ENG 3009G-004-009: Myth and Culture

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Syllabus
English 3009
Fall 2002

Required Books with abbreviations:
Harris and Platzner, eds. Classical Mythology. Second edition. (CM)
Coomaraswamy and Nivedita. Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists.
Lobsang Lhalungpa. The Life of Milarepa.
Barks and Moyné, et. al., trans. The Essential Rumi.
Mary Shelley. Frankenstein.
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. These 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 way in which human beings answer such questions varies not only from people to people but also in different periods of human history.

Aug. 27 Course Description and Introduction.
I. Classical Mythology.
Aug. 29 Classical Mythology, chapt. 1, pp. 3-25.
Sept. 5 Ovid's Metamorphoses (CM, pp. 885-91).
Sept. 10 Ovid's Metamorphoses (CM, pp. 891-905).
Sept. 12 Classical Mythology, chapt.11, pp. 255-64; and chapt. 12, pp. 342-59.
   Homer's The Odyssey, Book I (in WM).
Sept. 19 Homer's Odyssey, Books VI-X.
Sept. 24 Homer's Odyssey, Books XVI-XIX.
Sept. 26 Homer's Odyssey, Books XX-XXIII.
Oct. 1 Sophocles's Antigone (in WM). Begin with "Sophocles" (in WM, 652-57)
Oct. 3 Sophocles's Antigone.
Oct. 8  Sophocles's Antigone.
Oct. 10  Midterm Examination.

II. Buddhist and Islamic Mythologies.

Oct. 17  Myths of Hindus.

Oct. 22  Life of Milarepa, 7-35.

Oct. 29  Life of Milarepa, 108-45; and 153-73.


III. The Modern Myth of Progress.

Nov. 19  Mary Shelley's Frankenstein.
Nov. 25  through Nov. 29.  Thanksgiving Recess.

Dec. 3  Shelley's Frankenstein.
Dec. 5  Huxley's Brave New World.

Dec. 10  Huxley's Brave New World.
Dec. 12  Huxley's Brave New World.

Final Examination.
Course Requirements: The final grade will be determined on the basis of a midterm exam, a final exam, and a paper, each of which will count one-third. The exams will be essay-type; will be written in class; and will cover the readings in the course. The paper will explain a theme or a character in one of the course readings. It should approach 1000 words, and be typed, double-space, in accordance with an acceptable manual of style, such as the MLA Handbook (which is available at the Booth Library Reference desk). Both the paper and the exams will be given a letter grade on the basis of the English Department's "Guidelines for Evaluating Themes at Eastern." The course is writing-intensive which means that you may choose to submit your paper for your electronic writing portfolio.

Absence from an exam or lateness in submitting the paper will result in a penalty unless the student has a valid excuse from a physician. In the case of absence from an exam, the penalty will be reduction of the grade for make-up work by two letter grades; in the case of paper lateness, the penalty will be reduction of the grade by one letter for each class day that passes before the paper is submitted.

Reading quizzes may also be given, and would be used as an index of participation in the course. There will be no make-up quizzes. In addition, attendance will be taken, and be used as in index of participation. Students are 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.