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**Office Hours: Tuesday 4:00-5:00**  
**Wednesday 1:00-3:00**

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### **HRS 151: World Mythology**

**GE Area C-3**

**Section 03: Wednesday 5:30-8:20, Spring 2008, Mariposa 1000**

#### **Catalog Description**

This course offers an introduction to the nature and function of myth. The specific literature studied will be exclusive of classical mythology and because of this, the breadth of the subject matter will vary in content. The mythology of at least four cultures will be covered each term.

This section examines mythology in different cultural contexts. We use the term “myth” broadly to encompass the narratives cultural groups tell about their origins, reasons for existence, the nature of the cosmos, and guidelines for moral and ethical behavior. Students will study mythological traditions from cultures of the ancient Near East, Africa, the Americas, Europe, and the Pacific. In addition, the course examines different analytical or theoretical approaches to the study of mythology, and students will learn to compare and contrast different ways scholars have analyzed and explained myths and mythology. In this section, we will cover approaches to the study of mythology from Religious Studies, History, Literature, Anthropology, and Psychology. This is a GE course, but is appropriate for HRS majors and minors.

#### **Required Materials**

- *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth*, ed. Alan Dundes (noted as SN in syllabus); in Hornet Bookstore
- *Gilgamesh*, Herbert Mason; in Hornet Bookstore
- *Popol Vuh*, trans. Dennis Tedlock; in Hornet Bookstore
- *The Nibelungenleid*, trans. A.T. Hatto; in Hornet Bookstore
- *Gassire's Lute*, trans. Alta Jablow; in Hornet Bookstore
- Reader available at University Copy and Print, 446 Howe Ave. (behind Tokyo Fros on Fair Oaks Blvd.)

#### **Course Requirements and Assignments**

8% Attendance, Participation (surprise quizzes)

32% four short essay (each worth 8 points)

30% Midterm Exam (worth 30 points)

30% Final Exam (worth 30 points)

- Participation will be gauged by class attendance, participation, and surprise quizzes.
- Students are required to attend class, to complete all of the readings, and to participate in class discussion. Please note that lectures will be difficult to follow unless you have completed the readings.
- On the class days when we address “Approaches to Myth,” students will have the option of working in pairs or small groups to answer several readings-based discussion questions. You can also work alone if you choose.

- **Essays** should be 1-2 pages, single or double spaced, and should be your best writing. Topics will be given in class before they are due. Essays are graded on a 8 point scale.
- **Exams** will consist of short essay questions based on readings, films, and class discussion. The final exam is not cumulative.

### **Class Policies**

- I am happy to make accommodations for students with recognized disabilities; please see me early in the semester to discuss your needs.
- Cell phones must be turned off or silenced during class.
- Late essays will not be accepted, nor will essays submitted via email only.
- Makeup exams are not permitted.
- Plagiarism on essays and cheating on exams will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic F for the course. See the following:
  - <http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353>

### **Learning Goals**

Successful HRS 151 students will be able to:

- Identify and explain values and ideas that are transmitted through the myths of various cultures
- Describe the nature and role of myth in human experience across cultures
- Analyze examples of the relationship between myth, religion, ritual, and artistic expression
- Identify and differentiate key elements in the mythology of at least four culture areas
- Demonstrate an awareness of different analytical approaches to the study of mythology

<b>Date</b>	<b>Unit/Topic</b>	<b>Readings to be completed before class</b>
Jan. 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to course</li> <li>• Myth, Religion, and Ritual</li> </ul>	None—first day of class
	<b>Unit 1: Myths of the Ancient Near East</b>	
Feb. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of approaches to myth</li> <li>• Approaches to Myth: Frazer</li> </ul>	Reader: “Asmat Headhunting...” Reader: Genesis 1-4 (Biblical narrative) SN: Frazer, pp 72-97
Feb. 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FILM: <i>Return to Eden</i></li> <li>• The Epic of Gilgamesh</li> </ul>	Mason, <i>Gilgamesh</i> , pp 11-92 (Ancient Mesopotamia)
Feb. 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enuma Elish: The Epic of Creation</li> <li>• Approaches to Myth: Freud</li> </ul> <u>Essay #1 Due: Mesopotamian Myth</u>	Reader: “Epic of Creation” (Ancient Mesopotamia) SN: Dundes, pp 270-291
	<b>Unit 2: Myths of Africa</b>	
Feb. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yoruba and Dogon Myth</li> <li>• FILM: Dogon Coming of Age Rite</li> </ul>	Reader: “Oshun,” (Yoruba) Reader: Griaule “Conversations with Ogotemmel” (Dogon)
March 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gassire’s Lute</i></li> <li>• Approaches to Myth: Jung</li> </ul>	<i>Gassire’s Lute</i> , pp 7-47 (Soninke) SN: Jung, pp 244-255
	<b>Unit 3: Myths of The Pacific</b>	
March 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trobriand Mythology</li> <li>• Approaches to Myth: Malinowski</li> </ul>	Reader: Malinowski, “In Tewara and Sanaroa: The Mythology of the Kula” SN: Malinowski, pp 193-206
March 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maori Mythology</li> <li>• FILM: <i>Whale Rider</i></li> </ul>	Reader: “Maori Mythology” and “The Creation Cycle” (Maori)
March 26	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b> <u>Essay #2 Due: Myth in <i>Whale Rider</i></u>	No reading: write essay and prepare for exam!
April 2	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
	<b>Unit 4: Myths of the Americas</b>	
April 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approaches to Myth: Levi-Strauss</li> <li>• North American Creation Myths</li> <li>• FILM: <i>In Light of Reverence</i></li> </ul>	SN: Levi-Strauss, pp 295-314 Reader: “White Dawn of the Hopi” “When Grizzlies Walked Upright,” (Modoc) and “Devil’s Tower” (Sioux)
April 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayan Myth: <i>Popul Vuh</i></li> <li>• FILM: <i>Dawn of the Maya</i></li> </ul>	<i>Popul Vuh</i> , Parts 1, 2 (Quiche Maya) Optional reading: Introduction of PV
April 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayan Myth, Cont: <i>Popul Vuh</i></li> <li>• Approaches to Myth: Geomythology</li> </ul> <u>Essay #3 Due: Popul Vuh</u>	<i>Popul Vuh</i> , Parts 3, 4 and skim 5 Reader: “Tracking Myth to Geological Reality”
	<b>Unit 5: European Myth and Folklore</b>	
April 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myth, Folklore, and Literature</li> <li>• Approaches to Myth: Eliade</li> </ul>	Reader: “Snow White” & Sexton, “Snow White...” (Euro-American) SN: Eliade, pp 137-151 <i>Nibelungenlied</i> : pp 17-59 (Germanic)
May 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Germanic Myths: <i>Nibelungenleid</i></li> </ul>	<i>Nibelungenlied</i> : pp 60-141
May 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Germanic Myths: <i>Nibelungenleid</i></li> </ul> <u>Essay #4 Due: Nibelungenlied</u>	<i>Nibelungenlied</i> , 150-181, 258-291. Read chapter titles throughout
May 21	<b>FINAL EXAM 5:15-7:15</b>	