



This Class Emphasizes
Communication
Connections
Concepts
Creativity

LITERATURE 3334: MYTHOLOGY

Fall 2017 | Thursdays 4:00-6:50 PM | Bayou Bldg. 1313

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Office Hours:

**Tuesday: 2:30–6:00 pm,
Thursday: 1:00–3:30 pm,
& by appointment**

APPLIED CRITICAL THINKING STATEMENT

This course has been authorized by UHCL as an Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) Course which means that in addition to learning about the specified course content, students will be engaged with some or all of the Elements of Thought and Universal Intellectual Standards of critical thinking. The objective of an ACT course is to develop the student's ability to become skilled at analysis and evaluation by applying a set of intellectual tools that may be effectively used across all disciplines (as well as to the student's personal life). Based on the Foundation for Critical Thinking model (<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>), critical thinking involves thinking for a purpose, asking questions, using information, applying concepts, drawing inferences and conclusions, identifying assumptions, anticipating implications and consequences, and recognizing points of view. The Universal Intellectual Standards that are applied to these Elements of Thought of critical thinking in order to develop Intellectual Traits include clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an introduction to ancient mythologies from selected traditions, as well as periodic examination of modern interpretations of selected myths. Given the significance of Greco-Roman mythology on the development of Western literature and culture, much of this course focuses on this tradition, though there will be an opportunity for you to explore non-Western creation myths as well. The remainder of the course will examine myths from the Norse tradition and their significance for the development of chivalric tales and legends in Scandinavian and Germanic literature.

CENTRAL QUESTIONS

- What is the function and power of myth?
- What role does mythmaking play in reinforcing and creating culture and social norms?
- What do myths tell us about humans and about human relations (with other humans, with nature, with the divine)?
- Why and how do certain myths persist? What accounts for their longevity?

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Myth, myth-making, mythology, storytelling, origin stories, creation and creativity, hero, conflict; will; power; journey; human relationships (human-human; human-divine; human-nature); mortality

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Develop intellectual humility when engaging in *logical* and *fair* discussions about the **assumptions** we may bring to the course.
2. Demonstrate intellectual curiosity and courage when venturing forth *clear* and *relevant* **questions** about the texts.
3. Communicate *significant* **insight** about a text or texts, using *clear*, *precise* close readings to support *deep* **interpretations** of the texts.
4. *Clearly* articulate the **implications** of critically inflected analyses of the texts.
5. Communicate both *precise* and nuanced **knowledge** and critical **interpretations** of the individual texts of the course and a *broader* argument about what the myths, over time and across cultures, tell us about the human condition.

REQUIRED TEXTS (PRINT COPIES OF THESE EDITIONS)

Gilgamesh, translated by David Ferry, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992. (ISBN: 9780374523831)

Aeschylus. *Prometheus Bound*, translated by James Scully and C. John Herington, Oxford UP, 1975. (ISBN: 9780195061659)

Homer. *The Odyssey*, translated by Barry B. Powell, Oxford UP, 2015. (ISBN: 9780199925889)

Ovid. *Metamorphoses*, translated by Stanley Lombardo, Hackett, 2010. (ISBN: 9781603843072)

**Additional texts will be available in class and/or on Blackboard.

COURSEWORK

Critical thinking compels us to recognize our positions when we speak, so the depth and breadth of personal/individual viewpoint is enhanced by exposure to multiple points of view. It enables a more informed approach to complexity in the world. It unpacks “common sense” assumptions that structure our everyday lives. We aim instead for greater clarity and sophistication in our understanding of experience and consciousness. You will be asked in this course to demonstrate your curiosity, creativity, and active engagement with the texts by generating reading questions and crafting detailed close readings; to develop and apply critical thinking skills as you support your interpretations of texts; to communicate your understanding and interpretation of the texts in small- and large-group discussions, as well as in proficiently written essays; and, to demonstrate effective writing processes, including organization, argumentation, rhetoric, grammar, and citation.

