

RELS405

STUDENT WARNING: This course syllabus is from a previous semester archive and serves only as a preparatory reference. Please use this syllabus as a reference only until the professor opens the classroom and you have access to the updated course syllabus. Please do NOT purchase any books or start any work based on this syllabus; this syllabus may NOT be the one that your individual instructor uses for a course that has not yet started. If you need to verify course textbooks, please refer to the online course description through your student portal. This syllabus is proprietary material of APUS.

Course Summary

Course : RELS405 **Title :** Myth and Ritual

Length of Course : 8

Prerequisites : N/A **Credit Hours :** 3

Description

Course Description: This course is a study of the role of myth and ritual in historical terms as well as modern myth and ritual developments. Students explore the influence of pervasive myths and rituals in society as they are infused throughout people and religious thought. Students will examine the continued influences of classical, religious and new myths in American popular culture and society today.

Course Scope:

This course is divided into 8 weeks and is organized to give students a broad context in which to study myth and ritual developments. In this course, students will read a variety of myths from various geographic areas and study the various rituals that correspond to these parts of the world. Instruction is primarily textbook driven with accompanied online lectures and online classroom weekly forums discussion.

Because this is a survey course of a broad subject, it will out of necessity cover each topic with a broad brush. However, the “Additional Resources” section in each week’s Lessons will allow a deeper look into any subject area that particularly attracts the student. This will enable students to research topics related to the material discussed and covered in the textbook.

Objectives

After you have completed this course, you should be able to:

- Explain what myth and ritual are and are not and compare myths to other “stories” such as legends and folktales
- Discuss the purpose of mythology and rituals, both in contemporary society and in ancient times
- Discuss universal characteristics or themes common to all myths
- Describe and provide examples of the various types of myths including: Creation and Cosmology myths, myths of the Gods, Hero myths, Fertility myths, Place and Object myths, etc.
- Describe and provide examples of the wide variety of rituals including: rites of passage, divination rituals, ancestral rituals, fertility rituals, etc.
- Analyze various ancient and contemporary myths using theories of myth interpretation

Outline

Week 1: What is Myth?

Learning Outcomes

- Differentiate myth from other “stories,” such as legends and folktales
- Evaluate the role of myth within human culture
- Understand some specific functions of ritual and myth

Required Readings

Required Reading & Video

[“Ways of Interpreting Mythology”](#)

[“Myth and Psyche: The Evolution of Consciousness”](#)

[“Why Myth?”](#)

[“Myth and Consciousness”](#)

[“Shamans as the First Shapers of Myths”](#)

[“The Personification of Energies as Divinities”](#)

Additional Resources:

[World Mythology Tour](#)

[Encyclopedia Mythica](#)

[Myth Web](#)

[Indigenous Peoples Literature](#)

Assignments

- Become familiar with our online classroom
- Complete the Week 1 reading
- Read the Week 1 Lesson
- Post to Week 1 Forum: Introductions
- Post to Week 1 Forum: What is myth?

Week 2: Mythology and Rituals of Ancient Greece and Rome

Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate methods of reading and interpreting mythology
- Explain common elements found in creation myths from around the world
- Compare and contrast creation myths from a variety of different cultures
- Understand the ritual aspect of creation mythology

Required Readings

Required Reading & Video

["The Enuma Elish"](#) (Babylonia)

["The Creation of the Titans and the Gods"](#) (Greece)

["The Creation of the Universe"](#) (India)

["Pan Gu and Nü Wa"](#) (China)

["The Creation Cycle"](#) (Polynesia/Maori)

["The Creation, Death and Rebirth of the Universe"](#) (Northern Europe)

["The Creation of the Universe and Ife"](#) (Yoruba)

["The Origin of Life and Fire"](#) (Boshongo/Bakuba)

["Wanadi the Creator"](#) (Yekuhana)

["The Creation Story of the Maya"](#) (Central America)

["The Emergence"](#) (Navajo)

Additional Resources:

["Enuma Elish: The Babylonian Epic of Creation"](#)

[Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses](#)

[Sumerian Mythology](#)

[Norse Mythology](#)

[Native American Legends](#)

[Polynesian Mythology](#)

