

William Peace University
REL 231-01-ON
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY
3 Credit Hours

Instructor: Dr. R. Lee Carter
Office: Main 220
E-mail: RLCarter@peace.edu
Telephone: 919-508-2049

Course Description:

The course invites students to a contemporary, cross-cultural study of the world's great mythologies as a search for values and identity. Students will explore the common elements, recurrent patterns, themes, and archetypes of mythologies around the world, from ancient times to the present.

Our study views myths not simply as fanciful tales, but as the canonical stories that articulate and define a culture's primary values. Myths often serve to shape the identity of people-groups, to initiate the young into the domain of adulthood, to accompany rituals that mark rites of passage in people's lives, to help define the values of people, and to articulate their particular mission in the world. In brief, myths are the stories people live by and live through. They help people shape and map out a world of meaning.

This course examines historical and contemporary theories of myth, including those of Mueller, Frazer, Bachofen, Graves, Bastien, Frobenius, Levy-Bruhl, Durkheim, Janet, Freud, Eliade, Lévi-Strauss, Jung, Campbell, Jaspers and Propp and tests them in the light of our extensive reading of myths.

Most importantly, we will read myths from many cultures around the world, from ancient to modern times, just for the mere fun of it and for the joy that hearing oral stories always brings for young and old.

Why Take This Class?

This course is relevant to students across all aspects of the arts and sciences, including those with great interest in becoming writers and playwrights. The course may be especially useful to those interested in the study of literature and literary theories, history, anthropology, psychology and, to some extent, philosophy.

Most of all, the class is relevant to students in every area who simply appreciate the joy and power of a good story.

The course also demonstrates that our curriculum in Religion at William Peace

University is expanding to include more non-Western and cross-cultural studies.

Course Objectives:

1. to introduce students to a cross-cultural study of mythology in a global context, teaching them to look at myths from a comparative perspective.
2. to heighten global awareness; myths will be studied as unique expressions of individual cultures and also as universal ideas.
3. to facilitate the interpretations of mythological tales, students will be familiarized with theoretical frameworks useful in the understanding of a diverse range of myths.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- understand and appreciate varieties myths across cultures
- understand the cultural uniqueness but also the universal elements of myths
- understand the value and purpose of myth in shaping values, customs and social identities
- increase their awareness of human values, attitudes, and behavior
- appreciate the relationships among myth, religion, and culture
- understand how myth is used in the visual arts as well as literature
- appreciate how myth is used in contemporary society
- enhance their ability to complete an independent research project and present their findings in a large group setting.
- will practice literary analysis, independent research, and expository prose through the production of an analytical paper.
- become familiar with some of the different methodologies used in analyzing myth
- engage with basic mythological themes such as cosmogony, the flood, the hero/heroine and the trickster, the afterlife, and the apocalypse.

Measurements of Learning Outcomes:

1. Using a spread sheet or other means, plot the common features (parallels) of the Flood stories of all nations or people-groups that you can find.. (20% of final grade).
Send via email to rlcarter@peace.edu

2. Take a FINAL EXAM test on the theories of myths (see study guide): 40% of final grade

IMPORTANT NOTE:

William Peace University partnered with Proctortrack to uphold academic integrity through the delivery of online assessments, including tests and quizzes, during the pandemic. Proctortrack supports student identity verification while also monitoring what materials and resources are or are not approved for use during the exam. All online courses at William

Peace University require one (1) proctored exam or activity during the final week of the course. All proctored exams will be completed through Proctortrack.

3. Construct a creative presentation on some aspect of myths and modern culture. You may use power points, videos, prezis or other forms that make your presentation not only informative, but fun. For example, students may do a presentation on archetypes in the movies or the myths Americans (or Southerners or Peace students) live by. Others may want to adapt a classic myth to modern society via writing a play or movie script. I intend that this be an individual project (for grading purposes). Value: 40% of final grade. **Due before April 30.** Send to rlcarter@peace.edu

Textbooks:

J. F. Bierlein, Parallel Myths

David Adams Leeming, The World of Myth

David Adams Leeming, Mythology: The Journey of the Hero

Outline of the Course:

