Spring 1-15-2006

ENG 3009-006: Myth and Culture

Susan Bazargan
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2006

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2006/98

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2006 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring 2006 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.
General description:
This course introduces you to the variety of ways in which myth has been conceptualized in human history, in the realms of religion, literature, psychology, and politics. We'll focus on myth as a cognitive construct that allows us to gain some insight into the cultural foundations of various ancient and modern societies. The course material has been divided into four thematic units: 1) Understanding Myth; 2) Cycles of Creation, Death, and Rebirth; 3) The Goddess; 4) Myths in Context: a) the family and the community, b) women as makers of myth, c) adventures of the trickster, and d) adventures of the hero.

Course requirements:
1. 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 have to leave campus because of a family emergency, please let me know.

2. Papers:
You will write two papers, one short (4-pages, typed, double-spaced), the second longer (6-7 pages). English 3009 is a "writing-intensive" course, so you can submit one of your essays to your electronic writing portfolio.

3. Exams and quizzes:
You will take two exams during the semester. The first will cover all the material studied since the beginning of the semester; the second one will cover material studied since the first exam. Both exams will have two parts: a short-answer section followed by an essay question. Pop quizzes might be given occasionally, so come to class prepared!

Grading Policy:
Exams and quizzes: 40%; paper # 1: 20%; paper # 2: 30%; participation: 10%

Conferences:
Please stop by 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
Erdoes and Ortiz, American Indian Myths and Legends
Haddawy, The Arabian Nights
Harris and Platzner, Classical Mythology
Kovacs, The Epic of Gilgamesh
Leeming, Jealous Gods, Chosen People. The Mythology of the Middle East
Rinpoche, The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying
Rosenberg, World Mythology
Sproul, Primal Myths

Units, Class Meetings and Readings:

**Unit I: Understanding Myth** (myth and culture, myth and symbol, myth and religion, myth and ritual, externalist vs. internalist theories of myth)

1/10: Introduction to the course

1/12: Sproul, Introduction, pp. 1-14; Harris and Platzner, Chapter 2 (“Ways of Interpreting Myth”; read page 34-43)

**Unit II: Cycles of Creation, Death, and Rebirth** (Egypt, Mesopotamia, The Near East, Africa, India, Tibet, Ancient Greece)


1/19 Sproul, “From the Exegesis of the Good Religion (Zoroastrianism)” pp. 135-139. Sproul, from “the Genesis,” pp.122-126


1/31: Rinpoche, pages 82-110.
Unit III: The Goddess (the Middle East, the Ancient Greeks, Native Americans)

2/2: Leeming, 46-50, Harris and Platzner, pp. 83-116

2/7: Harris, pp.83-116 (continued); Rosenberg, Medea, 204-241.

2/9: Rosenberg, Medea, (continued)


Unit IV: Myths in Context:
  a) The Family and Community

  2/16: Achebe, Things Fall Apart

  2/21: Achebe (continued)

  2/23: Achebe (continued)

  2/28: Achebe, (continued)

March 2: First Exam

b) Women as makers of Myth

March 7: Arabian Nights (selections to be announced)
  First Paper is due

March 9: No class (I’ll be away at a conference)

Spring Break

March 21: Arabian Nights (selections to be announced)

c) The Trickster

March 23: Erdoes and Ortiz, Trickster Tales (selections to be announced)

March 28: Erdoes and Ortiz, Trickster Tales (selections); Rosenberg, “Raven and the Sources of Light” pp. 634-636;

d) The Hero
March 30: Kovacs, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*; see also Rosenberg, “The Epic of Gilgamesh”

April 4: Gilgamesh (continued)

April 6: Gilgamesh (continued); see also Leeming, 55-60

April 11: Gilgamesh (continued)

April 13: Rosenberg, “The Iliad” (pp. 106-153)

April 18: The Iliad (continued)

April 20: The Iliad

April 25: The Iliad. Review and Evaluation

**April 27: Second Exam**

*Second Paper is due.*