[African Mythology: The Gods and Spirits of Africa](#)

[Maya Culture: Traditional Storytellers' Tales](#)

Assignments

- Complete the reading for Week 2
- Read the Week 2 Lesson
- Post to Week 2 Forum: The Structure of the Universe

Week 3: Mythology and Rituals of the Far East and Pacific Islands

Learning Outcomes

- Analyze how nature myths express the relationship between humans and the environment
- Understand how concepts in ancient mythology relate to modern scientific theories
- Evaluate the symbolism of animals in myths from around the world

Required Readings

Required Reading

[The Golden Bough, Vol. 1](#), Chapter III, section 8: "Demeter and Persephone," pp. 304-333

["Environment Shaping Mythology"](#)

["The Corn Mother in Many Lands"](#)

["Tammuz"](#) (Sumerian & Babylonian)

["How Muin Became Keeper of the Medicines"](#) (American Indian)

["The Elk Spirit of Lost Lake"](#) (American Indian)

["The Bird Whose Wings Made the Wind"](#) (American Indian)

["Earthquakes in Maori Tradition"](#) (New Zealand)

["The Hare and the Tortoise"](#) (Somalia)

["Telepinu"](#) (Hittite)

["Demeter and Persephone"](#) (Greece)

["Raven and the Sources of Light"](#) (Haida/Tsimshian/Tlingit)

Additional Resources:

[Gateway to Babylon](#)

[The Maori People](#)

[Maori Mythology and Culture](#)

[African Folklore Tales](#)

[Myths, Legends, Beliefs and Traditional Stories from Africa](#)

[Myths and Legends of the Sioux](#)

Assignments

- Complete the Week 3 reading
- Read the Week 3 Lesson
- Post to Week 3 Forum: Depicting Nature as Conscious
- Submit Myth Analysis Paper

Week 4: Hero Myths

Learning Outcomes

- Explain how hero myths are a mythological expression of an initiation ritual
- Compare and contrast hero myths from different cultures
- Evaluate the depiction of heroes in popular culture

Required Readings

Reading & Video

[The Golden Bough, Vol. 1](#), Chapter III, section 6: "Osiris," pp. 276-294

["Gilgamesh"](#) (Sumer/Babylonia)

["Esfandiyar"](#) (Persia)

["The Labors of Heracles \(Hercules\)"](#) (Greece)

["The Odyssey"](#) (Greece)

["The Ramayana"](#) (India)

["Chi Li Slays the Serpent"](#) (China)

["Beowulf"](#) (England/Scandinavia)

["Sigurd the Volsung"](#) (Northern Europe)

["Gassire's Lute"](#) (Soninke)

["Bakaridjan Kone"](#) (Segu)

Additional Resources:

[Storytelling, the Meaning of Life and the "Epic of Gilgamesh"](#)

[Hinduism and Mythology](#)

[Maori Culture and Mythology](#)

[A Short Course on the Djinn](#) (supernatural beings in Arabic folktales who intervene on behalf of humans)

[Shimane: Home of Japanese Mythology](#)

[Monsters and Hybrids in Greek Mythology](#)

[Cuchulain: Champion of Ireland](#)

[Animal Symbolism in Celtic Mythology](#)

Assignments

- Complete the Week 4 reading
- Read the Week 4 Lesson
- Post to Week 4 Forum: We are Heroes
- Submit the Midterm in Tests & Quizzes

Week 5: Women in Mythology

Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate the different functions of female goddesses, such as seductress, warrior, and magician
- Explain the role of the Great Goddess in creation myths
- Compare and contrast the various ways women are portrayed in ancient and popular culture.

