Spring 1-15-2001

ENG 3009-001-012

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Course Description.

We will take semiotic approach to myth as “language” as we discuss texts, art, music, and film from a range of cultures.

Texts.

Chan, Wing-Tsit, A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy.
Chandler, Semiotics for Beginners, http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/54B/semiotic.html
Chatwin, The Songlines.
Ellison, Invisible Man.
Fluxus Portal, www.fluxus.org
Humphries, Ovid: The Metamorphoses.
Kerouac, On the Road.
Kingston, The Woman Warrior.
Merchant, Earthcare.
Meyeroff, Peyote Hunt.
Neihardt, Black Elk Speaks.
Nguyen, Tale of Kieu.
Powers, Yuwipi.
Rhodes, Outsider Art.
Robinson, The Debt, http://www.will.uiuc.edu/WILL_Contents/AM_Focus_580_Webcasts.htm
Sandars, Gilgamesh.
Snyder, No Nature.

Requirements and Evaluation.

Regular attendance and participation. (You will be allowed 2 absences. I will lower your final grade by one letter for each unexcused absence thereafter.)

Hourly examinations and take-home assignments. There will be about 8 in-class examinations, consisting of short answer questions on our assigned reading, and an essay question. They will not be announced in advance. You can (and need) only “prepare” for them by preparing for class. Make-up examinations will not be offered, but a short may be substituted for one examination. I will also ask you to complete 4 short papers/assignments. Extensions will not be granted for these. (70% of grade.)

Final examination. This will consist of a short-answer component and a 5-page essay, the latter to be written in advance of the examination day. (30% of grade.)

You must complete all course requirements punctually to receive a passing grade in the course.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive accommodations, which I will gladly provide, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
I: Semiotics, the Origins of Life on Earth, and Raw Art.

Week of...

January 17.

Chandler, *Semiotics for Beginners*. [http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/semiotic.html](http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/semiotic.html)

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. (Page numbers TBA)

**Discussion**: The origins of life. The Pygmalion myth in contemporary America. Pythagorean vegetarianism vs. food for “real” people.

January 22.

Powers, *Yuwipi*.


January 29

Meyeroff, *Peyote Hunt*.


February 5.

Chatwin, *The Songlines*.

**Discussion**: Colonialism and monocultures of the mind. Materialism and voluntary poverty. Group work on Australian artist Gordon Bennett. View excerpts of *Mad Max*.

February 12.

Rhodes, *Outsider Art*.

*Fluxus Portal*. [www.fluxus.org](http://www.fluxus.org)

**Discussion**: Notions of sanity and madness. Institutions. Commodification.

II: Interlude:

In and Around the Middle Kingdom

February 19 and 26.

Chan, *Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. (Page numbers, TBA.)

**Discussion**: Confucius, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Tang Dynasty Poetry.

March 5

Du, *The Tale of Kieu*.


March 19

The Scent of Green Papayas.
III. American Barbarism.

March 26


View excerpts of *Terminator.*

April 2, 9, 16

Ellison, *Invisible Man.*

Postcards from lynchings. Randall Johnson, *The Debt.*
View excerpts of *Boys in the 'Hood.*

April 23, 30

Kerouac, *On the Road,* selected poems from Snyder, *No Nature.*

Discussion: Beat and Counter-cultures. TV and Suburbia. Violence and indifference.