English 209.500: Introduction to Mythology
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Office: Liberal Arts North 210
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 8:30 am – 11:00 am
Meeting Times and Location: Online
Spring 2019

Course Description: An introduction to the mythologies of various cultures, emphasizing the role of myth in history, culture, and consciousness. Myths define a culture’s ethos and cultural practices, and yet, myths are also shaped by culture itself. Often, myths from around the world deal with questions on the nature of humanity and the divine; they engage with profound events in the heroes’ lives such as birth, death, love, hate, loyalty, betrayal, suffering, and redemption. In this course we will read a variety of myths from around the world, and will actively seek to understand the readings from multiple perspectives. We will analyze the myths by engaging with the socio-historical contexts wherein they were produced.

Because we will engage with texts that are foreign to your own context, you must remember that it is the responsibility and joy of academics to respect and become curious about other cultures. A good number of the myths, legends, and ideas we will encounter may challenge the way you see the world, and it is important that you keep an open and curious mind. The material we will discuss is based on serious academic scholarship, not upon ideologies or any religion. Therefore, I expect all of you to be curious, respectful, and analytical of the texts and worlds we will encounter.

Required Text:


The Epic of Gilgamesh, Benjamin R. Foster, translator; Norton Critical Editions.

Required Web Access:
You will need to have access to d2l.sfasu.edu in order to get access to course materials, submit assignments, and take reading quizzes. Please make sure to configure your d2l account as soon as possible. I will accept no lack of accessibility excuses for missing assignments, quizzes, etc. You also need to revise settings so that d2l emails you anytime I make an announcement.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives: In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the English Foundational Component Area in Language, Philosophy, and Culture may be assessed. These objectives are:

1. Critical Thinking: Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. 2

2. Communication Skills: Effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

3. Social Responsibility: Intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and
the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

4. **Personal Responsibility**: The ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

**English Program Learning Outcomes**: As ENG 209 is a core course, English Program Learning Outcomes do not apply; English majors or minors, seeking to fulfill sophomore-level literature requirements, should enroll in ENG 211, 212, 221, 222, 229, 230, or 233H.

**Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 209**: By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Exhibit an understanding of and appreciation for key works in world literature, as evidenced in daily work and quizzes, course discussions, written assignments, and/or examinations (this outcome aligns to the Core objective of Critical Thinking and Communication);

2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of periodization in world literature, as evidenced in daily work and quizzes, course discussions, written assignments, and/or examinations. Periodization is not merely an historical consideration, as defined by events, persons, or dates; students will demonstrate an understanding that historical, cultural, spiritual, and ethical issues, among others, shape human experiences and impact motivations (this outcome aligns to the Core objective of Critical Thinking and Communication as well as Personal Responsibility and Social Responsibility);

3. Students will read literature with increased critical acumen, as evidenced in daily discussions of readings and in responsive essays (this outcome aligns to the Core objective of Critical Thinking and Communication);

4. Students will be able to respond to literature with facility, both orally and on paper, on important thematic considerations having to do with literary and historical milieu, culture, human responsibility, morality, ethics, and the manner and causes by which humans interact with one another (this outcome aligns to the Core objective of Social Responsibility and Personal Responsibility).

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

By enrolling in ENG 209 you are also enrolling in a **Core Curriculum Course** that fulfills the Written Communication Skills requirement. You will see this course on your D2L list. At one point during the semester, you will receive an assignment that fulfills both the requirements of this course and the needs of Stephen F. Austin State University's Core Curriculum Assessment Plan with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. When you complete this one assignment, you need to upload the assignment to both your standard course dropbox determined by your Instructor and the “Core Curriculum” dropbox. The Core Curriculum dropbox will be identified by the Objective for which
work is being collected. Please note that this only applies to the approved assignment. All other assignments should be submitted according to regular class operations.

If you have any questions, please see your instructor or contact the Institutional Effectiveness Office at (936) 468-1130.

**Crucial Course Objective:**
It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. I encourage your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course. This course meets the following standards for diversity content and instruction in the following way(s):

1. Course content that includes readings and other materials that address various categories of social difference (gender, nationality, religion, ethnicity, race, age, sexuality, political affiliation, socio-economic status, ability, linguistic background, etc.) on the course topic.
2. Tying current events and local histories centered on the production of social difference into classroom activities.

**Course Requirements:** As noted before, this course is a fast-moving survey that requires your commitment to steady reading. Your reading of each day’s assignment will be explicitly tested during practically every session in some manner, whether through quizzes, written responses, or through course discussions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes and Discussions</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of Semester Capstone Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Your running points/grade will be available on D2L (http://d2l.sfasu.edu); please advise me ASAP if you see anything that seems amiss.

Students will write a core capstone project on an aspect of mythology—see prompt on d2l. Students will be graded based on their use of critical thinking skills; grammar, vocabulary, and written style; and the effect of social background on the personal choices of characters in the literary work, comparing and contrasting these choices with the modern world.

Essays will be graded both on substance (quality and accuracy of ideas) as well as expression (tone, style, syntax). Exams may include M/C, short answer, and essay formats.

