Syllabus for English 2309: Introduction to Mythology

Instructor: Billy Longino
Office: Liberal Arts North 243
email: longinobp@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: Tues. 9:00 – 2:00

Catalog Description
Focuses primarily on the studies of Greek, Roman, and Hebraic mythologies, emphasizing the role of myth in history, culture, and consciousness. Prerequisite: 6 semester hours of freshman English with a grade of C or better.

Myths are essential to understand a culture, but culture also shapes our understanding of myth. The stories we’ll be examining in this course, including Greek, Hebraic, and Norse mythology, all shape our concept of history and society, but our image of them also reflects what we understand about ourselves, whether we were members of these societies or viewing them from our place in the future. The stories of the gods and heroes provide us with means of accessing the universality of the human condition and a window into how we perceive ourselves in our contemporary socio-historical context.

Required Texts
Metamorphoses by Ovid, translated by Rolfe Humphries, annotated by Joseph D. Reed
The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki by anonymous, translated by Jesse L. Byock
Beowulf by anonymous, translated by Maria Dahvana Headley
Additional reading material will be provided by the instructor in print or pdf format.

Credit Hour Justification
“Introduction to Mythology” (3 credits) typically meets 3 times each week in 50 minute segments or twice each week in 75 minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2 and half hour examination. 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 at a minimum 6 hours of work to prepare outside of classroom hours.

English Program Learning Outcomes
As ENG 2309 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 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; 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.

General Education Core Curriculum

This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. 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 English 2309: Introduction to Mythology you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that
fulfills the Communication component requirement. The chart below indicates: (a) The core objectives that are
required to be taught in this course per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), (b) How the
required core objectives will be addressed.

Core Curriculum Objective Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How the Core Objective Will be Addressed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>To be addressed through the course’s capstone project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To meet State requirements (per SFA Policy 5.4), this course must include instructional time that is delivered
asynchronously. Examples of asynchronous instruction may include (but are not limited to): written content, video
content, discussions, case studies, synthesis exercises, reflection activities, peer review, and skills practice.
Periodically, you will be required to respond to a chosen reading in a Discussion Board on d2l. There will be three
such discussions, each expected to require at least 50 minutes of reading and response time, thus equaling a total of
150 minutes of asynchronous instruction time for the semester.

Assignments
The final grade for this course will be determined by arriving at the sum of points distributed among each of the major assignments:

- **Participation**: 20 points
- **Mythology Reflection**: 20 points
- **Creation Myth Exam**: 20 points
- **Mythology in Pop Culture Analysis**: 20 points
- **Mythopoeia Project**: 20 points

**Participation**

Over the course of this semester, I will document student participation in class. Participation will depend upon the student’s timely completion of daily assignments and readings, participation in classroom discussions, and attentive engagement in class meetings.

Students’ participation grade will be affected by the following offenses:

- Being late to class without a “reasonable” excuse.
- Use of cellphone or other electronic device outside of allowed times.
- Not completing a reading.
- Not bringing a textbook to class when textbook is being used.
- Persistent refusal to participate in classroom discussions.

**Attendance & Punctuality**

Attendance is required for this class. Students will not have the necessary information to successfully complete assignments in the class if they are not present. Students are allowed 3 absences in this class without penalty. Between 4 and 6 absences will result in the loss of five points from their final grade while 7 – 9 absences will result in a loss of ten points and 10 or more absences result in a failing grade for the class. If students are absent beyond their 3rd absence and have a “valid” excuse for being absent, I will excuse it, and it will not be counted toward the total. I will determine the validity of the excuse if the excuse does not fit within university policy on guidelines for an excused absence.

Additionally, being late to class will be taken very seriously. Punctuality and personal responsibility is a skill that students must develop to be successful in the classroom and beyond. If students are not present when I take roll for the class, they will be counted absent. But if something happened that made getting to class on time difficult, students should let me know at the end of class. Also, leaving class early, without an emergency or getting my prior acknowledgment, will result in an absence.

