

Mythologies

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English 355, Section 001
Spring Semester 2011

Office: Simpkins 115
Hours: TTh, 1:00-2:00; W, 3:00-5:00

M, 5:30-8:00 p.m.
Simpkins 308

Prerequisites: English 299 or permission of instructor.

Texts (in Order of Reading)

Except for texts to print from the website, use the editions available at the University Bookstore. Students with alternative editions will be asked to leave the class. More texts will be added to print from the website as the semester progresses.

Classical & Christian Mythologies

Sophocles, *The Oedipus Cycle*.

Plato, *The Republic*.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. Norton Critical Edition.

The Gospel of John (print from website).

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Excerpts (print from website).

Winterson, Jeanette. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

Contemporary Mythologies

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *A Discourse Upon the Origin and the Foundation Of The Inequality Among Mankind* (print from website).

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*.

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*.

Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth*.

Bordo, Susan. *The Male Body*.

Course Objectives

This course investigates mythology in two related, yet distinct, areas: in literature and in contemporary culture. The basic premise is that a grasp of what mythology is and how it operates helps us to understand not only the cultural productions of the past, but also the myth-saturated world around us today. Of particular interest will be fictions of the body and fables of the social order. The first half of the course focuses on Classical and Christian myth. In the second half, the emphasis falls on studying critical texts, in order to acquire the analytical tools to write about mythology in contemporary culture.

Requirements

This course involves a five-page midterm essay and a ten-to-twelve page final research essay. The midterm will concern literary analysis; the final will analyze mythology at work at a contemporary cultural site of the student's choosing. All writing done outside of class, including homework, must be typed, paginated, and stapled, with a standard-size font. Because I will make local corrections on your work, I need to insist that you double-space *everything*.

All students will be responsible for delivering a 10-minute presentation on their research topics during the second-half of the semester. In addition, students will be responsible for leading small group discussions on a rotating basis. When it is your turn, you will prepare four typed, double-spaced questions for discussion and turn them in to me at the end of the class. Please do not write out answers to the questions on the page that you give to me.

Absences will not be taken lightly, only excused with a doctor's note or other suitable documentation. Please see <<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/>> for student rights and responsibilities.

Everyone *must* actively participate. Lack of participation will damage your grade. This means doing the homework, completing the readings, and joining in class discussion.

Grading

Participation:	15%
Homework:	5%
Presentation:	10%
Discussion Questions:	20%
Midterm Essay:	20%
Final Essay:	30%

Unless excused, late essays receive a one-letter grade reduction. I will grant an extension for almost any reason, if the student contacts me *at least 24 hours in advance*. Plagiarism will result in an F for the course, and I will report the student for academic discipline. In this regard, please see WIU's Policy on Academic Integrity at <<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>>.

Visiting My Office

Please take the opportunity to meet with me during my office hours, or by appointment, to talk about the readings, or your writing. *I very much appreciate any kind of feedback about the course.*

The Writing Center

The University Writing Center can assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The tutor's job is to add another voice in response to your writing. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center can help with generating ideas, suggesting organization, and even working through grammatical issues. The University Writing Center is located in Simpkins Hall 341. Call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment to your session.

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I will make academic accommodations for any student who notifies me of the need. For me to provide the proper accommodation(s), you must provide me documentation from Disability Support Services. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to my attention, as I am not legally permitted to ask. Students who require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e., fire, tornado, etc.) should tell me the most appropriate procedures to follow. Please contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512.

Schedule

Week 1: January 24
Consult *Online Assignments* page.

Week 2: January 31
Consult *Online Assignments* page.

Week 3: February 7
Oedipus at Colonus. Antigone.

Week 4: February 14
The Republic.

Week 5: February 21
Metamorphoses.

Week 6: February 28
Metamorphoses.

Week 7: March 7
The Gospel of John & Paradise Lost.

Spring Break

Week 8: March 21
Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit.

Week 9: March 28
A Discourse Upon the Origin and the Foundation Of The Inequality Among Mankind.

Week 10: April 4
Borderlands/La Frontera.
Midterm Essay Due.

Week 11: April 11
Mythologies.
Student Presentations.

Week 12: April 18
Mythologies. The Beauty Myth.
Student Presentations.

Week 13: April 25
The Male Body.
Student Presentations.

Week 14: May 2
The Male Body.
Student Presentations.

Final Exam Week
Final Essay Due Monday, May 9.