

RYERSON UNIVERSITY
Department of English

ENG 201 THE HERO'S JOURNEY : MYTH AND ARCHETYPE

Winter 2010
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This is a Lower-Level Liberal Studies Course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“It’s just the same old story!”

Clichés like “the same old story” show us that there are important patterns in human life which keep reappearing. These patterns have been called archetypes, and they can consist of single figures, or characters, or a series of events, or situations.

We find these archetypes in the most popular stories, comic books, detective stories, science fiction, western romance narratives, such as the histories and legends of Billy the Kid, or Clint Eastwood films, and in adventure tales such as the James Bond books and films, and in Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings trilogy.

In this wide-ranging course we will be looking at some early examples of myths and romances and asking ourselves what these patterns show us about human identity, values, desires and narrative structure. We will chart some of the changes in the patterning and figures by moving from Homer’s magnificent tale of a man’s attempt to return home, in The Odyssey, to the charming romance of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight , set in the fabled court of King Arthur, and then on to Transylvania in Bram Stoker’s brilliant and horrific novel Dracula.

James Dickey’s Deliverance, and Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, published in the same year as Dracula, will also be studied, and each has been the basis of a contemporary film.

Students are encouraged to view various film versions of the texts, including both Francis Ford Coppola’s Apocalypse Now, and Eleanor Coppola’s documentary The Making of Apocalypse Now which discusses the film’s debt to

Conrad. There are many intriguing films based in Bram Stoker's Dracula.

Students will have the option of developing research papers which compare film and printed texts. Additionally, video games provide a rich source for research and contemplation of our subject, as do contemporary graphic novels, such as Alison Bechdel's Fun Home, A Family Tragicomic.

Music, dance, architecture, painting, and Greek figureware are also media which will reward student study.

We will be asking ourselves why we are haunted by certain stories ? Why do certain kinds of figures keep appearing ? How do we recognize them under their many different changes of costume and location? What do they tell us about human values ? About the nature of our societies ? About our deepest wishes?

Occasionally, during the term we will be reading some short poetic narratives, examining in miniature the larger configurations and deeper archetypal structures apparent in the five long works on the course.

Teaching Method
Lecture-Discussion.

Please note: Email messages will be read only when I am on campus in my office in Jorgenson Hall. Voice mail messages will be answered only from the same office.

No assignments will be accepted via email or via facsimile transmission. There is an essay box in the English Department on the tenth floor of Jorgenson Hall where all assignments may be placed, clearly marked with my name. Please do not shove assignments under my office door as they might be stolen. Assignments placed in my department mail box are also vulnerable to theft. The best policy is to hand the assignment to me directly. Also, please be sure you keep a copy of the final draft of each assignment, until the graded assignment is returned to you and you have received your final grade for the term. Assignments do go missing.

It is always best to keep copies of your work until the term is completed.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Homer. The Odyssey

Anon. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Bram Stoker. Dracula

Joseph Conrad. Heart of Darkness

James Dickey. Deliverance

***Five books will be discussed in class, in addition to a few shorter poetry selections. As a source for these shorter poems, I will be using the anthology edited by Joseph De Roche, but students may locate the required short poems in many other sources. If you are not using the De Roche anthology, I would suggest you compile your own anthology, so that you have the poems altogether in one place.

SUGGESTED READINGS

De Roche, Joseph, ed. The Heath Introduction to Poetry

Students are also encouraged to consult classic works by Frazer and Campbell, and other critical materials which explore the nature of myth and romance:

Anon. The Epic Of Gilgamesh

C.M. Bowra. Primitive Song

Joseph Campbell. The Hero With A Thousand Faces

Sir James Frazer. The Golden Bough

Northrop Frye. Fables of Identity

Julian Jaynes. The Origin of Consciousness In the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind

Susanne K. Langer. The Roots of Myth

Barry B. Powell. A Short Introduction to Classical Myth

Barry B. Powell. Classical Myth

Rank. Raglan and Dundes. In Quest of the Hero

**Two handouts for ENG 201 are available on my website <karenmulhallen.com>.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

The assignments total a minimum of 2000 words.

There will be four assignments. One in-class assignment and two essays written outside the class. There will be a final examination.

The essays and assignments are worth 70% of the final mark. The final examination will be worth 30% of the final mark.

1. Assignment Number One: An in-class Essay on Homer's The Odyssey. 25%

2. Assignment Number Two: A Research Paper on one of Sir Gawain and the

Green Knight, Dracula, Heart of Darkness or Deliverance. Suggested approaches and topics will be handed out in class. 30%

3. Assignment Number Three: A brief assignment on one of the shorter poems. 15%

4. Assignment Number Four: A Final Examination on the whole course. 30%

Evaluation Summary

The Odyssey 25%

Research paper 30 %

Short Poetry assignment 15%

Final examination 30%

TOTAL=100%

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week One (January 7-8): Introduction to the course, an examination of patterns and themes.

Week Two (January 14-15): Patterns and The Odyssey (Students should have read at least Books 1-8 of Homer's text.

Week Three (January 21-22): Homer, The Odyssey, up to Book 16

Week Four (January 29-30): Homer, The Odyssey (Students should have completed their reading of the text.)

Week Five (February 4-5): **Test on The Odyssey**; Introduction to Sir Gawain and The Green Knight.

Week Six (February 11-12): Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Week Seven (February 18-19): **Study Week**

Week Eight (February 25-26): Bram Stoker, Dracula

Week Nine (March 4-5): Bram Stoker, Dracula.

NB: RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE WEEK NINE

Week Ten (March 11-12) : Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

Week Eleven (March 18- 19): Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

Week Twelve (March 25- 26): James Dickey, Deliverance

NB: Short Poetry Assignment is Due Week Twelve

Week Thirteen (April 2-3): James Dickey, Deliverance

Week Fourteen (April 9-10): Review and Office Consultations

NOTES:

1. Classes end on 13 April 2010 and the examination period runs from 16-29 April, 2010. Students are advised not to finalize their travel or employment plans until the final examination schedule has been posted.

2. The **Faculty Course Survey** will be administered in the period from 19 March - 5 April, 2010. The actual date and format will be announced in advance in class.

The Shorter Poems

The following is a suggested reading list; other works may be added at the instructor's discretion and not all these poems will be discussed during the term, but all are related to the course's principal themes and patterns.

Assignment Number Three is to be based on this reading list.

Students are encouraged to examine these short poems for the larger pattern of the hero's journey, for a presentation of the anti-hero, for spirit guides and totems, for the earthly paradise, for the transformation of the hero, his metamorphosis, and for the collective unconscious.

Lewis Carroll, Jabberwocky
Alfred Lord Tennyson, Ulysses
William Butler Yeats, Sailing to Byzantium
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Kubla Khan
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
T.S.Eliot, The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock
Robert Frost, The Road Not Taken
Wilfred Owen, Strange Meeting
Earle Birney, The Bear on The Delhi Road
Al Purdy, The Cariboo Horses
James Dickey, The Heaven of Animals
D.H. Lawrence, The Snake
Adrienne Rich, Diving Into The Wreck
Robert Service, The Cremation of Sam Magee