Whether an absence is excused or not, students are responsible for any coursework or content that was presented that day in class. Students should ask their classmates or check the class’s D2L site to receive any missed assignments or material.
Late Work

If a student does not have a valid excuse for an absence, I will not repeat material from the class which the student missed. Students cannot make up missed in-class activities or exams unless they have a documented, excused absence. See SFA policy for what constitutes an excused absence.

Grades

For each assignment a grade will be calculated according to the number of points it is worth. For some assignments I will use a 10-point scale while on others he will use a 20-point scale. According to university policy, final grades for the course will consist of a letter grade only (no plus or minus). Here is a general description of letter grades:

A: 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: 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: 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:** 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:** 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 the maximum number of 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.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**
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.

**Note-taking**
Students should always take notes in class. This gives the student a record of what occurred that day, helps the student internalize the material, and provides the student with information that they may be able to use in their exams.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by
university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

If plagiarism is discovered on a student’s assignment, no credit will be given for the assignment unless the student and I reach an agreement for revision of the offending essay. Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**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/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Acceptable Student Behavior**
Classroom behavior should not interfere with my 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. I 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.

**Email Etiquette**
Students are required to communicate with me in a respectful and professional manner. This means that students should compose emails with a clear, precise subject line that informs me of the purpose of the email and includes the course and section number; with a proper salutation; a body that contains the necessary information and is
grammatically sound; and a formal closing. All email should be sent from the student’s SFA account. I will not respond to student emails from non-SFA addresses.

**Mental Health Statement**
SFASU 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:**
SFASU Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU 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

**Course Calendar**
Please note that the following schedule is tentative and subject to change at a moment’s notice. No due dates for essays will be moved up to an earlier date. I will attempt to keep changes to a minimum, but students must be aware that the course is a living thing subject to unpredictable occurrences.

**Monday, January 22** – Class introduction and “The Meaning of Myth” lecture.
   **Homework:** Read “Ten Characteristics of the Ancient Greeks.”

**Wednesday, January 24** – Discussion of Ancient Greek culture.
   **Homework:** Read excerpts from Hesiod’s *Theogony*.

**Monday, January 29** – Discussion of Hesiod’s *Theogony*.
   **Homework:** Read “Book One” and “The Story of Phaethon” from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.

**Wednesday, January 31** – Discussion of Ovid’s creation myth.
**Homework:** Read excerpt from *Enûma Eliš* and *Genesis, “Chapters I – III.”

**Monday, February 5** – Discussion of Mesopotamian creation myths. **Mythology Reflection due.**

**Homework:** Read “Introduction” to *Children of Ash and Elm: A History of the Vikings.*

**Wednesday, February 7** – Discussion of Nordic (or Viking) culture.

**Homework:** Read “The Prophecy of the Seeress” and “The Lay of Grimnir” from *The Poetic Edda*.

**Monday, February 12** – Discussion of Nordic creation myth.

**Homework:** Read excerpts from the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis A* and *Genesis B.*

**Wednesday, February 14** – Discussion of cultural influences upon myth and myth evolution.

**Homework:** Study for Creation Myth exam.

**Monday, February 19** – Creation Myth Exam.

**Wednesday, February 21** – TBA.

**Monday, February 26** – TBA.

**Wednesday, February 28** – TBA.

**Monday, March 4** – TBA.

**Wednesday, March 6** – TBA.

**Monday, March 11** – Spring Break!

**Wednesday, March 13** – Spring Break!

**Monday, March 18** – TBA.

**Wednesday, March 20** – TBA.

**Monday, March 25** – TBA.

**Wednesday, March 27** – TBA.

**Monday, April 1** – TBA.

**Wednesday, April 3** – TBA.

**Monday, April 8** – TBA. **Mythology in Pop Culture Analysis due.**

**Wednesday, April 10** – TBA.
Monday, April 15 – TBA.
Wednesday, April 17 – TBA.

Monday, April 22 – TBA.
Wednesday, April 24 – TBA.

Monday, April 29 – TBA.
Wednesday, May 1 – TBA.

Wednesday, May 8 – Finals week. No class. Mythopoeia Project due.