Week 1: March 14-20 AN INVITATION TO MYTH

Readings: J. F. Bierlein, Parallel Myths, pp. 3-23

Leeming, The World of Myth, pp. 1-8

See class notes and PowerPoint presentations each week on Moodle site

Week 2: March 21-27

PARALLEL MYTHS AND WAYS OF INTERPRETING THEM: Theories of Myth

Readings: Bierlein, pp. 267-303

Week 3: March 28-April 3

COSMOGONIC MYTHS: Creation, The Fall, Ages of Man, Flood

Readings: David Adams Leeming, The World of Myth, pp. 15-70

J. F. Bierlein, Parallel Myths, pp. 37-90; 91-120; 121-135

Week 4: April 4-10

COSMOGONIC MYTHS: Apocalypse and Beyond

Readings: Bierlein, pp. 237-254

David Adams Leeming, The World of Myth, pp. 71-85

FLOOD MYTH PROJECT DUE ON April 11

Week 5: April 11-17

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Readings: Bierlein, pp. 24-33

David Adams Leeming, *The World of Myth*, pp. 89-116; 117-168

Week 6: April 18-24

HEROIC MYTHS: From Birth to Quest

Readings; Bierlein, pp.179-236

David Adams Leeming, *The World of Myth*, pp. 203-269

David Adams Leeming, *Mythology: the Voyage of the Hero*, pp. 3-98

Week 7: April 25-30

HEROIC MYTHS: From Turning Point to Apotheosis

Readings; Bierlein, pp.179-236

David Adams Leeming, *Mythology: the Voyage of the Hero*, pp. 99-258

Final exam due on April 30.

Project on Heroes due by April 30.

Tutorial Services

Tutoring is available for all WPU students free of charge. Support is offered in most subjects, including anthropology, biology, business, chemistry, criminal justice, history, math, political science, psychology, simulation and game design, and writing. Free workshops are also offered each semester. Tutorial Services also has many resources on studying, citation, grammar, and other academic topics. Students can sign up for individual appointments in Tutorial Services, located in the 2nd floor of Finch Library. For more information, contact Mrs. Margaret Herder-Hill, Coordinator of Tutorial Services, at maherder-hill@peace.edu or 919-508-2080.

Disability Services

"Disability Services are available to all WPU students who require reasonable accommodations due to any cognitive, physical, or psychological disability, in order to provide equal access to the educational environment. Students will need to be certified with the Disability Services Office and provide appropriate documentation to receive an Academic Accommodation Plan. For more information or to become certified, please contact a counselor in the Disability Services Office, which is located on the 1st Floor of

Joyner House. You may also reach Disability Services by sending an email to Disability@peace.edu."

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU OBSERVE THE HONOR CODE. PLEASE PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE PLAGIARISM POLICY WHICH FOLLOWS.

Academic Integrity Statement for Syllabi

William Peace University seeks to develop both the intellect and character of its students. All members of the University are expected to promote a culture of academic integrity, and all students are expected to inform themselves of the University's policies and procedures related to the Honor Code.

All forms of academic misconduct are violations of the University's Honor Code. These include, but are not limited to:

- Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in academic work or in working with others on academic requirements (tests, assignments, etc.)
- Plagiarism: Representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic work, whether intentional or not
- Falsification: Falsifying or inventing any information or citation in academic work
- Facilitating academic dishonesty: Helping or attempting to help another student to commit an act of academic dishonesty
- Lying: Misrepresenting information that is relevant to the classroom or academic performance

If a faculty member suspects academic misconduct has taken place, s/he will complete an Honor Code Violation Report and meet with the student to discuss. A student may accept or decline to accept responsibility. If a student accepts responsibility, s/he will be subject to the penalty determined by the faculty member. If a student declines to admit responsibility, the case will be turned over the Honor Board for adjudication. A complete summary of the Honor Code and Honor Board policy can be found in the 2017-2018 Academic Catalog.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarism is theft; it is the deliberate or accidental use of a source's words, interpretation, or information without properly quoting or paraphrasing and acknowledging that use.

In both the professional world and the academic world, plagiarism is punished. In the professional world, charges of plagiarism, when proven, carry potentially enormous financial penalties. In the academic world, universities and colleges punish plagiarism with varying degrees of severity, with the penalties ranging all the way from expulsion from the school, to automatic 'F' in the course, down to automatic 'F' on the particular project or paper.

There are only two ways to avoid plagiarism:

1.Quote and Citation: Use the source's exact words, place quotation marks at the beginning and end of them, and insert a citation immediately at the end of the quotation according to the standards of the discipline.

2.Paraphrase and Citation: Transform (paraphrase) the source's words and information entirely into your own style of writing, and insert a citation at the end of this paraphrase. If what you write still echoes the source's words and style, you have plagiarized. If you fail to insert a citation, you have plagiarized.