Required Readings

Required Reading & Video

["The Goddess: The Giver of Forms"](#)

["Osiris, Isis, and Horus"](#) (Egypt)

["Medea"](#) (Greece)

[“Pyramus and Thisbe”](#) (Rome)

[“The Legend of Amaterasu”](#) (Japan)

[“The Woman Who Fell from the Sky”](#) (Inuit/Huron)

[“The Legend of Sedna, the Sea Goddess”](#) (Inuit)

[“The Descent of Ishtar”](#) (Babylonian)

[“The Man-Eating Wife, the Little Old Woman and the Morning Star”](#) (Native American)

[“The Fatal Swing”](#) (Native American)

[“The Saga of Rhiannon”](#) (Celtic)

Additional Resources:

[Ancient Mesopotamian Gods and Goddesses: Inana/Ištar](#)

[Anat: The Canaanite Goddess of War and Sacrifice](#)

[Roman Mythology](#)

[Rhiannon: Celtic Goddess](#)

[Determining the True Character of Sita](#)

[Sacrifice of a Goddess](#)

[Ancient Goddess Religions](#)

Assignments

- Complete the Week 5 reading
- Read the Week 5 Lesson
- Post to Week 5 Forum: The Mythological Woman

Week 6: Mythology and Rituals of Africa and Secularization

Learning Outcomes

- Compare and contrast trickster myths from around the world
- Analyze the role of animals in trickster myths
- Evaluate how divine creativity is expressed through trickster mythology

Required Readings

Required Reading & Video

[The Golden Bough, Vol. 2](#), Chapter IV, section 2: “Balder,” pp. 220-267

[“The Mythology of the Trickster”](#)

[“The Death of Balder”](#) (Northern Europe)

[“How Maui Tamed the Sun”](#) (Polynesian/Maori)

[“Lodge-Boy and Thrown-Away”](#) (Crow)

[The Magic Windpipe](#)” (Native American)

“[The Trickster’s Great Fall and his Revenge](#)” (Native American)

“[How He Got Tongue](#)” (Native American)

“[Ouyan the Curlew](#)” (Australasian)

“[The Exploits of Olofat](#)” (Micronesian)

“[The Tortoise and the Magic Drum](#)” (Nigeria)

“[Tug of War](#)” (Bantu, East Africa)

Additional Resources:

[Mind: Trickster, Transformer](#)

[Amaterasu](#)

[Hero vs. Trickster](#)

[Depiction of Animals in the *Popul Vuh*](#)

[The Trickster](#)

[The Enigmatic Loki: A Trickster among Gods in Norse Mythology](#)

[The Trickster in African-American Literature](#)

[Native American Tricksters of Myth and Legend](#)

[Crow \(Waa Wahn\) in Australian Aboriginal Mythology](#)

[Dreamings and Place: Aboriginal monsters and their meaning](#)

Assignments

- Complete the Week 6 reading
- Read the Week 6 Lesson
- Post to Week 6 Forum: Tricksters in the Media

Week 7: Rituals, Myth, & Art

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss the purpose of mythology and rituals, both in contemporary society and in ancient times
- Describe and provide examples of the wide variety of rituals, including rites of passage, seasonal festivals, ancestral rituals, fertility rituals, etc.
- Identify and describe a variety of rituals from around the world

Required Readings

- Read "[The Basic Ideas of Mircea Eliade's The Sacred and the Profane](#)"
- Read the Week 7 Lesson
- Post to Week 7 Forum: Exploring Connections between Ritual, Myth & Art
- Submit the Myth & Culture project (see Assignments)

Assignments

Required Reading

- Read "[The Basic Ideas of Mircea Eliade's The Sacred and the Profane](#)"

Additional Resources:

[African Ceremonies](#)

[Egungun Festival in Nigeria](#)

[Cultures on the Edge](#)

[Celtic Festivals](#)

[Ancestor Worship in China](#)

[Aboriginal Religion](#)

[Native American Healing Ceremonies](#)

Week 8: Myth and the Modern World

Learning Outcomes

- Consider how myths and rituals change (or do not change) as their vehicle changes
- Compare and contrast the function of myths and rituals in contemporary society
- Analyze the use and expression of rituals in ancient cultures as compared to modern times

Required Readings

Required Reading

- Read "[From mythology to psychology: Identifying archetypal symbols in movies](#)"

Additional Resources:

[History and Story of Mother Goose](#)

[The Annotated Cinderella](#)

[Noodleheads: The Wisdom of Fools](#)

[The Hero's Path: Gabrielle as Focal Hero in "Xena: Warrior Princess"](#)

[Top 12 Films Based on Classical Mythology](#)

[Power of Images: Creating the Myths of Our Time](#)

[Exploring the True Origins of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#)

[Soberheroes: A Critical Look at Modern Mythology](#)

Assignments

- Read "[From mythology to psychology: Identifying archetypal symbols in movies](#)"
- Read the Week 8 Lesson
- Post to Week 8 Forum: Myth & Culture Project
- Submit the Final in Tests & Quizzes

Evaluation

The nature of an online course dictates a significant degree of independent work. I will provide you with the resources, experience, and guidance; you assume the responsibility for managing your time, learning the material, and completing assignments on time.

