Introduction to Mythology
English 2309.001
Time: TR 12:30-1:45
Place: Ferguson 182

Professor: James Couch
Office: LAN 327
Office Hours: MW: 12:00-1:00
TR: 11:00-12:30
And by appt. via Zoom

Department: English
Phone: 468-2430
Email: Via D2L

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
“Study of primarily Greek, Roman, and Hebraic mythology, emphasizing the role of myth in history, culture, and consciousness.” Prerequisite: ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302.

“Introduction to Mythology” (3 credits) meets 3 times each week in fifty-minute segments or twice each week in seventy-five minute segments for fifteen weeks, and also meets for a two hour examination during finals week according to the final exam schedule. Students have significant weekly reading assignments and take regular reading quizzes along with the midterm and final examinations. Students make a major group or individual presentation on a mythological subject in film or literature and are required to submit a responsive essay. These activities average 6 hours of work outside of classroom hours.

About This Class
The story of our species over the last 10,000 years is nothing short of extraordinary. Humans, with their remarkable capabilities, have built much, discovered much, and left an indelible mark on the world they inhabit. In this course, we will examine the profound role that myths play in shaping our understanding of that world and our place within it.

The many characterizations of that “world” are indeed diverse. Today, many envision the universe as a dynamic interplay of energy and mass in perpetual flux. Others depict it as an eternal chemical reaction, a grand cosmic stew. Some even offer the notion that our
entire existence might be a sophisticated simulation. We have portrayed the “world” as the body of a deceased deity, a disk supported by pillars, or even turtles all the way down.

Was the "world" birthed through the harmonies of music or the potency of spoken words? Did industrious hands fashion it with tools or is it the result of some divine craftsmanship? What dynamics govern our world, and what are the virtues, vices, rewards, and punishments that shape our experiences? The realms of past, present, and future; the cycles of birth, life, and death; mercy and justice; war and revenge; the dichotomies of love and hate, creation and destruction, loyalty and betrayal, truth and illusion, nature and artifice, these are the profound concepts that inspire the rich narratives we collectively term "mythology."

At its core, mythology is a collection of stories, narratives that serve as potent tools for exploring the complexities of human existence. The art of narrative, a crucial element in our cognitive development, has played a pivotal role in this exploration. These tales are not mere diversion; they are threads that weave through the fabric of our consciousness, offering insights into the fundamental nature of the grand tapestry of reality and how we define our part in it.

In this course, we embark on a journey of exploration and discovery, delving into mythologies that have evolved across centuries and civilizations. As we navigate a small portion of the vast landscape of myth, we invite you to ponder the timeless questions, and, in doing so, to unearth the profound wisdom embedded in the stories that have shaped humanity’s understanding of itself and the world.

Because we will engage with some texts foreign to your own cultural context, you must remember that it is the responsibility and joy of academics to respect, inquire, and learn about other cultures. A number of the myths, legends, and ideas we will encounter may challenge the way you have traditionally seen the world, and it is important that you, as a scholar, keep an open and curious mind. We will discuss the material from the perspective of serious academic scholarship rather than ideologies, as is appropriate for
the university classroom. Therefore, I expect all of you to be curious, respectful, and analytical of the texts and perspectives we will encounter.

**Required Texts and Materials**

*The Greek Myths*, by Robin Waterfield  
*Metamorphoses*, Translated by Charles Martin  
*The Odyssey*, Translated by Robert Fitzgerald  
*Ten Plays by Euripides*, Translated by Hadas and McClean  

Laptop or other word processing device for quizzes, notes, etc.  

*Additional readings to be provided by the professor

**Course Requirements**

All papers must be typed and require MLA format (including an MLA heading, 12 pt type, 1” margins, double-spacing, Times New Roman font, indented paragraphs, etc.). Late work will be penalized a letter grade for each day it is late. No work more than three days late will be accepted. Students are required to submit an electronic copy through D2L to the Turnitin comprehensive plagiarism detector. Failure to turn in an assignment will result in a failing grade (0 points) on the paper in question. This is a web enhanced class. You will need to visit BRIGHTSPACE by D2L regularly to keep up with assignments, contact the instructor, and receive supplemental information for your success in the course. Classroom activities, homework assignments, other instructional materials, and grades will all be posted in BRIGHTSPACE.

**Grading Policy**

Semester grades will be the sum of the daily quizzes (40 pts), Mythic Hero Project (25 pts), the Comparative Myths Project (25 pts) and participation (10 pts). After your grades have been compiled, attendance points may be added or subtracted (see below). Feel free to call, email, or Zoom me during office hours about your writing, your grade, or for any other reason.

**Attendance Policy**

Punctual attendance (physical and mental) is required.
Students with perfect attendance will receive three points added to their final average. Students who miss more than two days will lose three points for each absence after the second. Students who exceed six absences will fail the course.

**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 will 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 that is available to help SFA students succeed.

**Academic Integrity**
The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty.
member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

Use of Generative AI
While the use of AI as a plagiarism tool is unacceptable, it can be a valuable resource when used to enhance your learning experience. If you decide to employ AI as a writing resource, remember the following: Deceptive use of AI is considered cheating and will result in severe penalties. “Deceptive use” is defined as the utilization of AI to generate content and the claiming of such generated content as your own.
Withheld Grades
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 http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/

Mental Health and Wellness
SFA values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students' mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
SFA Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
Rusk Building, 3rd Floor
936.468.2401
SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services, Room 202
936.468.1041
Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

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, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information thinking.
2. Communication Skills: Effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
4. Personal Responsibility: The ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

English Program Learning Outcomes
As ENG 2309 is a core course, English Program Learning Outcomes do not apply.

Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 2309
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;
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;
3. Students will read literature with increased critical acumen, as evidenced in daily discussions of readings and in responsive writings; and
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.