World Mythologies
HRS 151, sec. 1
Monday & Wednesday 12:00-1:15

Dr. Allison Solso
Allison.solso@csus.edu
Classroom: Mendocino 4004
Office: Mendocino 2022
Phone: 278-5331
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 10-11:40am and by appointment

Course Description:
This course offers a general introduction to the nature and function of myth. The specific material studied will be exclusive of classical mythology and the breadth of the subject matter will vary in content. The mythology of at least four world cultures will be covered each term. The teaching format of the class will be lecture with discussion as time allows and when appropriate to examination of the topics.

Specific Focus of This Section:
This semester, we will be examining: Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hebrew, Indian and Native American mythologies. Because mythology encompasses vast amounts of often complex and esoteric information, our studies cannot be comprehensive, but are designed as introductions. In addition to reading and discussion of primary source materials, this course will include an exploration of scholarly theoretical approaches regarding the role and function of myth within different cultural contexts.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:
* Read, analyze, and discuss myths from different cultures.
* Learn the various theories by which world mythology can be classified and be able to recognize these theories in myth, cross-culturally.
* Discover and discuss what common themes and parallels unite myths from different cultures and better understand how these can exist in cultures about which there is no known contact.
* Discover how world peoples view themselves and how mythology, religion and history serve as mirrors, reflecting universal human hopes, fears, and biases.
* Examine how world societies characterize their relationship with the natural world, how they explain its creation and processes and in what ways these questions are evident in various systems of mythology.

Required Texts:
**Course Requirements:** This class requires you to read the four books listed above, attend lecture and complete all of the assignments. Please note: all assignments must be completed in order to pass the course! You cannot pass without doing all of the work, even if you have enough points to pass.

**Assignments:**

*Midterm Exam #1 (150 points) All exams include multiple choice, fill in the blank and short answer components.*

*Midterm Exam #2 (150 points)*

*Final Exam (200 points) The final will cover material since the second midterm and cumulative conceptual/theoretical material from the entire semester*

*Writing responses (100) This will constitute your homework for the quarter and will be short writing assignments (2-3 paragraphs each) in response to the course readings*

*Attendance, quizzes and discussion (100 points) Quizzes are unannounced and based on the readings for the week*

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100%-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92%-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89%-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86%-83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82%-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79%-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76%-73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72%-70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69%-60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all sessions of the class, prepared to discuss the reading assignment for the day. It is necessary, both for your own education and as a courtesy to the other members of the class, to attend class regularly and punctually. An attendance sheet will be distributed for your signature at each class meeting. It is your responsibility to sign this sheet. Numerous absences and/or chronic tardiness will adversely affect your participation grade.

**Classroom Behavior and Expectations:** Helping one another create and maintain an environment of respect and collegiality is always expected of you. In this class, we will engage some topics that are controversial and arouse strong opinions. I encourage you to feel comfortable voicing your thoughts, but please do so with care. Your tolerance and patience, especially given our diversity, is much appreciated.

Before you enter the classroom, please turn off all electronic devices, and refrain from using them during class. Laptop computers and tablets are NOT to be used in class except with the explicit consent of the instructor. I have a zero tolerance for technology abuse, so if they are tempting for you, just leave them at home. Know thyself.
Academic Integrity: If you cheat, engage in unauthorized collaboration, plagiarize your own or someone else’s writing, or otherwise engage in academic misconduct, you will fail the assignment in question and possibly the course. Please don’t cheat. You are very likely to get caught with all the safeguards in place in the digital age. It’s not worth it. Seriously, just don’t do it. Please. Oh, and its a huge headache for me too. For further info on academic misconduct of all sorts, please consult Sac State’s policy at: http://www.csus.edu/umanual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm.

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction
August 31: Introduction to the academic study of religion
September 2: Con’t: Religious studies as an academic discipline; Read “Podium and Pulpit” (June O’Connor) and “Snakes Alive” (Robert Orsi); Begin “The Hero with a Thousand Faces” (Campbell)

Week 2: Critical Terminology
September 7: The category of myth; (Campbell)
September 9: Functionalist and Phenomenological Interpretations of myth (Campbell); Representations of Myth in Art and Culture (Campbell);

Week 3: Mesopotamian Myth
September 14: Mesopotamian Society; (Campbell)
September 16: The Enuma Elish; read “Enuma Elish” (online); (Campbell)
Finish Enuma Elish, (Campbell); READING RESPONSE 1 DUE

Week 4: Mesopotamian Myth
September 21: Epic of Gilgamesh; read “Epic of Gilgamesh” (online); finish Campbell by class on Monday
September 23: Con’t Epic of Gilgamesh; finish “Epic of Gilgamesh” (online)
Images of the Flood

Week 5: Egyptian Myth
September 28: Egyptian Society; read “Book of the Dead” (online)
September 30: Osiris, Isis and Horace
Mythic pharaohs; read “Egypt” (online)

Week 6: Exam Week
October 5: Review Session
October 7: Midterm Exam #1
Introduction to Hebrew Society; read “Hebrew Creation Myths” (online)

Week 7: Hebrew Myth
October 12: Competing creation myths; read “Abraham and Moses” (online)
October 14: Mythic heroes: Abraham and Moses; read “Noah and Solomon” (online)
Mythic heroes: Noah and Solomon; read “Hebrew Flood imagery” (online); READING RESPONSE 2 DUE

Week 8: Hebrew Myth
October 19: Images of the Flood, revisited; read “Esther”
October 21: Hebrew Femininity and Power; read “Jacob and Rachel” (online)
Hebrew Women and family culture; read “The Jewish Family” (online)

Week 9: Indian Myth
October 26: The Indus Valley Civilization and Aryan Culture; read “The Rig Veda” (online)
October 28: The Rg Veda; “Selections from the Vedas” (online)
Vedic myth and culture; Begin Upanishads

Week 10: Indian Myth
November 2: Vedanta and Classical Hinduism; continue Upanishads
November 4: Samsaric myth; continue Upanishads
Darshan; finish Upanishads; READING RESPONSE 3 DUE

Week 11: Exam Week
November 9: Review Session
November 11: Midterm Exam
Intro to Native American History

Week 12: Native American Myth
November 16: Cosmogonic Myths and Sacred Space; Begin BES
November 18: Ancestors, Shamanism and “Animism;” Continue BES
Tricksters and Sacred Fools; Continue BES

Week 13: Native American Myth
November 23: The Sun Dance; Continue BES
November 25: Film: The Sun Dance Way

Week 14: Native American Myth and American Myth
November 30: The Ghost Dance; continue BES
December 2: The “Myth of the Vanishing Indian; Finish BES
Sacred Objects; American Material Culture; READING RESPONSE 4 DUE

Week 15: Modern American Myth and Concluding Thoughts
December 7: American myth; Read excerpts from “Restless Souls” (online)
December 9: The Function of Myth is American Culture