English 3009G-001  Myth and Culture  
Summer 2006 (six weeks)  
Dr. Susan Bazargan  
MTWR 3-4:45 CH 3170  
Office: CH 3765  Phone: 581-6979  
Office Hours: MW 12-1, 5-6 (by appointment only)  
E-mail: sbazargan@eiu.edu

General description:  
This course introduces you to the variety of ways in which myth has been conceptualized in human history, in the realms of religion, literature, psychology, and politics. We’ll focus on myth as a cognitive construct that allows us to gain some insight into the cultural foundations of various ancient and modern societies. The course material has been divided into four thematic units: 1) Understanding Myth; 2) Cycles of Creation, Death, and Rebirth; 3) The Goddess; 4) Myths in Context: a) the family and the community, b) adventures of the trickster, and c) adventures of the hero.

Course requirements:  
1. Class attendance:  
I have a strict attendance policy. If you have more than ONE unexcused absence during the semester, your grade for the semester will lose one-half point for each unexcused absence. If you are ill or have to leave campus because of a family emergency, please let me know.

2. Paper:  
You will write one paper (at least 7 pages long, typed, double-spaced). It can incorporate some research material, but be sure to use proper documentation. The paper is due the last day of class, July 20.

3. Exams:  
You will take two exams during the semester. The first will cover all the material studied since the beginning of the semester; the second one will cover material studied since the first exam. Both exams will have two parts: a short-answer section followed by an essay question. The two exams will be on June 29 and July 20.

Grading Policy:  
Exams: 50%; paper: 30%; participation: 20%

Conferences:  
Please stop by office to discuss any problem or question related to the course. It is best if you make an appointment.

Other policies:  
1. The English Department’s policy on plagiarism states that “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 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.

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

Required texts:
Achebe, Things Fall Apart
Erdoes and Ortiz, American Indian Myths and Legends
Harris and Platzner, Classical Mythology
Kovacs, The Epic of Gilgamesh
Rinpoche, The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying
Rosenberg, World Mythology
Sproul, Primal Myths
Scheub, The African Storyteller

Units, Class Meetings and Readings:

Unit I: Understanding Myth (myth and culture, myth and symbol, myth and religion, myth and ritual, externalist vs. internalist theories of myth)

June 12: Introduction to the course


Unit II: Cycles of Creation, Death, and Rebirth (Egypt, Mesopotamia, The Near East, Africa, India, Tibet, Ancient Greece)

June 14: Rosenberg, “Osiris, Isis, and Horus” (pp. 12-21); Rosenberg, “The Enuma Elish” pp. 3-11, Sproul, from “the Genesis,” pp.122-126


Unit III: The Goddess (the Middle East, the Ancient Greeks, Native Americans)

June 20: Harris and Platzner, pp. 83-116

June 21: Rosenberg, Medea, 204-241.

**Unit IV: Myths in Context:**

**a) The Family and Community**

June 26: Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

June 27: Achebe (continued)

June 28: Achebe (continued)

June 29: FIRST EXAM

**b) The Trickster**

July 3: Scheub; Notes on the trickster (116-119); “Beiho tricks his uncle” (145-149); “The Magic Drum” (164-171); “Notes on the Hero” (198-201); “The Girl with one hand” (302-308)

July 4: HOLIDAY

July 5: Scheub, “The Two Brothers” (363-370). Erdoes and Ortiz, The trickster (335-336). “What’s this? My balls for your dinner?” (339-341); “Adventures of Great Rabbit” (347-352); “Coyote gets rich off the white men” (369-371); “Iktome sleeps with his wife by mistake” (372-374). Rosenberg, “Raven and the Sources of Light” pp. 634-636;

**d) The Hero**

July 6: Kovacs, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (you can also consult Rosenberg, “The Epic of Gilgamesh”)

July 10: Gilgamesh (continued)

July 11: Gilgamesh (continued)

July 12: Gilgamesh (continued)

July 13: Introduction to the Greek Hero and Homer (Harris and Platzner; Rosenberg) pp. 255-272; ↓ 106-127

July 17: The Iliad (continued)

July 18: The Iliad
July 19: The Iliad

July 20: Second Exam, Second Paper is due.