

Fall 8-15-2008

ENG 3009G-002: Myth and Culture

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English 3009: Myth and Culture
Fall 2008

Jyoti Panjwani

Office: Ch 3576 (316A)

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Office Hours: TR 11:00 a.m.-1200 noon and by appointment

Course Description:

This course will involve an in-depth look at the myths and culture of **three Asian** countries, namely, **India, China, and Japan**. In the Indian segment, we will read the **Hindu** and the **Buddhist** (the **Hinayana** or the Theravada) myths. The study of Hinduism will include (i) **Vedic** (Early and Later) Mythology, (ii) the **Puranic** (The Mahabharata) Mythology, (iii) **Krishna** Mythology, and (iv) **Shiva** Mythology. The Chinese segment will include the study of **Confucianism, Taoism** and **Mahayana** (or Pureland) **Buddhism**. Finally, the Japanese segment will focus on **Zen Buddhism, Shinto** and **Ainu** Mythologies. The primary orientation of this study will be to develop a clear understanding of (a) **philosophical and religious interpretations** of the concepts of creation/origin of the world, death, divinity, fate, the ultimate goal/s of human life, etc., and (b) **social systems and moral/ethical values** of these cultures. Whenever possible, we will also compare the commonalities and differences among these three Asian cultures and mythologies.

Course Requirements:

Active preparation and class-participation – 15%

Mid-term exam – 25%

Final exam – 25%

One research paper, 5-6 pages – 35%

Text Required:

Ananda Coomaraswamy and Sister Nivedita. Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists.

Rajeshwari Pandharipande. The Eternal Self and the Cycle of Samsara.

Eknath Easwaran. The Bhagavadgita

Optional Reading:

R.K. Narayan. Mahabharata

Easwaran. Dhammapada

Course Policies:

Discussion (participation) is an important component of this course. Your presence in class is important for everyone, but especially for you. Three unexcused absences will bring your final grade down by 1%. Three late appearances equal one unexcused absence.

Papers are due at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. For each day that the paper is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an 'A' essay due on Friday will be a 'F' by next Thursday. ALWAYS MAKE COPIES AND BACK UP YOUR WORK!

Plagiarism Policy (English Department)

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – “The appropriation or imitation of the language, of 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 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 to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Co-ordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Tentative Syllabus.

Week 1

8/26 – Introduction to the Course

8/28 – Myth: Definition, form, content and function (Chapter 1, from R.P.), Indus Valley Civilization (Chapter 2 from R.P)

Week 2

9/2 – Continued, Introduction to Aryan Ideology and Early Vedic Mythology (Chapter 3, R. P.)

9/4 – Introduction to the Later Vedic Literature (Chapter 3, R.P.)

Week 3

9/9 – Continued, Introduction to The Mahabharata

9/11 – Mahabharata (Chapter 3 from Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists, and Chapter 5 from R.P.)

Week 4

9/16 – Mahabharata (continued)

9/18 – Mahabharata (continued)

Week 5

9/23 – Mahabharata (continued)

9/25 – Review for Midterm Exam

Week 6

9/30 – Midterm Exam

10/2 – Bhagavad-Gita (Chapters 1-3 from Easwaran, and Chapter 6 from R.P.)

Week 7

10/7 – continued (Chapters 4-6 from Easwaran)
10/9 – continued and Krishna myths (Chapter 7 from R.P.)

Week 8

10/14 – continued and Shiva myths (Chapter 8 from R.P.)
10/16 – continued and Introduction to Buddhism, Buddhist myths (Chapter 9 from R.P.)

Week 9

10/21 – continued
10/23 – continued

Week 10

10/28 – continued
10/30 – Conferences for the Research Paper

Week 11

11/4 – Conferences
11/6 – Research paper due at the beginning of the class, Chinese mythology, Confucianism (Chapter 10 from R.P.)

Week 12

11/11 – continued
11/13 – Taoism (Chapter 11 from R.P.)

Week 13

11/18 – continued
11/20 – Japanese mythology, Zen Buddhism (Chapter 12 from R.P.)

Week 14

12/2 – continued
12/4 – Shinto mythology and Ainu mythology (Chapter 13 from R.P.)

Week 15

12/9 – continued
12/11 – Review for the Final Exam