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ENG 3009G-001: Myth and Culture

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ENG 3009G: Myth and Culture  
Spring 2013, T/Th 9:30-10:45am, Coleman Hall 3170  

Professor Lania Knight, PhD  
Coleman Hall 3751  
Office Hours: T 11–2pm and Th 11–1pm,  
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Joseph Campbell said, “Mythology is not a lie, mythology is poetry, it is metaphorical. It has been well said that mythology is the penultimate truth—penultimate because the ultimate cannot be put into words. It is beyond words. Beyond images, beyond that bounding rim of the Buddhist Wheel of Becoming. Mythology pitches the mind beyond that rim, to what can be known but not told.” In this course, you will engage in discussion inspired by readings and films in an effort to pitch your mind “beyond that rim,” to discover something more about your own personal mythology. This course will require dedicated daily work, lots of reading and class discussion, and a final paper.

This is an introductory course in the art and craft of writing plays. In this course, students will:
  1. Read many books (~50 pages per class)  
  2. Participate in class activities/discussion  
  3. Attend and write a response to one film outside of class  
  4. Respond in writing to course material  
  5. Write a final paper

**Required Texts:**
LeGuin, Ursula. *A Wizard of Earthsea*.  
LeGuin, Ursula. *The Tombs of Atuan*.  

**Grades:**
- Reading Responses: 600  
- *Hobbit* Response: 200  
- Final Paper: 200  

Total: 1000 points

**Be Prepared for Class**
To prepare for each class, please do the following:
  1. Bring your textbook(s) and a notebook with you to class  
  2. Read the assigned material **before** class  
  3. Respond via Dropbox on Desire2Learn to the assigned reading **before** class

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Reading Responses
You’ll write responses to the readings for each class, which may or may not be shared during class (depends on time available). These responses are due before class via Dropbox on Desire2Learn by 8am. Each response is worth around 23 points. Your response can be anything you dream up that conveys to me that 1) you read the assigned material, 2) you understand the material, and 3) you have made connections between the material and class. Always write (or say) page and paragraph numbers.

Some suggested formats for your responses to the reading: 1) a List of Ten (for each separate text), which means ten of anything about the reading, such as words you needed to look up, items you found interesting or confusing, phrases you had questions about… PLUS your comments. ANYTHING GOES. 2) a video (YouTube) in which you discuss the reading and your thoughts on it (7-10 minutes), 3) good, old-fashioned notes (at least 500 words), 4) a short play or story or poem, or 5) a song (YouTube)

Attendance
I keep attendance. You may miss up to four classes. If you miss a fifth class, you will fail the course. Exceptions will be made only for documented emergencies and documented school activities. In order to receive credit for material due on a day you are absent, submit it to me via email Dropbox on Desire2Learn by 8am the day it is due.

Attending a Film
You must attend a screening of The Hobbit within the first three weeks of class and write a response of 8–10 pages (2000–2500 words). You may attend the film with the class or go on your own. In your paper, describe the film (briefly), describe how it illuminates (or does not) the text of The Hobbit, and explain how the film is (or is not) a story of the hero’s journey. This is a formal paper. Use MLA formatting and quote/cite material from The Hero with a Thousand Faces and The Annotated Hobbit to support your thesis.

Final Paper:
You’ll write a 10–12-page (2500–3000 words) reflection on the course readings, the films and discussions in class, and any other material relevant to your understanding of the hero’s journey in order to illuminate and describe your own evolving understanding of myth and culture and your personal mythology. Further guidelines will be provided.

Extra Credit
If you attend any readings or events outside of class that are relevant to our studies, I’ll give you 10 points extra credit if you write a 500-word reflection/review. Please send via Dropbox on Desire2Learn within one week after attending.

Students with Documented Disabilities
If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodation, you must make arrangements through the Office of Disability Services; you should contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
Tentative Schedule

Week One
Tuesday, 1/8: Introduction and overview
Thursday, 1/10: **Attend lecture**: “The End of Wonder in the Age of Whatever,” Dr. Michael Wesch, 8:30–10am, The Theatre, Doudna Fine Arts Center; submit (by 8am) response to *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, “Preface to the 1949 Edition” and “Prologue I: Myth and Dream” (xii–18)

Week Two
Thursday, 1/17: Discuss *The Annotated Hobbit*, Ch. 2 “Roast Mutton” and Ch. 3. “A Short Rest” (60–99) and *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, “Prologue: The World Navel,” (32–40)

Week Three
Tuesday, 1/22: *The Annotated Hobbit*, Ch. 4 “Over Hill and Under Hill” and Ch. 5 “Riddles in the Dark,” (100–36) and *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. I, “Departure: The Call to Adventure,” (41–8)
Wednesday 1/23: **FIELD TRIP** to see *The Hobbit* at AMC Theatre in Mattoon!
Thursday, 1/24: Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. I, “Departure: Refusal of the Call and Supernatural Aid,” (49–63)

Week Four
Tuesday, 1/29: Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. I, “Departure: The Crossing of the First Threshold,” (64–73) and *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Ch. 1
Thursday, 1/31: Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. I, “Departure: The Belly of the Whale,” (74–80) and *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Ch. 2

Week Five
Tuesday, 2/5: Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. II, “Initiation: The Road of Trials,” (81–90) and *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Chs. 3 & 4
Thursday, 2/7: **DUE**: response to *The Hobbit*; Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. II, “Initiation: The Meeting with the Goddess,” (91–100) and *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Chs. 5 & 6

Week Six
Tuesday, 2/12: Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. II, “Initiation: Woman as the Temptress” (101–3) and *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Chs. 7 & 8
Thursday, 2/14: Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. II, “Initiation: Atonement with the Father,” (105–26) and *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Chs. 9 & 10

Week Seven
Tuesday, 2/19: Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. II, “Initiation: Apotheosis,” (127–47) and *The Tombs of Atuan*, Prologue and Chs. 1–3
Week Eight
Tuesday, 2/26: Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. III, “Return: Refusal of the Return,” (167–9) and *The Tombs of Atuan*, Chs. 6–8

Week Nine
Tuesday, 3/5: Discuss *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Ch. III, “Return: Rescue from Without,” (178–87) and *The Tombs of Atuan*, Chs. 11 & 12
Thursday, 3/7: NO CLASS

Week Ten: SPRING BREAK

Week Eleven

Week Twelve

Week Thirteen
Tuesday, 4/2: Discuss *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* (54–167)
Thursday, 4/4: Discuss *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* (166–230)

Week Fourteen
Tuesday, 4/9: *American Born Chinese* (7–130)
Thursday, 4/11: Discuss *American Born Chinese* (133–233)

Week Fifteen
Tuesday, 4/16: Discuss *Siddhartha*, Part I (3–42)
Thursday, 4/18: Discuss *Siddhartha*, Part II (45–85)

Week Sixteen
Tuesday, 4/23: Discuss *Siddhartha*, Part II (87–152)
Thursday, 4/25: DUE: Final Paper; evaluations