Before you e-mail me, please read and follow the guidelines in “How to e-mail a professor”: goo.gl/4n6EH. These guidelines are read all over the world and will serve you well in e-mailing any professor (assuming that your professor answers e-mail).

One guideline that you don’t need to follow: you need not add your class number and meeting time to your signature. I’ll know who you are.

DECORUM
The atmosphere in our class should be serious—not somber or pretentious, but collegiate and genuinely intellectual. No eating, sleeping, talking, texting, or doing work for other classes. No headphones, hoods, iPods, or phones. Electronic devices should be turned off and out of sight. Please show proper respect for our community of learning.

DISCUSSION
Consider what the writer Thomas Merton says about a teacher he admired (Mark Van Doren, Columbia University):

Most of the time he asked
questions. His questions were very
good, and if you tried to answer
them intelligently, you found
yourself saying excellent things
that you did not know you knew,
and that you had not, in fact,
known before.

like to ask questions that make people
think. I also like it when people ask me
such questions. Try to think of an in-
class question not as having an answer
you’re already supposed to know but
as an invitation to think. I know that
this suggestion might go against the
grain of much of your experience in
classrooms. You should be asking
relevant questions too, of me and
perhaps of one another. That helps to
make the class less like a quiz show
and more like a conversation.

One more observation on discussion,
from the cultural critic Randolph
Bourne:

A good discussion increases the
dimensions of every one who takes
part. Being rather self-consciously a
mind in a group of minds means
becoming more of a person.

As you can guess, I’m optimistic about
discussion. For more on questions and
discussion, read “How to answer a
question”: goo.gl/DIzaG. (That’s a
capital I (“eye”) after the D.)

GRADING

Your grade will be based on your
written work (60%), class participation
(20%), and final examination (20%).

Longer writing assignments receive
letter grades. Shorter ones get
numerical grades. Missing work
receives a zero. Participation receives a
numerical grade, an overall evaluation
of the extent to which you’re prepared
and contributing: 100 (always), 85
(frequently), 75 (usually), 50
(sometimes), 0 (rarely or never).

To calculate semester grades, I use
numerical equivalents for letter
grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>D-</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>87</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes when I grade writing I’ll
give a grade that falls between two
grades—e.g., B+/A- (89.5).

For semester grades, 90 or above is an
A; 80 or above, a B; 70 or above, a C; 60
or above, a D; below 60, an F.

EWP

You may include work from the course
in your Electronic Writing Portfolio.
Please make sure that you understand
the requirements for the EWP and that
you fulfill them in a timely way. For
more information: www.eiu.edu/
assess/ewpmain.php.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The English Department’s statement
on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act
of plagiarism—“The appropriation
or imitation of the language, ideas,
and/or thoughts of another author,
and the representation of them as
one’s original work” (Random House
Dictionary of the English Language)—
has the right and responsibility to
impose upon the guilty student an
appropriate penalty, up to and
including immediate assignment of
a grade of F for the course.

And my statement concerning
academic integrity:

Any breach of academic integrity—
from a single sentence cut and pasted
into a dinky little assignment to a
wholly unoriginal essay—is a serious
matter and will get you a serious
penalty. The Student Standards office
recommends an F for the course. You
will also be required to take a course
in ethics administered by Student
Standards, whose staff will keep your
misconduct on record and notify your
other professors that one of their
students has violated academic
integrity.

You should be familiar with Eastern’s
statement on academic integrity and
should ask if you have any questions
about quoting from and/or
documenting sources. But because the
work of the course is to be an
expression of your ideas in your words,
aside from words and ideas from
properly acknowledged sources,
questions of plagiarism and collusion
should never arise.

Do not “borrow” work or give your
work to anyone (allowing someone
else to make use of your work is also a
breach of academic integrity and will
also get you a serious penalty, up to
and including an F for the course).

PROVISIONAL OUTLINE (WEEKS)

1: Thinking about myth and culture
1-3: Gilgamesh
4-6: Odyssey
7: The Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge
8: Dor
9-11: The Grapes of Wrath
12-15: Invisible Man

Provisional due dates for writing:

January 25 (in-class writing)
February 13
April 24

Other modest pieces of writing will be
assigned as in-class writing or on a
due-next-class basis.

Final examination: May 1, 10:15-12:15