Fall 8-15-2001

ENG 3009G-006: Myth and Culture

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Office: 3751. Hours: MWF 11:00-12:00 and by appt.

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/S4B/semiotic.html
Ellison, Invisible Man.
Fluxus Portal. www.fluxus.org
Kerouac, On the Road.
Meyeroff, Peyote Hunt.
Neihardt, Black Elk Speaks.
Nguyen, Tale of Kiw.
Powers, Yuwipi.
Rhodes, Outsider Art.
Sanders, 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 5 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 several 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.
*Agenda*

The course has three segments. We'll adjust the time devoted to each segment according to the class's needs and interests.

Segment 1. *Situations*

A.) Indigenous

Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*.

Powers, *Yuwipi*.

Discussion: Sign and symbol, Myth and ritual, The Shaman, Spiritual and borderline experiences, Sweat lodge, Vision Quest, Healing.

Meyeroff, *Peyote Hunt*.

Discussion: Beauty and Being, Art/Work and Religion, Domains (personal, familiar, communal, public), History in Myth, The Quest.

B.) Modern

Sandars, *Gilgamesh*.


C.) Mad

Rhodes, * Outsider Art*.

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

Discussion: Notions of sanity and madness, Institutions, Commodification.
Segment II. In and Around the Middle Kingdom

Chan, Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy. (Page numbers, TBA.)
Discussion: Confucius, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Tang Dynasty Poetry.

Du, The Tale of Kieu.
Discussion: "Yin" civilization. The Female hero. Beauty, Karma.

The Scent of Green Papayas.

Segment III. American Barbarism

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

Kerouac, On the Road.
Ovid, Metamorphoses: Pigmalion, Tereus, Procne and Philomela.
Ridley Scott, Thelma and Louise.

Snyder, No Nature.
Discussion: Beat and Counter-cultures. TV and Suburbia. Violence and indifference.