

Glendale Unified School District

High School

October 12, 2021

Department: English

Course Title: Mythology

Course Code: 1375D/1376D

School(s)
Course Offered: Glendale High School

UC/CSU
Approved: Yes, (G) College-Preparatory Elective

Course Credits: 10

Recommended
Prerequisite: N/A

Recommended
Textbook: *Introduction to Mythology: Contemporary Approaches to Classical and World Myths 4th ed.* Eva M. Thury and Margaret K. Devinney
Online Resource: <https://learninglink.oup.com/search/thury>

Course Overview: This year-long mythology class will be a standards-based course that advances student skills in the core CCSS ELA domains: Reading Nonfiction, Reading Literature, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language, while introducing students to mythology from around the world, including deities, heroes, monsters, and trickster figures. We will also examine folktales, fairy tales, poetry, and excerpts from literary works inspired by mythology, while exploring the relationships between ritual and myth, as well as dreams and myth. Through analysis of myths from different parts of the world, students will be able to identify common themes, motifs, symbols, and archetypes across cultures and different time periods. Students will also examine how mythology developed to explain death and natural disasters, to justify burial and other sacred rituals, to create a sense of identity for a people, expressing the values of the societies which developed and/or perpetuated these stories. We will also address

the essential questions: 1) What is mythology? 2) Why is it necessary to explore the origins, purpose, and the persistence of myth? 3) How and why do we create myths in modern society? 4) What does the mythmaking process reveal about how humanity has coped and is still coping with the puzzle of being human, as we continue to search for meaning and reassurance in a universe that is not always hospitable?

First Semester

Unit 1: Introduction to the Study of Myth: Myth, Symbol, and Archetype (9 Weeks)

- A. The introductory unit of this course will address two essential questions: What is mythology and why is it important? Students will examine the significance of the oral tradition and be introduced to predominant gods/goddesses, heroes, monsters, and trickster figures. Using Joseph Campbell's *Hero's Journey* as the archetypal theme, students will compare excerpts from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Ramayana*, *The Mwindo Epic*, *Prose Edda*, *Arthurian Legend*, *Oedipus the King*, the story of *Prometheus*, *The Odyssey*, as well as North American and African and African-American tales to trace the epic journey of a hero and trickster figures in mythology.

We will watch Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth* and study "The Hero's Adventure," along with the 12 stages of a hero's journey. We will also examine contemporary epic journeys, including *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, *Hercules* (animation), *Thor*, *Troy*, *The Matrix*, *I am Legend*, and *Stargate*. While viewing selected scenes from these films, students will apply concepts learned to pop culture and identify ways in which we embody and incorporate myths in the modern world. Students will also analyze theories by C.G. Jung and Claude Levi-Strauss to gain insight into how myths are developed and how they can be looked at from the standpoint of different disciplines, including history, sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

B.

- Formal assessments will include teacher made tests and quizzes.
- A scoring rubric and a presentation rubric will be introduced to students and used for all writing assignments and group presentations.
- Assignment #1 Research Paper: Research a myth from your own culture (or a myth from another culture of your choice) and present it to the class using Google Slides, a Prezi or PowerPoint presentation. Include a 2-3-page summary and analysis of the myth selected using MLA guidelines and citations. Identify themes, symbols, motifs, and archetypes within the myth and analyze how the myth reflects the values, beliefs, fears, and concerns of the culture at that period in time.
- Assignment #2 Reflective Essay: Write a 5-7 paragraph Reflective Essay connecting Campbell's *Hero's Journey* with your own life and journey through adolescence.

Unit 2: Myths of Creation and Destruction

(7 weeks)

- A. Students will explore creation and destruction myths in Greek, Roman, Biblical, Mesopotamian, Icelandic, Native American, African, and Chinese traditions. Students will examine thematic similarities and differences among these myths and identify the parallel structures found in creation and destruction stories around the world. We will examine the nature of the gods, the advantages and disadvantages of their omnipotence, their morality, how they serve as models for human beings, how the gods embody human frailties themselves, and how these stories about them shape our beliefs.
- B.
- Formal assessments will include teacher made tests and quizzes.
 - A scoring rubric and a presentation rubric will be introduced to students and used for all writing assignments and group presentations.
 - Assignment #1 Pantheon of Gods Project: Select a region of your choice from the classical world, Europe, Asia, The Americas, Africa, or Oceania. (Greek, Roman, Babylonian, Mesopotamian, Icelandic/Norse, African, Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Persian, Armenian, North American, South American, Central American myths). These presentations can be in the form of posters, diorama, Prezi, PowerPoint, Google Slides, film, or any other visual presentation form. Write a 3-5 paragraph MLA formatted research paper discussing the significance and influence of these gods in that particular culture and in world mythology.
 - Assignment #2 Creation or Destruction Chart: Create either a Creation Chart or a Destruction Chart that compares and contrasts world creation or destruction myths. Use visual aids to illustrate the act of creation, the divinities responsible for the creation, and the role humans or other characters play in the creation stories. The Destruction Charts will show the parties responsible, analyze the purpose and function of destruction, the emotions or deities involved, as well as stories of rebirth and reconciliation. Write a 3-5 paragraph thesis-based essay using MLA guidelines.
 - Assignment #3 Analysis Essay: Write a 3-5 paragraph essay analyzing the theme and/or the possible insights these creation and destruction stories provide for each culture.

