

Mythologies

Professor Merrill Cole
M-Cole@wiu.edu / 298-1410
<http://faculty.wiu.edu/M-Cole/>

English 355, Section 001
Fall Semester 2013

Office: Simpkins 109
Hours: TTH, 12:30-2:00; W, 1:00-2:00

TTh, 11:00-12:15 p.m.
Simpkins 308

Texts

Except for texts that I ask you to print from my website or WesternOnline, use the editions available at the University Bookstore. Alternative editions of books and e-book readers are not acceptable.

Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*. ISBN: 0374521506
T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*. Norton Critical Edition. ISBN: 0393974995
Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. ISBN: 0195283805
John Milton, *Paradise Lost*. ISBN: 0393924289
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. Norton Critical Edition. ISBN: 039392534X
Plato, *The Republic*. ISBN: 0872201368
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*. Norton Critical Edition. ISBN: 0393927938
Sophocles, *The Oedipus Cycle*. ISBN: 0062119990
Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. ISBN: 0802135161

Description

This seminar investigates mythology in literature and 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. That is to say, myth does not exist only elsewhere, for other people: it is active here and now. Of particular interest to the course are fictions of the body and fables of the social order.

The course centers on Classical, Christian, and contemporary mythologies, but there will be opportunities to discuss non-Western mythologies, too.

Requirements

This course involves three five page essay assignments: (1) a personal narrative due near the beginning of the course in which you critically examine the role that myth has played in some part or time in your life; (2) a literary analysis; and (3) a final essay that brings critical texts into a literary analysis. You will receive assignment sheet for all three.

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 5-minute presentation during the second-half of the semester. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce a mythology not covered in the readings, though there are other options. 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, but be prepared to discuss the group's findings.

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:	10%
Homework:	10%
Presentation:	10%
Discussion Questions:	15%
First Essay:	10%
Second Essay:	20%
Third Essay:	25%

Unexcused late essays receive a one-letter grade reduction. I will grant an extension for almost any reason, if contacted *at least 24 hours in advance*. Plagiarism means 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 Malpass Library (3rd Floor, West Side). Call for an appointment (298–2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment to your session. For more information on other locations, see www.wiu.edu/uwc.

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: August 20 & 22

Introduction. Mythology & First Essay handouts. *Mythologies*.

Week 2: August 27 & 29

Classes Canceled.

Week 3: September 3 & 5

First Essay due September 3. *Oedipus at the King*. Freud.

Week 4: September 10 & 12
Oedipus at Colonus.

Week 5: September 17 & 19
The Book of Job & Ecclesiastes

Week 6: September 24 & 26
Antigone.

Week 7: October 1 & 3
The Republic.

Week 8: October 8 & 10
Second Essay due October 8. *Metamorphoses. The Book of Genesis.*

Week 9: October 15 & 17
Metamorphoses. The Gospel of John. Student presentations.

Week 10: October 22 & 24
The Book of Revelations. Paradise Lost. Student presentations.

Week 11: October 29 & 31
Paradise Lost. Student presentations.

Week 12: November 5 & 7
Frankenstein. Student Presentations.

Week 13: November 12 & 14
Frankenstein. Student Presentations.

Week 14: November 19 & 21
The Waste Land. Student Presentations.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15: December 3 & 5
Mythologies. Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit. Student Presentations.

Final Exam Week
Final Essay Due Monday, December 9.