READING AND PARTICIPATION (10%)

Student Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

As this is a discussion based course, full participation requires active reading. I expect you to complete all reading assignments per the course schedule and to come to class with the **print copy of the required text**. As you read, pay attention to detail. This course will demand your attention to detail and ask you to think about how the details in the texts generate meaning. Further, active reading involves asking questions: **not**, primarily, “What is this poem about?” *but* “How does the poem represent its subject?” Active participation begins with the questions you ask (and note down!) as you read and continues in the classroom, where there will be frequent opportunities for small and large group discussions.

QUIZZES (15% TOTAL)

Student Learning Objectives: 3, 5

Quizzes will consist of short, factual questions and one discussion question, all based on the reading assigned for that day. You may use your notebook during the quiz but not the text of the assigned reading. There will be six quizzes during the semester. Of these, I will drop the lowest score; alternatively, you are allowed to miss one quiz, with the understanding that all others will count towards your grade. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class period.

PAPERS (20% EACH)

Student Learning Objectives: 2, 3, 4, 5

You will submit two 4-5 page analytical papers. Central to each will be a close reading of a passage or a motif and a discussion of how the passage/motif contributes to, develops, or troubles the meaning of the larger work. These essays will be thesis-driven: they will begin with, and organized using, the answer to the big question: “So what?” I will provide a handout for each paper.

EXAMS (15%; 20%)

Student Learning Objectives: 3, 4, 5

Exams will test your knowledge of the reading material and your ability to draw connections between texts. The final exam will be comprehensive, though with greater emphasis on post-midterm material.

GRADING

Attendance and Participation:	10%
Quizzes (periodic)	15%
Paper 1 (Oct. 5):	20%
Paper 2 (Nov. 30):	20%
Midterm Exam (Oct. 19):	15%
Final Exam (Dec. 14):	20%

A (93-100)	C (73-76)
A- (90-92)	C- (70-72)
B+ (87-89)	D+ (67-69)
B (83-86)	D (63-66)
B- (80-82)	D- (60-62)
C+ (77-79)	F (0-59)

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Active engagement in class is a vital component of a successful and rewarding course, and each session will offer frequent opportunities for in-class writing and group discussion. You are expected to have regular, punctual attendance. As unforeseen circumstances may make it impossible for you to attend class, I will let two absences pass without mention or penalty. If an assignment is due that day, you will still be responsible for turning it in on time; however, for

two absences, you do not need to contact me unless we have specifically made a separate appointment to meet. Three or more unexcused absences will lower your overall grade.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Arrive on time to each class and, if you have to leave, please do so unobtrusively.

Cellphones may only be used in cases of emergency; *please turn off your ringer before entering class*. I reserve the right to collect cell phones for the duration of class if I deem them disruptive in any way!

You are welcome to consume food and drinks during class, with the exception of crunchy/noisy food (potato chips, carrots, apples, Cheetos, etc.) or other food that disturbs the classroom-learning environment. As a class, we may decide upon further guidelines or criteria for achieving a productive and enjoyable course.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

You are welcome to email me at marcoline@uhcl.edu. Please make sure to set up your **UHCL email account** and to check it regularly (or set up email forwarding), as I may send out messages to the whole class. To avoid the disappearance of your email in the abyss of my spam folder, please ***send me messages only from your UHCL account***. Before writing an email, make sure your question cannot be answered on the syllabus or on the course Blackboard site. Please err on the side of formality in your writing. Of course, grades will not be communicated or discussed by email, and lengthy questions are better discussed in person during office hours. *Expect a turn-around time of 24 hours during the work week; weekend messages will be processed on Mondays.*

ACADEMIC HONESTY

You are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the UHCL catalog and the Student Life Handbook for the University Academic Honesty Policy.

Plagiarism, that is, using research without citations, or using a created product without crediting the source, may result in a grade penalty or failure of the course.

In other words:

- You **must** use quotation marks around any words or phrases you take from someone else's text and give a parenthetical reference with the relevant information.
- You **must** give a parenthetical reference whenever you paraphrase someone else's idea.
- You **must** provide complete bibliographic information at the end of your paper for all sources you use.

