

**Fair Lawn Public Schools
Fair Lawn, NJ**

Senior Topics: Mythology

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2012**

I. Course Synopsis

This Senior Topics course is designed to explore a variety of texts revolving around mythology from various cultures including Greek, Egyptian and Norse. Students will read, analyze and decipher the hidden motives behind the actions of many gods and goddesses. This course aims to introduce students to the heroes and folklore surrounding these multifaceted cultures such as Heracles, Perseus, Odin, Osiris and many more. Selected short stories, articles and films will accompany creative projects and academic papers in this course all leading to the culminating activity of creating your own mythical hero. We will also read, analyze, and respond to selected articles, stories, and novel excerpts. The students will write academic and creative papers as well as produce creative projects, comics, etc.

II. Philosophy & Rationale

The aims of the course are to help students to: (1) become aware of the orally transmitted culture in their lives; (2) become aware of the mythical element in all of man's history; (3) know the meanings of the following words: folklore, myth, culture hero, trickster, motif, and cultural hero; (4) discover some recurrent patterns of thought and action found in myths; and (5) develop familiarity with some theories of the origin of myths.

The Practical Use of Mythology

Skills acquired by studying mythology can be useful in all areas of life. The main benefits, however, lie in acquiring the ability to think critically and analytically in an organized way about confusing and controversial questions; to react to criticism not with outrage or fear but with a willingness to state the grounds for one's views and to listen and learn from the views of others, and to recognize ancient, archetypal patterns acted out in the modern world as well as in our own lives. The term "Mythology" is rather obviously defined as "The study of myths." But what is a myth? Is it merely an "untrue story," told for entertainment value like a sit-com or an action movie full of narcissistic divine beings that don't care about the fate of the world? Or, is it a natural way societies explained phenomena occurring all around them? Is there something more to the literature in myths that has pervaded history, and which happens, unperceived, all around us every day? Is there a connection between ourselves and the ancients? We will find answers to these questions (and many more) in this class. Other topics covered include ethics, the free will of man, the fickle nature of ancient divine beings, as well as other social and political topics.

Course Objectives:

- identify the major (and many of the minor) characters from mythology;
- describe the ancient literary sources for classical mythology, as well discuss some of the artistic and other material evidence;
- explain and use some of the most influential theories about and approaches to mythology;
- describe and analyze, in writing, mythological themes and structures in literature, art, and even films;
- compare different myths, or different versions of the same myth, and discuss common and different elements;

- relate the knowledge you have obtained throughout this course to your own experience, including an ability to create your own myths and recognize mythic elements in the world around you.

Essential Questions

- What is the nature of man?
- What are the elements of our own cultural mythology, and how do we unconsciously participate in it?
- Who, or what, controls our destiny?
- What is a monster? What is a hero?
- What is a leader? What are the qualities of a good leader?
- Do all cultures have underlying beliefs and values explained in mythology?

III. Scope & Sequence

Unit 1: Greek Mythology 6 weeks

- *Greek Culture*
- *Gods, Goddesses, Heroes and Monsters*
- *Creation Myth*

1. Heracles
2. Medusa
3. Jason and the Golden Fleece

Unit 2: Egyptian Mythology 5 weeks

- *Egyptian Culture*
- *Gods and Goddesses*

1. Creation Myth
2. *The Book of the Dead*

Unit 3: Norse Mythology 5 weeks

- Nordic/Viking Culture
- Gods and Goddesses(Aesir and Vanir)
- Creation Myth

1. *The Edda*
2. *Ragnorak*

Unit : Vocabulary Continuous

1. Assigned vocabulary words from context
2. Define words based on context
3. Apply the vocabulary to their own writing

Unit : Grammar Continuous

1. Understand grammatical terms and concepts
2. Apply these grammatical terms and concepts to their own written and verbal communication

IV. Unit Descriptions

Unit Overview
Target Course/Grade Level: Mythology/ 12CP
Unit: Greek Mythology
<p>Enduring Understanding:</p> <p>Myths are ancient stories whose authors are unknown that attempt to explain a belief, custom, or force of nature by telling of gods and goddesses and their interventions in the lives of mortals.</p>
Learning Targets
<p>Common Core State Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RL.9-10.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • RL.9-10.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. • RL.9-10.3. Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. • RL.9-10.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). • RL.9-10.5. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. • W.9-10.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. • Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. • Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns. • Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and

clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- **W.9-10.4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
- **W.9-10.5.** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- **W.9-10.6.** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
- **W.9-10.10.** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- **SL.9-10.1.** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Come to discussions prepared having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

Unit Essential Questions:

- What is the nature of man?
- What are the elements of our own cultural mythology, and how do we unconsciously participate in it?
- Who, or what, controls our destiny?
- What is a monster? What is a hero?
- What is a leader? What are the qualities of a good leader?
- Do all cultures have underlying beliefs and values explained in mythology?