**Grade Criteria and Policy:**
Overall, your grade will be based on the total weight of each grade category (see above).

Grading Standard: A: 90-100: Students earning the grade of an A on any assignment will have completed work that obviously demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of an A is reserved for that work which expertly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors.

B: 80-89: Students earning the grade of a B on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a B is reserved for that work which adeptly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. However, the level of thought, while still above average, may fluctuate in terms of analytic abilities and expression.

C: 70-79: Students earning the grade of a C on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates an average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a C is reserved for that work which displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand (more so through summary and response rather than analysis), recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas (however, the complications recognized will focus more on surface level issues rather than the greater whole), and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. As can be seen from this description, the level of thought will be acceptable and display that a student has read the assignment, but his/her analytic abilities and level of expression will not be nearly as complicated nor developed. Instead, C work will display a student’s hold to traditional methods of expression (simpler construction of sentence and paragraph development) and a struggle to develop complex, critical thinking skills.

D: 60-69: Students earning the grade of a D on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a below average understanding of course material and a lack of completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a D is reserved for that work which displays one’s struggle or refusal to engage the ideas at hand, simply summarizes the work under study with no actual recognition of or dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and the translation of ideas into writing is completed in such a convoluted manner that the audience will have difficulty following the conversation.

F: 0-59: Students earning the grade of a F on any assignment will either not have completed the assignment, will have completed the assignment but not followed the guidelines, or will have completed the assignment and demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of the course material. In this case, it will be obvious that the student has either not completed the required reading and/or given him/herself enough time to develop the work. The grade of a F is reserved for that work which does not engage the issues at hand, offers a base (not complete) summary of the work at hand with no critical engagement, and the translation of ideas into writing is either incomplete or the audience will be unable to follow the conversation. It is important to remember that a student can receive 0 out of 100 points. In the case that a student only partially completes an assignment or completes a work (in terms of page length, but not purpose) s/he may receive 0 points.

What You Can Expect from Me
I will strive to:
• create a challenging and engaged learning environment that will enrich your college career
• encourage you to explore new ideas, to develop your own intellectual abilities, and to strengthen your critical thinking skills
• encourage you to identify the ways in which our culture influences your lives, your self-identity, and your perceptions of others
• provide you with helpful feedback about your ideas and writing
• meet with you to discuss your work in detail anytime you request guidance

What I Expect from You
During the time spent in this course you should:
• Read and understand all the policies in the syllabus – contact me if you have any questions
• Refer to the calendar attached to the syllabus for any questions regarding deadlines or course requirements
• interact with other students and your professor in a respectful, mature, and thoughtful manner
• read all assigned reading and be prepared to actively participate in class discussion
• keep an open mind; the reading and viewing selections have been carefully considered as works that will contribute to your intellectual development
• feel free to contact me during my office hours if you are having difficulties with the material, or any other issues that might negatively impact your performance in this course
• be prepared to engage with difficult topics

Course Policies:
1. **Communication with your professor:** If you send an email I will answer it that same day if the email was sent between 8am-3pm on weekdays. If your email was sent after those specified times, I will reply the next morning, or after the weekend. Additionally, when you email follow proper email etiquette. I do not check d2l email, so only send emails to this address: lameborsel@sfasu.edu
   
   **Note:** I will not reply to any questions the answer to which can be found by carefully reading the syllabus or the assignment prompts.

2. **Online Class Environment:** Be considerate and professional to your peers and your professor. Rude behavior in discussions and forums is unacceptable and it will hurt your grade. This online platform is a professional environment and I expect all of you to behave professionally.

3. All Writing Projects **must be typed** and turned in on d2l on the due date and time. ALL ASSIGNMENTS NEED TO BE TURNED IN MICROSOFT WORD FORMAT!!! No make-up work is allowed on major assignments.

4. No make-up work is allowed on homework announced at the beginning of the semester. **Late work** will not be accepted unless an exception is approved in advance.
5. **Attendance** is required in this course. Attendance is determined by your ability to participate in course discussions/forums, and your active completion of work by the due dates.

6. I will only accept documented excuses for any in-class make-up work: family emergencies, university sanctioned events, and extreme medical issues (hospitalization); I need to be presented (via email) with documentation within a week of the absence.

7. **An excused absence** does not also excuse major essay deadlines, since these deadlines are given weeks in advance. You must turn in major assignments and homework on time regardless of the excuse, since these due dates are announced at the very beginning of the semester.

8. **Online Classroom Conduct:** If you are disrespectful, rude, or inconsiderate to me or anyone else in the class, you will need to come see me in my office during my office hours. If you continually are disrespectful during discussions or feedback, your participation grade will decrease and you will need to see me during my office hours.

9. **Plagiarism,** or turning in work that is not one’s own, runs counter to the most basic purposes and presumptions of higher education. The minimum penalty for plagiarism will be failure of the assignment. In repeated cases, the penalty is failure of the course and filing paperwork with the academic dean. See SFA policy regarding plagiarism.