If you are uncertain whether a writing practice counts as plagiarism, **stop writing** and verify whether you are using quotation marks and parenthetical references correctly, whether your paraphrase is actually in your own words, and, basically, whether you are writing your idea or someone else's and then proceed with your writing while using proper citation practices.

However, if you are certain that a writing practice counts as plagiarism and you are about to do it anyway, **stop writing** and contact me for assistance.

LATE WORK

Late work will be accepted without penalty **only** in exceptional cases and with prior approval. All other late work will be marked down a letter grade step (A to A-, or B+ to B, for example)

for each day it is late, starting with the day it is due and including weekends. *N.B. All work for this class must be turned in by **December 7th**.

WITHDRAWALS

The last day to drop the class is **October 2nd**. Please be advised of the **Six Drop Rule**: Dropping this or any other course between the first day of class and the census date for the semester/session does not affect your 6 drop rule count. Dropping a course between the census date and the last day to drop a class for the semester/session will count as one of your 6 permitted drops. You should take this into consideration before dropping this or any other course. Visit www.uhcl.edu/records for more information on the 6 drop rule and the census date information for the semester.

INCOMPLETES

A grade of “I” is given only in cases of documented emergency after the withdrawal date but before the end of the semester, provided that you have been making satisfactory progress in the course.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact your University’s student disability services center.

First, consult the Coordinator of Health Disabilities Services, SSB 1.301, telephone 281-283-2627, and **then** discuss the accommodation with me. This must be done before the first formal assignment is due.

OFFICE HOURS

Come to office hours as often as you like to discuss questions you may have about the readings, lectures, or assignments!! No appointment is needed for the set hours. **If you cannot meet with me during my office hours, email me or see me in class to set up a meeting.** *To cancel or change an appointment that is not during office hours, please email me at least 24 hours in advance.*

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is subject to change as we progress through the readings. It is your responsibility to keep updated on course information if you are absent. *Prepare all readings prior to the class for which they are scheduled.*

SEPTEMBER 7

- Introduction to the Course
- Homer, from *Iliad* and from *The Odyssey*

SEPTEMBER 14

- Homer, *The Odyssey*, Books 1-8

SEPTEMBER 21

- Homer, *The Odyssey*, Books 9-16 (**Quiz 1**)
 - ❖ Recommended
 - Heine, “Die Lorelei” (BB)
 - Goethe, “The Fisherman” (BB)
 - Plath, “Lorelei” (BB)

SEPTEMBER 28

- Homer, *The Odyssey*, Books 17-24 (**Quiz 2**)
 - ❖ Recommended
 - Tennyson, “Ulysses” (BB)

OCTOBER 5 (PAPER 1 DUE BY 4 PM [in class and on Blackboard])

- Hesiod, *Theogony* (BB)
- Creation Myths Research

OCTOBER 12

- Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, all (**Quiz 3**)
 - ❖ Recommended
 - Goethe, “Prometheus” (BB)
 - Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, Act One (BB)
 - Byron, “Prometheus,” “Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte” (BB)
 - Shelley, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, excerpt (BB)

OCTOBER 19

- **In-Class Midterm Exam**

OCTOBER 26

- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Books 1-5 (**Quiz 4**)

NOVEMBER 2

- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Books 6-10 (**Quiz 5**)

NOVEMBER 9

- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 11-15
 - ❖ Recommended
 - Rilke, “Orpheus. Eurydice. Hermes” (BB)
 - Atwood, “Orpheus (1),” *Orpheus and Eurydice Cycle* (BB)

NOVEMBER 16

- *Gilgamesh* (Quiz 6)

****Happy Thanksgiving: November 23****

NOVEMBER 30 (PAPER 2 DUE BY 4 PM [in class and on Blackboard])

- Colum, *The Children of Odin*, Parts One and Two (Blackboard)

DECEMBER 7

- Colum, *The Children of Odin*, Parts Three and Four (Blackboard)
- Norse mythology in modern pop culture; Wagner, *The Valkyrie*, *Götterdämmerung* (*Twilight of the Gods*), excerpts (in-class listening)
- Conclusions
- Take-home portion of final exam (handout)
- Evaluations

DECEMBER 14

- **In-Class Final Exam**