

Hagerstown Community College
OFFICIAL COURSE SYLLABUS DOCUMENT

COURSE: ENG 114 – Mythology

3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR:

SEMESTER/YEAR:

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The emphasis of this course is upon Greek and Roman gods and those classical myths which have had the greatest impact upon Western arts and culture. The modern use of classical myths is also examined. Mythology from other areas of the world is included as time permits. Total of 45 hours of lecture.

TEXTBOOK: Barry B. Powell, Classical Myth, Fifth or Sixth Edition, Pearson/Prentice-Hall, 2007 or 2009 (0-13-196294-9); or Sixth Ed., 2009 (978-0-13-696171-7) and handouts

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

To be able to read and interpret mythic metaphors, symbols, and analogies present in myths, legends, and folktales and to compare and contrast significant characters, events, symbols, and actions (motifs) in one myth with similar events in another myth, in this way enabling students to read various types of literature in general with greater comprehension and insight.

To be able to identify mythological images and archetypes that continue to pervade modern thought and art and thereby to recognize how myths function as building blocks of culture, high and low, in such areas as art, architecture, literature, music, film, cartoons, humor, etc. By the end of this course, students should understand more profoundly a range of matters in the world around them, from political symbols to *Star Wars* to TV ads.

To see how Greek and Roman myths, stories of gods and heroes from civilizations long past, contain, in some sense, *truths* that are real, for all their embodiment in fiction. Teasing out the nature of these truths is difficult, but by examining these mythic tales in the context of the culture that produced them, we can more easily formulate and explore meaningfully important human questions about divinity and humanity, life and death, female and male, rational and irrational, freedom and necessity, etc. What is the role of myths in human thinking and what do they have to do with religion? With psychology? With the natural world? With the history and society of the peoples who produced them? How do they relate to rituals and morality? In what ways are myths practical? In what ways recurring?

And last but not least, to improve students' analytical, conceptual, and connective skills, and to marshal these with textual backing in support of arguments in formal expository writing assignments.