10. All work needs to adhere to **MLA format** with appropriate documentation – The Little Seagull Handbook has MLA documentation guidelines.

11. You may not use essays or assignments you have previously written.

12. I will not accept emailed assignments. All assignments need to be turned in via d2l.

13. All students will be graded on their ability to: 1. Achieve the goal of the specific assignment 2. Efficiently and effectively communicate through writing 3. Properly format the work and 4. Avoid stigmatized grammatical and syntactical errors. Each assignment will vary, but these four factors will always determine part, or all, of your grade.

**Acceptable Student Behavior:** Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to
judicial, academic, or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed.

**What is Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism:**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam;
- falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment;
- helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- submitting an assignment as one’s own work when it is at least partly the work of another person;
- submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source;
- incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy:**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities:**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to the SFA website.

**AARC:**
The Academic Assistance Resource Center offers a free tutoring/writing assistance service to all students at SFASU. You are encouraged to seek help from this center throughout the semester.

**Discrimination/Harassment Policy:**
No one will be discriminated against or harassed on the basis of gender, age, size, ethnicity/race, religion, disability, or any other categories. If discrimination/harassment takes place (either reported or observed) involved students will be required to conference with me prior to returning to class. More information on this topic can be found here on the SFA website.
Tentative Calendar

**Week 1: 23 January – 25 January**
Introduction to the course and syllabus.
Myths and Mythologies Introduction.

**Week 2: 28 January – 1 February**
“Amma and Nummo Prepare the World” p. 46
“The Creation” from the Eddas p. 58 in *Myth and Knowing*
“From Chaos to King Zeus” p. 63
“Out of the Blue” p. 68 in *Myth and Knowing*
“Creation Myth from the Vishnu Purana” p. 79
“Genesis” p. 84 in *Myth and Knowing*
Complete Discussion.

**Week 3: 4 February – 8 February**
“The Fire Goddess” p. 122
“White Buffalo Calf Woman” p. 132 in *Myth and Knowing*
“A Taste of Earth” p. 144
“Kali Beheaded” p. 154 in *Myth and Knowing*
“Callisto and Arcas” p. 161
“The Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi” p. 137 in *Myth and Knowing*
Complete Discussion.

**Week 4: 11 February – 15 February**
Introduction to the Male Divine.
“Bhagavad Gita” p. 208
“Enki and Ninhursanga” p. 220 in *Myth and Knowing*
“Orunmila Gives the Orishas Their Powers and His Friendship with Eshu” p. 227
“Thor’s Duel with Hrungnir” p. 232 in *Myth and Knowing*
“Quetzalcoatl Rescues the Precious Bones and Discovers Corn” p. 239 in *Myth and Knowing*
Complete discussion

**Week 5: 21 February – 25 February**
Introduction to Trickster Myths.
“Why We Tell Stories about the Spider” p. 253
“Àjàpá, Ajá the dog, and the Yams” p. 257 in *Myth and Knowing*
“How Coyote Placed the Stars” p. 265
“Coyote Man and Saucy Duckfeather” p. 268 in *Myth and Knowing*
Complete discussion

**Week 6: February 25- 1 March**
“Old Man Coyote Meets Coyote Woman” p. 274
“The Treasures of the Gods” p. 277 in *Myth and Knowing*
“Prometheus” p. 301
“The Raven Steals the Light” p. 311 in *Myth and Knowing*
Complete discussion

**Week 7: 4 March – 8 March**
Introduction to Sacred Places.
Midterm Review

**Week 8: 11 March – 15 March**
Midterm on 11 March
“The Zuni and the Grand Canyon” p. 331
“The Emergence” p. 333
“Bighorn Medicine Wheel” p. 336
“The Medicine Wheel” p. 343 in *Myth and Knowing*
“Sacred Landforms in Japan” p. 347
“The Mountain of the Lotus and the Fan” p. 349
“Yosoji and the Goddess Fuji” p. 352 in *Myth and Knowing*
Forum/Discussion

**Week 9: Spring Break**

**Week 10: 25 March -29 March**
“The Waters of Eternal Life” p. 360
“The Castle in the Lake” p. 370 in *Myth and Knowing*
“The Areca Tree” p. 380
“Biriwilg Becomes a Painting” p. 387 in *Myth and Knowing*
Introduction to Myths about the End of the World.
Complete Discussion

**Week 11: 1 April – 5 April**
PDF file on d2l – Myths of the End of the World
Introduction to *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
Tablets I – II in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
Complete Discussion

**Week 12: 8 April – 12 April**
Tablets III – IV in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
Tablets V – VI in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
Tablets VII – VIII in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
Complete Discussion

**Week 12: 15 April-19 April**
Tablets IX – XI in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

**Forum/Discussion**
Friday 19 April: University Spring Holiday

**Week 13: 22 April – 26 April**
Film Screening and response due

**Writing Project Due!**

**Week 14: 29 April-3 May**
Presentations and responses

**Week 15: 6 May – 10 May**
Presentations and Responses

May 13-17: Final Week