

## **English 363 Mythology—3 Credit Hours Evans 251 6:00-7:20 MW**

Dr. Melissa Morpew Fall 2007

Office 116 Evans 294-1944 eng\_smm@shsu.edu

Office Hours : 3:00-6:00 MW 12:00-3:30 TTH and others by appointment.

### DESCRIPTION:

The study of myths and their application to literary studies. Recommended for certification program in Language Arts composite (see Secondary Education Requirements). Prerequisite: 9 hours of English.

In this class we will read several myths and novels, stories, poems based on myth or that deal with mythic elements. In each instance, we will examine through class discussion and lecture what the texts have to add to our knowledge of the universal human experience and the struggle of daily life in both extraordinary and ordinary circumstances, aiding in our exploration of the concerns, hopes, and fears of human existence. We will examine the characteristics of myth and archetype, creating a definition of myth that encompasses several critical and philosophical viewpoints addressed in the study of mythography. We will also complete study guides, take essay exams, and write essays in order to explore these texts and to deepen our understanding of them through explication, analysis, and synthesis.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Students will delve into the study of mythology and mythography, mythological narrative, and theories of myth.

Students will analyze the characteristics of myth and archetype and how myth differs from other literary genres and the edges where those genres blend and meld together.

Students will write essays analyzing various elements of the myths and novels and poems and stories we read.

Students will discuss what makes myth important not only to individuals but to our culture.

Students will develop a personal definition of myth.

Students will complete various exercises and study guides to help them explore the mythological themes of the texts.

Students will read outside articles to enrich their study of myth.

Students will explore the distinctions between myth and religion.

Students will gain a broad knowledge of the underlying myths that shape western culture and western literature, as well as archetypes that are present in the myths of myriad cultures unfamiliar to us.

### COURSE POLICIES:

Since your essay assignments and study guides will be based upon, not only the assigned texts, but also class discussion, attendance is extremely important. You are allowed 3 absences without penalty. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> absence, your final grade will be reduced by one letter grade. After the 6<sup>th</sup> absence, your final grade will be reduced by two letter grades. Should any student accumulate 10 or more absences, he or she will receive a failing grade for the course. It is your responsibility to inform me of your presence at the end of the class period should you come in late. If you will be absent for major recognized religious holidays, these will be excused if I am given prior notice that you plan to take these holidays during the semester. Otherwise there are no excused absences. Plan accordingly.

I expect you to come prepared to discuss the selections, and occasionally I may give a pop quiz.

Your grade will be based on your performance on 3 to 4 critical essay assignments (based on your own analysis, not on research), a study guide for each unit, 7 out of 10 pop quizzes, as well as, a take home mid-term and a cumulative final essay exam. Since your exams are take-home exams, they are due on the due date. The exams will be posted on Blackboard and you will be given ample time to complete them.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

**The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus**

by Magaret Atwood

**Achilles: A Novel**  
by Elizabeth Cook

**Grendel**  
by John Gardner

**Perfume: The Story of a Murderer**  
by Patrick Suskind

**The Virgin Suicides**  
by Jeffrey Eugenides

**Heart of Darkness (Dover Thrift Editions)**  
by Joseph Conrad

**The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony**  
by Roberto Calasso

**The Greek Myths: Complete Edition**  
by Robert Graves

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

DATE:

- \_\_\_\_: WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION WHAT IS A MYTH
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK TWO: SHADOW SELF, THE MINOTAUR
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK THREE: *HEART OF DARKNESS*
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK FOUR: *HEART OF DARKNESS*
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK FIVE: *PERFUME: THE STORY OF A MURDERER*
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK SIX: *PERFUME* CONTINUED
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK SEVEN: *ACHILLES*
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK EIGHT: *ACHILLES* CONTINUED
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK NINE: *PENELOPEIAD*
  
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK TEN: *PENELOPEIAD* CONTINUED
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK ELEVEN: *GRENDEL*
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK TWELVE: *GRENDEL* CONTINUED
  
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK THIRTEEN: *THE VIRGIN SUICIDES*
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK FOURTEEN: *THE VIRGIN SUICIDES* CONTINUED
- \_\_\_\_: WEEK FIFTEEN: TYING UP LOOSE ENDS

GRADES: ESSAYS and  
STUDY GUIDES and POP QUIZES 80%  
MID-TERM 10%, FINAL 10%

A=90-100 B=89-80 C=79-70 D=69-60 F=59 AND BELOW

**\*\*\*!!\*\*If you are absent it is your duty to find out what you missed and what you need to make up , either from me or from one of your classmates.\*\*\*!!\*\*\***

ALL OF YOUR COURSE WORK WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH SHSU'S BLACKBOARD ON-LINE COURSE NETWORK. BE SURE TO CHECK REGULARLY FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS AND OTHER COURSE MATERIALS AS THEY COME AVAILABLE.

This syllabus is meant as a general guide and **adjustments will be necessary.**

### **Academic Dishonesty**

**All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.**

**If you are found guilty of plagiarism or academic dishonesty at the least you will receive a failing grade on the compromised paper or test, at the most you might end up failing the course, depending upon the severity of the infraction.**

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

### **Religious Holidays**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

### **Visitors in the Classroom**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the

visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

**Instructor Evaluations**

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

**Classroom Rules of Conduct**

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:

<https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

Please turn off all cellphones prior to entering class. It is a tremendous distraction to have cellphones going off in the middle of discussions and lectures.

