

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

- A. Department Information:  
Division: Humanities and Social Science  
Department: Philosophy/Religious Studies  
Course ID: RELIG 150  
Course Title: Introduction to Mythology  
Units: 3  
Lecture: 3  
Prerequisite: None

B. Catalog and Schedule Description:

An overview of myth and its function in culture through an introduction to origin and end-time stories from many traditions including native American, the classical mythology of Greece, and the major living religions

**II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One**

**III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Formulate and express a historical, cultural, and/or intellectual matrix within which the concerns and the questions regarding religion and mythology can be placed;
- B. Read and critically evaluate selected primary sources related to religion and mythology (including but not limited to epics, aphorisms, novels, short stories, poetry, and non-textual primary sources such as music, movies, and visual art forms);
- C. Respond critically, analytically, and/or synthetically in writing to issues dealing with religion and mythology (including but not limited to the themes of the hero, the goddess, the end of the world, the interpretation of mythology in the twentieth century, and the relationship between mythology and religion);
- D. Apply the ideas and concepts in the disciplines of religious studies and mythology (see Sample Course Content below) to contemporary experience.

**IV. COURSE CONTENT:**

- A. Myths of Creation
- B. Myths of the End of the World
- C. Myths of the Flood
- D. The myth of the Hero
  1. Miraculous Conception and Virgin Birth
  2. Childhood, initiation, and divine signs
  3. Preparation, meditation, withdrawal, and refusal
  4. Trial and Quest
  5. Death and Scapegoat
  6. Resurrection and Rebirth
  7. Ascension, Apotheosis, and Rebirth
- D. Ways to Interpret Myth
  1. Greek theories
    - a. Allegory
    - b. Euhemerism
    - c. Platonism
  2. Medieval and Renaissance Theories
  3. Theories of the Enlightenment

4. Theories of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
  - a. Romantic theories
  - b. Anthropological theories
  - c. Linguistic theories
  - d. Psychological theories
  - e. Structuralism

**V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

- A. Lecture
- B. Discussions (class and group)
- C. Audio-Visuals
- D. Reading of texts, both secondary and primary
- E. Writing tasks appropriate for the material
- F. Computer Tutorials (if applicable)

**VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

- A. Reading: Read the introductory chapter of Joseph Campbell's Hero With a Thousand Faces. Be able to identify the key ideas and concepts regarding the hero's journey from that chapter. Be able to identify the key examples from the variety of traditions that Campbell uses to illustrate his points. Be able to apply the ideas and images arising in the first chapter of Hero With a Thousand Faces to aspects of your own experience.
- B. Writing, critical thinking: Read the accounts of the descent to the underworld of Aeneas, Odysseus, Orpheus, Jesus, Dionysus, and Izanagi and Izanami. Compare and contrast the various elements of the descent. Compare and contrast the various descriptions of the underworld. After noting the similarities and differences of both the descent and the place of the underworld, evaluate the adequacy of such mythologies for a "postmodern" and/or "post-Christian" America using your own experience as well as information gleaned from researching contemporary religious experience.

**VII. METHODS OF EVALUATION:**

- A. Methods of evaluation will vary from instructor to instructor, but may include multiple choice tests, or sentence completion tests. In addition, written components such as essay tests, writing tasks (i.e. journals, summary reviews, interpretive essays, and/or term projects) will be included. Telecomputing can include downloading and uploading reading and writing tasks on-line discussion, and computer tutorials. Grading may be comparative within a class or may be based on an absolute standard.
  1. Sample Objective Test Question: According to Joseph Campbell, Bastian's Elementargedanken most closely resemble
    - a. Freud's theories of id, ego, and superego
    - b. Maslow's hierarchies of human existence
    - c. Jung's archetypes
    - d. Miller's hermeneuts
    - e. None of the above
- B. While the frequency of evaluation will depend on the type of evaluation (i.e. "objective" or written), evaluation will take place periodically throughout the semester with enough frequency to be sufficient to measure student progress and will be sensitive to the various learning styles of students. The minimum evaluation will consist of at least two evaluative instruments (i.e. papers, projects, portfolios, or tests) chosen by the instructor of record for the class.

**VIII. TYPICAL TEXTS:**

- A. Rosenberg, Donna. World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics. Lincolnwood, Ill.: JTC Publishing Group, 1994.
- B. Leeming, David Adams. Mythology: The Voyage of the Hero. New York: Harper & Row, 1998.

**IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:**

Supplementary material may include handouts, primary sources, maps, study guides, computer disks, and/or software.