It is imperative that you **read your messages** every time you log into the classroom. Important updates to your assignments, due dates, etc. will be sent to you via message or posted in the course announcements.

For the purposes of this course, a “**week**” is defined as the time period between Monday–Sunday. The **first week** begins on the first day of the semester and ends at 11:55 p.m. Eastern Time, the following Sunday.

I have designed this course so that your weekly readings include:

- Several weekly readings
- A weekly lesson

Grades in this course are based on the following:

1. **Class Participation in Forums:** Participation will be evaluated based on the degree of interaction you have with your instructor and with your fellow students.

You are required to participate in classroom Forums during the week. Respecting your busy schedules, Forum work is asynchronous, meaning you are **not** required to be online at a specific time or place with the professor and other members of your course. Instead, you post your comments in Forums. (You certainly may choose to interact synchronously with your classmates or me via a chat room, however). **It is not acceptable to wait until Sunday (the last day of the online week) to begin participating in the discussions, as it does not give your classmates ample time to respond to your post, or you to theirs. You must participate, substantively, during the week to fulfill the Forum requirements.**

In addition, forum work must be posted in the classroom on the week assigned. Please keep in mind that the weeks run Monday-Sunday. Forums will not be accepted via email, snail mail, or phone calls. And, all posted discussions must be relevant to the week’s reading. That is: Week 4 requires a forum on the readings and assignments for Week 4. Postings unrelated to the week’s discussion will not be counted as participation.

Full credit for a Forum post is given for signing in weekly and contributing to the forum, each week, with meaningful and valid comments. Please see procedure below.

The Forum Procedures are:

- 1) Submit your initial posting(s) in the Forum section of the classroom, making sure that it is at least 250+ words long and demonstrates:
 - a) a recall of concepts and theories in the book and/or lectures,
 - b) critical thinking and evaluation through examples that assess the validity of the concept,
 - c) application of outside information to illustrate both the concepts being discussed and your opinion on this topic.
- 2) You must attribute a source when using information from your readings, lectures, and other outside sources, although in forums, a specific citation style is not required.
- 3) Respond to the initial forum posting of at least TWO of your classmates, making sure that

these are substantial responses of at least 100 words to each classmate.

Helpful Hint: In order to complete your Forum posts, click on the weekly topic and create a new post by clicking on the "Post New Thread" link at the top of this page. When you are done typing in the text box, click "post message," at the bottom of the text box. When responding to one of your classmates, you simply need to click on the "Reply" button to the right of their name. Again, when you are done typing in the text box, click "post message," at the bottom of the text box.

2. Other Assignments: Please see the "Assignments" tab in the course for details about each assignment and due dates.

3. Open Book/Open Note, UNTIMED, Midcourse Assessment: The due date for this assessment is listed in your course outline, below. Assessments are opened one week before they are due.

4. Open Book/Open Note, UNTIMED, End of Course Assessment: The due date for this assessment is listed in your course outline, below. Assessments are opened one week before they are due.

Grading:

Name	Grade %
Forums	35.00 %
Week 1 Intro Forum	3.89 %
Week 1 Forum	3.89 %
Week 2 Forum	3.89 %
Week 3 Forum	3.89 %
Week 4 Forum	3.89 %
Week 5 Forum	3.89 %
Week 6 Forum	3.89 %
Week 7 Forum	3.89 %
Week 8 Forum	3.89 %
Paper	20.00 %
Week 3 - Myth Analysis Paper	20.00 %
Midterm	10.00 %
Week 4 - Mid-Term	10.00 %
Final	10.00 %
Week 8 - Final	10.00 %
Project	25.00 %
Week 7 - Myth & Culture project	25.00 %

Materials

Book Title: Various resources from the APUS Library & the Open Web are used. Links provided inside the classroom in the Lessons section.

