

Fall 8-15-2005

ENG 3009-008: Myth and Culture

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Fall 2005 / TTh 14:00-15:15 / Coleman 3160

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Course Description

This class will serve as an introduction to myth, but not as a survey of myths from around the globe. There are some 6800 languages spoken on the earth today, each of which constitutes a relation between a people and their world, a "culture," if you will, and each culture has its own stories elucidating the relations between its members, other cultures, and its environment. This number, however quickly it may be decreasing, is far too large to imagine covering in this course. Alternatively, we will engage in a series of texts questioning received notions about myth—the "myths" about myths—and, I hope, allowing us to think about the possibilities for myth in our technology-addled universe. And sometimes we will reflect on why it is that we don't much think mythically anymore. Since this course centers on myth, the primary medium of communication will be speech, since myth, in general, implies an oral-based culture. That is, we will approach our subject by attempting to mimic it. To that end, you will need to schedule a conference with me sometime during the semester, so that we can chat.

Texts

Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein. New York: Broadview, 1996.

Course Reader, available at Copies Express in the Student Union Building.

Requirements

All assignments and exams must be turned in to pass the course.

First paper on Myth: due Monday, 28 August (10%)

Exams: two texts worth 10% each, in weeks 7 and 13 (20%)

Class Participation: see below (15%)

Annotated Bibliography: ~ week 7 (10%)—see below

Presentation of Annotations: ~ weeks 7-9 (10%)--see below

Revision of First Paper: due in week 15 (10%)

Final Paper on Myth in Class Reader: ~ five pages, due on Wednesday, 7 December (25%)

Papers—and all other assignments—are due at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be commented upon, and be marked a half grade lower for every class period late.

Your paper should be stapled and include page numbers. Format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, although you may, if you wish and your handwriting is not completely indecipherable, write your first paper by hand.

Academic honesty: Students are responsible for knowing Eastern Illinois University regulations and policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism will likely result in your failing the course and in further action by the university. Here is 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 representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

English 3009G-008: Schedule of Classes—subject to revision

There will be random readings thrown into the mix at odd times (short poems, essays, and selections) not indicated here.

		Assignments Due
WEEK 1	M 8/22 Introduction to class, Myth, Culture Reading from Amy Cruse, <i>The Book of Myths</i>	
WEEK 2	M 8/29 Plato, Black Elk	FIRST PAPER (10%)
WEEK 3	M 9/5 LABOR DAY—NO CLASS Benjamin	
WEEK 4	M 9/12 Corbin, Cruse	
WEEK 5	M 9/19 Shelley	
WEEK 6	M 9/26 Shelley, Adam Smith	ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
WEEK 7	M 10/3 Shelley	TEST #1
WEEK 8	M 10/10 Shelley, and P.B. Shelley?	PRESENTATION (wks. 7-9)
WEEK 9	M 10/17 Course Reader	
WEEK 10	M 10/24 Course Reader	
WEEK 11	M 10/31 Course Reader	
WEEK 12	M 11/7 Course Reader	
WEEK 13	M 11/14 Course Reader	TEST #2
WEEK 14	11/21-11/25 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY—NO CLASS	
WEEK 15	M 11/28 Course Reader	REVISION of FIRST PAPER
WEEK 16	M 12/5 Course Reader and Review	FINAL PAPER

First Paper and Revision (10 and 10%)

At the beginning of Week 2, you will hand in an assignment relating a personal story about myth (of your own or someone close to you). More details will be discussed during our first class period. You will hand in a revision—an *extention*, really—of this assignment after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Annotated Bibliography and Presentation (20%)

By mid-semester, I will require you to hand in a summary of two critical works (i.e., secondary sources) on Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In order to save you the trouble, I will take the time to look up articles for you to locate (in the library or online). These summaries should be no longer than a page in length, double-spaced. You must hand in a copy of the summarized articles with your assignment. In the classes that follow, I will ask you to give a brief (five-minute) presentation to the class on your two annotated works.

Tests (20%)

The tests will examine your engagement with the class material, through identification and short-answer questions. Before the first test, we will run through some example questions to familiarize you with my testing tendencies.

Final Paper (25%)

In your course reader, you will find a series of readings on myths from various locations on the globe. Your task at the end of the semester will be to synthesize these myths into a meta-narrative (I shall explain the term later). Or, and this option may prove more difficult, you will show the radical divergences of these myths, what makes them completely incommensurable. I will expect you to reference, with academic grace and bibliographic ease, the works in the reader, and will encourage you to research further.

Class Participation (15%)

There will be a number of required, yet ungraded assignments throughout the quarter, constituting a substantial portion your class-participation grade. I will expect you to come to class having read the material, and with questions or comments on the readings. Some of the course material may be quite tough slogging: you should pinpoint specific moments of textual density, and query me ("test" me, if you will) about them. I will also provide a virtual forum for post-class discussion, but I am not yet certain whether that will be through email or a class web page. Attendance is not mandatory, but let me add this disclaimer. If you do not attend class without finding an extremely reliable notetaker, you will almost certainly fail the two tests, and your class-participation grade will suffer immensely. Since the final paper will be much easier to write after we discuss the reader materials, your grade for this assignment will likewise be compromised. You are, however, all adults and should be able to use your own judgment vis-à-vis attendance.

Important disclaimers...

Conduct

Instructors are responsible for maintaining order and a positive learning environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to the instructor or to other students may be required to discontinue course activities and to cancel the course registration (or be disenrolled). In addition, students may be subject to disciplinary action.

Grades

Your instructor sets the requirements and grading criteria for specific assignments. Here are general standards for grades:

- A = Achievement that is outstanding and unique
- B = Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet the requirements
- C = Assignment meets the basic requirements in every respect
- D = Assignment meets only some of the requirements and is worthy of credit
- F = Assignment does not substantially meet the basic requirements

Incompletes

Incompletes are not given except in the most extraordinary circumstances (e.g., medical emergency), which a student must be able to document, and only if just a small part of the course remains to be finished. The student and teacher must make a written agreement concerning the condition of the incomplete.

Cell Phones

All those caught not having turned off their cells and/or pagers and/or electronic devices will be subject to relentless mockery, public shaming, and, if necessary, unimaginably medieval tortures.