Evidence of Learning		
<p>Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion/participation Quizzes Tests Projects/Presentations Essays Vocabulary 		
Lesson Plans		
Timeframe	Learning Targets	Activities
<p>6 weeks</p>	<p>Objectives: The students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the gods and goddesses of Greek Mythology. • To examine the cultural and historical context of these myths. • Describe and analyze, in writing, mythological themes and structures in literature, art, and even films. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standard quizzes and tests -Cooperative learning activities -Trojan Mural -Comparative Mythology presentations -Greek Culture ppt -Gods, Goddesses, Heroes and Monsters ppt •Stories covered (varies) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation Myth 2. Heracles 3. Medusa 4. Jason and the Golden Fleece 5. Trojan War (Achilles, Odysseus)

<p>Informative texts/ Supplemental texts</p>		<p>-<i>The Iliad</i> -<i>Troy</i> (clips) -Clash of the Titans (original film) -<i>Mythology</i> by Edith Hamilton - <i>Oxford Companion to World Myth</i></p>
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Unit Overview	
<p>Target Course/Grade Level: Mythology/ 12CP</p>	
<p>Unit: Egyptian Mythology</p>	
<p>Enduring Understanding: Comprehending the legends and myths of a particular society helps one understand and relate to that society’s culture and history.</p>	
Learning Targets	
<p>Common Core State Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RL.9-10.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • RL.9-10.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. • RL.9-10.3. Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. • RL.9-10.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and 	

place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

- **RL.9-10.5.** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- **W.9-10.1.** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- **W.9-10.4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
- **W.9-10.5.** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- **W.9-10.6.** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
- **W.9-10.10.** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- **SL.9-10.1.** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Come to discussions prepared having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding

and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

Unit Essential Questions:

- What are legends and myths?
- In what ways are stories that come from oral tradition different from written stories with a specific author?
- How do the traits of a legendary hero exemplify the values of the culture from which the legend originated?
- In what ways do myths illustrate the belief systems and customs of the cultures that create them?

Evidence of Learning

Assessments:

- Class discussion/participation
- Quizzes
- Tests
- Projects/Presentations
- Essays
- Vocabulary

Lesson Plans

Timeframe	Learning Targets	Activities
<p>5 weeks</p>	<p>Objectives: The students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the gods and goddesses of Egyptian Mythology. - To examine the cultural and historical context of these myths. - To describe and analyze, in writing, mythological themes and structures in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Creative Writing Essay -Standard quizzes and tests -Cooperative learning activities - Egyptian Culture ppt -Gods and Goddesses ppt -Skits <p>Stories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation Myth 2. Ra 3. Isis and Osiris 4. Mummies

	literature, art, and even films.	
Informative texts/ Supplemental texts		<p>-<i>The Book of the Dead</i> -<i>The Mummy</i> (film) -<i>Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends</i> by Lewis Spence - <i>Oxford Companion to World Myth</i></p>

Unit Overview
Target Course/Grade Level: Mythology/ 12CP
Unit: Norse Mythology
<p>Enduring Understanding: Legends are traditional stories based on historical figures and usually exaggerate or supernaturalize heroic deeds.</p>
Learning Targets
<p>Common Core State Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RL.9-10.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • RL.9-10.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development

over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

- **RL.9-10.3.** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- **RL.9-10.4.** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- **RL.9-10.5.** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- **W.9-10.1.** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
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- Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
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- or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
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 - Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

Unit Essential Questions:

- How can we determine the purpose of a particular legend or myth and identify the cultural values or beliefs it is intended to illustrate?
- Why did certain myths continue after Christianity pervaded the Nordic territories?
- How can we account for similarities between different cultural myths?
- How do the contemporary hero and monster compare to the archetypal monster and hero?

Evidence of Learning

Assessments:

- Class discussion/participation
- Quizzes
- Tests
- Projects/Presentations
- Essays
- Vocabulary

Lesson Plans

Timeframe	Learning Targets	Activities
<p>5 weeks</p>	<p>Objectives: The students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify the gods and goddesses of Norse Mythology. - To examine the cultural and historical context of these myths. - To describe and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Literary Analysis Essay -Standard quizzes and tests -Power Point project -Vocabulary assessment -Nordic/Viking Culture ppt -Gods and Goddesses(Aesir and Vanir) ppt -Creation Myth ppt <p>Stories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ragnorak 2. Valkyrie 3. Sigmund

	<p>analyze, in writing, mythological themes and structures in literature, art, and even films.</p>	<p>4. Odin 5. Thor</p>
<p>Informative texts/ Supplemental texts</p>		<p>-<i>The Edda</i> (prose and poetic) -<i>Thor</i> (film) -<i>Myths of the Norsemen</i> by <i>Helene Guerber</i> - <i>Oxford Companion to World Myth</i></p>

V. Course Materials

- **Primary Text:** Mythology by Hamilton Grand Central Publishing; Reissue edition (2011)
- **Secondary Texts:** Oxford Companion to World Mythology Reprint Ed. by Leeming
Classical Mythology & More: A Reader Workbook by Colakis & Masello
- **Films:** *Clash of the Titans, Troy, Thor, Excalibur, The Mummy, The Odyssey*