

The Myth of the Hero

Professor

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Course Description

This course addresses what Joseph Campbell calls the "Monomyth," the great human story of the process of development, transition and discovery that is the essence of human existence. The values and significance associated with each of the stages in this life process have been communicated and interpreted through the mythologies associated with all human cultures. We will study Campbell's seminal text *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*, and will interpret and test the points Campbell makes by reading a variety of hero narratives from different cultures. In the course of our study we will address not only the attitudes and values associated with the heroes' deeds, but also the narrative forms and styles through which the stories are told. Students will take an active part in class discussion, and will develop a project during the semester that will be presented in brief during the final class meeting.

Learning Goals and Outcomes

A successful student in this course should be able to:

1. Define and analyze the concepts of "myth" and "hero" in terms of Campbell's "monomyth"
2. Define and analyze the stages of the Hero's quest
3. Apply these concepts to a variety of narratives from world culture
4. Apply and assess the idea of the hero and hero quest in social and cultural experiences
5. Demonstrate familiarity with assigned reading in clear, constructive, on-topic classroom dialogue
6. Use excellent standard English in both speaking and writing
7. Prepare and submit a research proposal including a research question and anticipated sources
8. Prepare and effectively deliver an in-class report, and conduct subsequent discussion
9. Do independent research on a proposed and approved topic related to the course
10. Write a 19 to 22 page research paper based on the aforesaid research, including a thesis, appropriate organization, and effective use of research evidence
11. Properly annotate the research paper using the Turabian format

Assessment

The above outcomes will be assessed by weekly student seminar attendance and participation (20%), the presentation of a class report and leadership of subsequent discussion (25%), the presentation of a research project (5%), and the quality of the project itself (50%).

Course Requirements

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Please verify any necessary absence with the instructor.
- **Any student who misses more than two class sessions for any reason may be involuntarily dropped from the course.** This may mean an F grade. Two tardies

(arriving more than five minutes late or leaving more than five minutes early) equal one absence.

- *Incomplete Grades:* Extension of time to finish coursework will be granted only in unusual and clear documented situations. Extensions must be mutually agreed upon between student and instructor no later than the last class meeting. Then all such agreements must be approved by the Associate Dean. In no case will the extension exceed three additional weeks. Work not received by the Incomplete deadline will result in a change of the semester grade to "F."
- All work must be done to pass the course.

Class Reports

Each student will give an in-class report, to be submitted in note form. This report consists of 10 minutes of formal presentation on a subject related to the week's topic. At the end, two discussion questions will generate additional discussion, for which the presenter is responsible.

Tips on Giving Reports:

- Narrow your subject. In ten minutes you will be far more comfortable doing a detailed analysis of one work by Richard Wagner, revealing a few of his central artistic strategies and objectives, than you will doing "The Life and Work of Richard Wagner."
- Use notes, rather than reading a full text. Any and all appropriate media may be used as part of the presentation.
- Limit your report to 10 minutes. I will "call time" if you go over.
- Focus on creating good discussion questions. They are essential to the success of your report.
- Be prepared to lead the discussion.

Research Project—Criteria, Proposal, and Specs

Each student will also submit a project paper **proposal** in writing by June 9. Projects will normally be research papers, including *annotated* bibliography with citations in Turabian format. Non-traditional projects will be considered. Expected scale: 19 to 22 pages. Students will give brief informal **presentations** of their projects during the last class meeting. All project papers must be submitted by July 28.

For the **proposal** write a solid paragraph stating your topic, with as much detail as possible explaining (1) the issues you hope to address; (2) some of the kinds of sources you expect to use; (3) how you understand your project's relationship to the course; and (4) a research question that implies a tentative thesis, or argument. Since the course is quite diverse in its readings, many possible topics suggest themselves. I leave that up to you. One approach is to select a topic with which you have some familiarity, so that you can explore some specific aspect of it in depth. Another is to select a topic that you are unfamiliar with, but would like to learn more about. A research project is an excellent way to become familiar with something.

The **final project**, if it is a conventional essay, must follow the format and documentation requirements of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 8th Ed. Turabian is the style approved by the Liberal Studies Program. Students may choose either the Note and Bibliography or the Parenthetical Reference and Reference List format. Either the Bibliography or the Reference List must be annotated. Page formats must follow Turabian. For non-conventional projects, a statement of several pages explaining the concept, rationale, and procedures of the project must accompany the project itself. An annotated Bibliography in Turabian format must be attached.

Class Schedule [HTF signifies Campbell's *Hero with A Thousand Faces*]

- May 26 **The Monomyth**
NOTE: This class will be a Virtual Class, with no classroom meeting. Follow the instructions on the Assignments page of Blackboard to write and post comments and replies on the Discussion Board regarding the reading assignment given below.
Online attendance and participation are required at this first class meeting. Students not participating may be dropped from the course by the Associate Dean
- Reading Assignment: HTF 3-46
- June 2 **Departure**
This will be our **first classroom meeting**.
HTF 49-96. Callings: Bible: Exodus 6:28-7:7; 19-20; 1 Samuel 2:27-3:21; Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1.
Bring a calling narrative of your choice to share with the class.
- June 9 **Initiation I**
HTF 97-125; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
- June 16 **Initiation II**
HTF 126-192; Shakespeare, *As You Like It* [use any edition]
- June 23 **Return**
HTF 193-244; *Gilgamesh*
- June 27 **The Keys / Emanations**
Saturday HTF 245-296; *American Indian Myths and Legends*
Erdoes & Ortiz, pp. 3-45; 62-72; 73-124; one other section of your choice.
- July 14 **The Virgin Birth**
HTF 297-314
Bible: Matthew 1: 18-25; Luke 1:5-2:20; Isaiah 7:10-16.
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, selections posted on Blackboard.
- July 18 **Transformations of the Hero**
Saturday HTF 315-364. Bible: Matthew 16:28-17:13; Mark 9:1-13; Luke 9:27-36 and Matthew 28; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 24:13-53; John 20:11-21:25.
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, "Jason and Medea," [153].
- July 21 **Dissolutions / Myth and Society**
HTF 365-378; Hesse, *Steppenwolf* [Project Presentations]
- July 28 **Epilogue**
HTF 381-92. Bring evidence to support the nomination of a modern Hero of your choice. [Project Presentations]

Book List

Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. New World Library 978-1577315933
Erdoes & Ortiz, *American Indian Myths & Legends*. Pantheon 978-0394740188
Gilgamesh tr. Andrew George. Penguin Classics 978-0140449198
Hesse, *Steppenwolf* tr. Creighton. Picador 978-0312278670
Ovid, *Metamorphoses* tr. Humphries. Indiana U. P. 978-0253200013
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight tr. Boroff. Norton 978-0393930252

University Policies

The Honor Pledge

Submission of written work in this class signifies assent to the Georgetown University Honor Pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: to be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Any violation of this Pledge will result in a failing grade for the course, and will be reported to the University Honor Council for adjudication.

Religious Observances

Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. ***Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.*** The Office of the Provost, in consultation with Campus Ministry and the Registrar, will publish, before classes begin for a given term, a list of major religious holidays likely to affect Georgetown students. The Provost and the Main Campus Executive Faculty encourage faculty to accommodate students whose bona fide religious observances in other ways impede normal participation in a course. Students who cannot be accommodated should discuss the matter with an advising dean.

Disabilities

Students with a disability should please contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu), located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. This Center is responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies. Students must present documentation to receive accommodation in the course. ***Accommodation will not be applied retroactively.***