Spring 1-15-1999

ENG 3009C-115: Myth and Culture

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Course requirements:
I. Class attendance:
I have a strict attendance policy. If you have more than two unexcused absences during the semester, your grade for the semester will lose one-half point for each unexcused absence. If you are ill or cannot attend class because of a family emergency, please call my office or home and let me know. You can also send e-mail.
II. Papers:
You will write two papers, the first 3 pages long, the second 4-5 pages long (typed, double-spaced). Topics will be assigned later.
III. Exams
The midterm exam will be held on 3/3; the final on 4/28.
IV. Class participation and presentation:
Participation in class discussions is required. You'll do one oral presentation during the semester as part of a group project.
Grading Policy: Short paper: 15%; Long essay: 20%; Midterm: 20%; Final: 20%; Class participation: 15%; Class presentation: 10%
Conferences:
Please stop by my office to discuss any problem or question related to the course. You can also make an appointment if my regular office hours are inconvenient for you.
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
Coomaraswamy, Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists
Du Bois, Souls of Black Folk
Dundes, Sacred Narrative
Erdoes and Ortiz, American Indian Myths and Legends
Harris and Platzner, Classical Mythology
Hesse, Siddhartha
Kovacs, The Epic of Gilgamesh
Neihardt, Black Elk Speaks
Rinpoche, The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying
Scheub, The African Storyteller
Willis, World Mythology

Class Meetings:

I. Myth and Culture: Some Definitions

II: Africa:
1/20: "The Problem of Defining Myth" in Dundes
Willis, "Egypt" pp. 36-43; "Isis and Osiris" in Scheub, pp. 67-71;
"The Two Brothers" in Scheub, pp. 363-371; Willis, "Africa": pp. 264-269, 274-277; All in Scheub: "The Blue Crane"; "The Weight before the Door"; "Notes on Myth" (pp. 50-52)

1/27: All in Scheub: "The Creation"; "God Creates Man and Woman"; "Notes on the Trickster" (pp. 116-119); "Two Tar Baby Stories" (pp. 151-157); "Notes on the Hero" (pp. 198-201); "Sikhuluma, The Boy Who Did Not Speak"; "The Girl with One Hand"

III: The Middle East
2/3: Willis, "The Middle East" pp. 56-63,67;
The concept of the hero: Kovacs, The Epic of Gilgamesh

IV: Greece and Rome
2/10: All pages are from Harris and Platzner: 3-46; 54-61; "The Great Goddess and Goddesses" pp. 84-116
(Recommended reading: "The Cultural-Historical Background of Myths on the Separation of Sky and Earth" in Dundes)

2/17: Harris and Platzner: "The Quest of Odysseus" pp. 342-381
V: India
2/24: First paper is due
Willis: "India" pp. 68-69; 72-81
Myths of Hinduism: Coomaraswamy, The Mahabharata, 118-216

3/3: Midterm exam

3/10: Willis, "Myths of Buddhism" pp. 86-87; Coomaraswamy, Chapter V, Buddha 245-250, 259-276
Hesse, Siddhartha

Spring Break

3/24: Rinpoche, The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying (Chapters One, Two, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight)

VI: North America
From Erdoes and Ortiz: Student selections and presentations (Groups I, II, III and IV)
Recommended reading:
"An Ideological Dichotomy: Myths and Folk Beliefs Among the Shoshoni"; "The Creation Myths of the North American Indians" (both in Dundes)

VII: Myth and Culture: Loss and Recovery in the Modern World
4/7: Africa: Achebe, Things Fall Apart
4/14: Niehardt, Black Elk Speaks
Second paper is due

4/28: Final Exam