Author:

Publication Info:

ISBN: N/A

Course Guidelines

Citation and Reference Style

- Students will follow MLA format as the sole citation and reference style used in written assignments submitted as part of coursework to the Humanities Department.
- Please note that no formal citation style is graded on forum assignments in the School of Arts & Humanities—only attribution of sources (please see details regarding forum communication below).

Tutoring

- [Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com) offers online homework help and learning resources by connecting students to certified tutors for one-on-one help. AMU and APU students are eligible for 10 free hours of tutoring provided by APUS. Tutors are available 24/7 unless otherwise noted. Tutor.com also has a SkillCenter Resource Library offering educational resources, worksheets, videos, websites and career help. Accessing these resources does not count against tutoring hours and is also available 24/7. Please visit the APUS Library and search for 'Tutor' to create an account.

Late Assignments

School of Arts & Humanities Late Policy

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution.

Work posted or submitted after the assignment due date will be reduced by 10% of the potential total score possible for each day late up to a total of five days, including forum posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments. ***Beginning on the sixth day late through the end of the course, late work, including forum posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments, will be accepted with a grade reduction of 50% of the potential total score earned.***

Turn It In

Assignments are automatically submitted to Turnitin.com within the course. Turnitin.com will analyze an assignment submission and report a similarity score. Your assignment submission is automatically processed through the assignments area of the course when you submit your work.

Academic Dishonesty

- Academic Dishonesty incorporates more than plagiarism, which is using the work of others without citation. Academic dishonesty includes any use of content purchased or retrieved from web services such as CourseHero.com or Scribd. Additionally, allowing your work to be placed on such web services is academic dishonesty, as it is enabling the dishonesty of others. The copy and pasting of content from any web page, without citation as a direct quote, is academic dishonesty. When in doubt, do not copy/paste, and always cite.

Submission Guidelines

- Some assignments may have very specific requirements for formatting (such as font, margins, etc) and submission file type (such as .docx, .pdf, etc). See the assignment instructions for details. In general, standard file types such as those associated with Microsoft Office are preferred, unless otherwise specified.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure the all submitted work can be accessed and opened by the instructor.

Disclaimer Statement

- Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of a particular group or class.

Communicating on the Forum

- Forums are the heart of the interaction in this course. The more engaged and lively the exchanges, the more interesting and fun the course will be. Only substantive comments will receive credit. Although there is a final posting day/time after which the instructor will grade and provide feedback, it is not sufficient to wait until the last day to contribute your comments/questions on the forum. The purpose of the forums is to actively participate in an on-going discussion about the assigned content.
- “Substantive” means comments that contribute something new and important to the discussion. Thus a message that simply says “I agree” is not substantive. A substantive comment contributes a new idea or perspective, a good follow-up question to a point made, offers a response to a question, provides an example or illustration of a key point, points out an inconsistency in an argument, etc.
- As a class, if we run into conflicting view points, we must respect each individual's own opinion. Hateful and hurtful comments towards other individuals, students, groups, peoples, and/or societies will not be tolerated.
- Students must post a response to the weekly forums prompt and post the required number of replies to other students – refer to the grading rubric and/or forum instructions for specific expectations on number of replies and word count requirements.
- The main response to the forum is due mid-week – refer to the grading rubric and/or forum instructions for specific expectations. Late main response posts to a forum may not be accepted without prior instructor approval.
- Replies must be posted in the week due and replies after the end of the each week may not be graded.

Quizzes and Exams

- Quizzes and exams may consist of true/false, multiple choice, and short essay questions. Each quiz/exam is accessible only once. Once a quiz/exam is accessed, you will not be able to access it again if you disconnect. Therefore, allocate time to complete your quiz. Weekly quizzes must be submitted by midnight Eastern Time, Day 7 of the assigned week. Late quizzes or exams will not be accepted without prior instructor approval.

University Policies

[Student Handbook](#)

- [Drop/Withdrawal policy](#)
- [Extension Requests](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Appeals](#)
- [Disability Accommodations](#)

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