Syllabus

English 3009
Fall 1997

Required Books with abbreviations:

Barbara Sproul, comp. Primal Myths. (PM)
Alan Dundes, ed. Sacred Narrative. (PM)
N. K. Sanders, trans. The Epic of Gilgamesh. (PM)
Barbara Miller, trans. The Bhagavad-Gita. (PM)
Lobsang Lhalungpa. The Life of Milarepa. (PM)
Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, eds. American Indian Myths and Legends. (AIM)
Aldous Huxley. Brave New World.

Course Purpose: The purpose of the course is to transmit knowledge of the beliefs of some of the world's peoples. Those beliefs are expressed in their myths and legends, which will be read, discussed, and analyzed in writing. The overall approach is that in their mythologies peoples, past and present, seek to answer questions that are basic to human life: Why are we here? Why is life pleasant—or painful? What is the best way to live? The course falls roughly into three divisions, each of which will deal with particular mythologies, Mesopotamian and Greek, Indian and Christian, native and modern American.

Aug. 26 Course Introduction and Description.
I. Mesopotamian and Greek Mythologies.
Aug. 28 Primal Myths, 1-30.
Sept. 4 The Epic of Gilgamesh.
Sept. 9 The Epic of Gilgamesh.
Sept. 11 The Epic of Gilgamesh.
Sept. 23 Homer's The Odyssey, Books VI-X.
Sept. 25 Homer's The Odyssey, Books XVI-XIX.
Sept. 30 Homer's The Odyssey, Books XX-XXIII.
Oct. 2 Homer's The Odyssey, Books XXIV.
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Oct. 7 First Hourly Exam.

II. Indian and Christian Mythologies.


Oct. 16 The Bhagavad-Gita.

Oct. 21 The Life of Milarepa, 7-35.

Oct. 23 The Life of Milarepa, 36-74; and 89-107.


Nov. 4 Everyman (in WM, 1639-60).

Nov. 6 Everyman.

Nov. 11 Second Hourly Exam.

III. Native and Modern American Mythologies.

Nov. 13 American Indian Myths, 14-15; 77-82; 88-93; 117-118; 355-356; 470-471.

Nov. 18 American Indian Myths, 5-8; 8-11; 11-13; 15-19; and 442-445; 447-451; and 457-462.

Nov. 20 American Indian Myths, 337-339; 339-341; 355-356; 358-359.

Nov. 24 through Nov. 28. Thanksgiving Recess.

Dec. 2 Huxley's Brave New World.

Dec. 4 Huxley's Brave New World.

Dec. 9 Huxley's Brave New World.

Dec. 11 Huxley's Brave New World.

Final Exam.
Course Requirements: The final grade will be determined on the basis of three essay-type examinations. These exams will have equal weight, and will cover the readings for each of the three sections of the course. The exams will be given a letter grade on the basis of the English Department "Standards for Evaluating Themes at Eastern." Absence from an exam will result in a penalty unless the student has a valid excuse from a physician. The penalty will be reduction of the grade for make-up work by two letter grades. Reading quizzes may also be given, and will be used as an index of participation in the course. There will be no make-up quizzes. Students are expected to attend, and encouraged to take notes in class. If a student has a documented disability and wishes academic accommodations, he or she should contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services.

Statement concerning 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 original work" (Random House Dictionary)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course.