Second Semester

Unit 3: Folktale and Myth, Literature and Myth

(9 weeks)

- A. Students will identify the similarities and differences between folktales and myths, understand that they both emerge from the oral tradition, and observe how both serve the same function for society: Passing on cultural norms and values. By reading Vladimir Propp's "The Morphology of the Folktale" and Grimms' Household Tales, students will be able to use Propp's framework for comparing stories. Students will also read literary works inspired by mythology, such as "To Homer," "Ulysses," "Leda and

the Swan," "The Second Coming," "Leda," "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," "A Litany for Survival," "Between Ourselves," "Yellow Woman," and a chapter on "Narrative and Myth," reflecting on how myths take on different meanings in different cultures throughout the passage of time as perspectives and values change. Students will read and analyze literature specifically focusing on allusions to characters and events in mythology, explain how these references enrich the literary work, and determine how the tastes and expectations of readers change over time.

B.

- Formal assessments will include teacher made tests and quizzes.
- A scoring rubric and a presentation rubric will be introduced to students and used for all writing assignments and group presentations.
- Assignment #1 Writing Assignment (select one option): 1) Write an original fairy tale of your own, incorporating Propp's framework and structure for the fairy tale, but write from a more contemporary perspective reflecting updated gender roles and values upheld in modern society. 2) Write a folk tale, myth, narrative, or poem using allusions to mythological characters or stories. 3) Find lyrics to a contemporary song that contains references to mythological themes and in a 3-5 paragraph thesis-based essay, argue whether the mythology connections enrich the song or not.
- Assignment #2 Dramatic Representation: In groups, act out a myth or fairy tale of your choice using costumes, props, and digital tools to bring the literature to life. Write a 1-2-page reflective paper on your artistic choices and the moral you tried to convey through the re-enactment of the selected literary piece.

Unit 4: Ritual and Myth, Dreams and Myth, Contemporary Myth

(11 weeks)

- A. In this unit, students will explore the relationship between ritual and myth, and dreams and myth. By reading Victor Turner's theory *The Forest of Symbols*, students will learn how rituals serve as symbols to define events and traditions in society. Students will read about Demeter and Persephone, Isis and Osiris, Heracles and Dionysus, Meals in the Bible, and The Rituals of Iceland to appreciate how myths affect and reflect our view of reality. Students will also read C.G. Jung's *Theory: Man and His Symbols*, learning how myths and dreams are the primary pathway to self-realization because they allow human beings to understand and relate to parts of their psyches that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

Students will be introduced to the different types of archetypes: the shadow, animus or anima, and Self. Through analysis of select mythological stories, students will chart how the same or similar archetypal images are found in people from different cultures, how archetypal images originate in the unconscious, and how dynamic these images are. Students will apply their understanding of cosmology, morality, symbol, archetype, recurring themes and motifs to the contemporary myths we've created. We will also

study individual characters in modern film and literature, with emphasis on modern superheroes, and determine what the depictions of heroes say about contemporary American society.

B.

- Formal assessments will include teacher made tests and quizzes.
 - A scoring rubric and a presentation rubric will be introduced to students and used for all writing assignments and group presentations.
- Students may choose any two of the following projects below:**
- Assignment #1 Collage: Scan current magazines or newspapers for illustrations of any themes and images that you consider mythic and make a collage. Usually (but not always), this means applying one of the systems of analysis we learned in class, including insights produced by analyses of myth; Jung; Levi-Strauss; Campbell (the hero on a quest); Propp. Write a 5-7 paragraph essay explaining the significance of each image in the collage and how it is mythic.
 - Assignment #2 Ancient and Modern Heroes Research Project: Conduct research to find as many similarities and differences as you can between ancient heroes and modern heroes. Search for modern heroes and/or literary characters that are based on ancient heroes and/or mythological characters. Write a 5-7 paragraph essay explaining how contemporary authors sometimes rely on ancient texts/ideas to create new heroes that modern audiences find admirable. Include specific literary works, titles of films, names of characters, who they're based upon and provide as many details and examples possible to support their claim. Create a poster or other visual aid to present to the class.
 - Assignment #3 Film Analysis: Choose a film or TV show that is heavily loaded with mythic content. Trace the themes and images that justify your selection. You can also compare the movie(s) to the TV series. Analyze the film or TV series according to at least two or more of the interpretive systems found in the course readings. These include: the various insights produced by analyses of myth; Jung; Levi-Strauss; Campbell (the hero on a quest); Propp. Write a 5-7 paragraph thesis-based essay in MLA style and present selected footage and brief analysis to the class.
 - Assignment #4 Food as Ritual: Research recipes from any of the cultures we've studied and make food to share with the class. Discuss where the following dish originated from, the ingredients found, how to prepare it, when the dish was usually served, and what significance it held in the culture. Write a 5-7 paragraph research-based paper with MLA citations and a Works Cited page.

Additional Recommended Materials - None