

# **Art History 102 – Symbols and Stories in Art World Art and Mythology**

**Prof. Robert DeCaroli**  
**Mon. and Wed. 1:30-2:45**

**Arts Building 2003**

## **Course Description/Objectives:**

Gods of storm, radiant solar deities, deceptive tricksters, heroic peasants, and talking animals, such individuals populate the religious stories of cultures worldwide. This course examines the ways art and religious tales, sometimes referred to as myths, complemented and inspired each other over the centuries and across the world. Important art historical concepts will be explored with reference to examples from Greece, Japan, India, Scandinavia, the Pacific Northwest, Mexico, China, West Africa, the Near East, and many other locations. We will learn to identify major figures and narratives, while learning about common themes and techniques in word art.

**This course fulfills the Mason Core general education requirements in the Arts**

**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday 3:00-4:00 and by appointment in Robinson B 371D

Email: rdecarol@gmu.edu

## **Course Requirements:**

Participation	10%
Open Note Quiz	10%
Midterm	30%
Symbolism Paper	20%
Final	30%

The class meetings will consist of lecture-discussions on specific topics with occasional discussions based on the weekly readings. These meetings will form the core of the course material so it is strongly advised that you attend class consistently

## **Grading Policies:**

A+	100-99%	C+	79-77%
A	98-93%	C	76-73%
A-	92-90%	C-	72-70%
B+	89-87%	D	69-60%
B	86-83%	F	59% and lower
B-	82-80%		

Attendance is necessary; much of the material will only be presented in class lectures and discussions. You are responsible for keeping up with the material and for getting notes for missed classes.

A student's class participation grade will be evaluated not according to the amount of talking that student does, but rather according to whether that student contributes thoughtfully and constructively, based on a careful consideration of the class readings. Obviously, students cannot contribute to class discussion if they are absent; consequently, repeated unexcused absences will be reflected in their participation grade.

Make-up tests and extensions will be given **ONLY** in cases of emergencies or illnesses with proper documentation (doctor's note etc.) In all other legitimate cases (family obligations, religious holidays, disabilities etc.), extensions may be granted if I am informed well **BEFORE** the deadline.

I am happy to make necessary accommodations for students with documented disabilities. But, in order to properly accommodate you, I will need to see and sign the documentation from the Disabilities Resource Center well before the tests and assignments are given. It must be properly documented by the DRC Please contact them for more information.

Assignments are **due by the beginning of class on the day specified** in the schedule. Late papers will be marked down five points (half a grade) for every weekday and ten points (a full grade) for every weekend they are late.

Graded materials will be handed back in class once. If you are not present on the day papers are handed back it is your responsibility to ask me for the graded assignment.

Adherence to codes of academic honesty is expected on all assignments and in all testing situations. I take the Honor Code (as stipulated in the university undergraduate catalog) very seriously. This code is a simple expression of respect for the course, your classmates and yourself. Cheating and Plagiarism are forbidden (obviously).

For those who do not know what Plagiarism is, it can be defined as: presenting as one's own the words, work or opinions of someone else without giving them proper acknowledgment. Plagiarism can also refer to borrowing the sequence of ideas, arrangement of material, or pattern of thought of someone else without giving them proper credit. Plagiarism can easily be avoided by proper use of footnotes.

**The material in this course is based on the art and literature of various cultures and historical periods, some topics of violence, gender, sexuality, or ideology may be contrary to your individual beliefs, but we will deal with them in an academic and intellectual manner. We are primarily interested in these texts as historical documents and they will be discussed as such. Please be respectful.**

### **Texts:**

- 1) Course Readings - – Please find the PDF files Blackboard. They are organized by geographic region

You must be very familiar with at least two of the following by week 11: The Lord of the Rings, Star Wars (The old ones, episodes 4-6), Harry Potter, Alice in Wonderland, or The Wizard of Oz.

### **Readings and Lectures: (This schedule is subject to change)**

---Readings need to be completed BEFORE the day under which they are listed---

#### **Week 1**

**Aug. 29:** Introduction – Art History, Myth and Religion

**Aug 31:** Storm Gods - iconography

#### **Week 2**

**Sept. 5:** Labor Day

**Sept. 7:** Stories of the Sun (part 1) -- Questions of Similarity

**Japan** “Amaterasu and Susanowo” Borgen, Robert and Marian Ury. “Readable Japanese Mythology: Selections from *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki*” *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*. 68-71.  
Nihon Shoki PDF.

**North America** “Raven Steals the Light” -  
<http://www.northwestart.com/NorthwestArt/WebPages/StoriesRavenStealsTheLight.htm>

**Greece** “Helios (Helios)” in Robert Graves. *Greek Myths* vol2. 1-2. (Pelican Books, 1960)

#### **Week 3**

**Sept. 12:** Stories of the Sun (part 2) – Light and Halos

**Sept. 14:** Cosmogony and Creation (Part 1) - style

**Biblical** Genesis 1-3, The Bible: New International Edition.  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%201&version=NIV>

**North America** Hopi Creation Story.  
<http://www.gly.uga.edu/railsback/CS/CSFourCreations.html>

#### Week 4

**Sept. 19:**       **Cosmogony and Creation (Part 2)**

**Sept. 21:**       **Unusual and Remarkable Births (Part 1) – visual narrative**

**Buddhist** “The Birth of the Buddha.” The *Lalitavistara: The Play in Full*.  
Dharmachakra Translation Committee.

#### Week 5

**Sept. 26:**       **Unusual and Remarkable Births (Part 2)**

**Sept. 28:**       **Dragons and Snakes (Part 1) – cultural relativity**  
**Open-note Quiz**

**Mesopotamia** Marduk Creates the World from the Spoils of Battle.  
<http://www.gly.uga.edu/railsback/CS/CSMarduk.html>

**Hindu** Rg Veda. “Victory over Vritra” and “Who is Indra”  
[http://college.cengage.com/history/primary\\_sources/world/rig\\_veda.htm](http://college.cengage.com/history/primary_sources/world/rig_veda.htm)

**Scandinavia** “Thor Fishing for Jormungand” Dan McCoy trans.  
<http://norse-mythology.org/tales/thor-fishing-for-jormungand/>

#### Week 6

**Oct. 3:**         **Dragons and Snakes (Part 2) Dragon Slaying**

**Oct.5:**         **Love and Infatuation (Part 1)**  
**Symbolism Paper Assigned**

**Greece** “Ganymedes”, “Narcissus” and “Apollo and Daphne” in Robert Graves.  
*Greek Myths* vol2. 1-2. (Pelican Books, 1960)

**Hindu** Chapters 5-7 in the *Gita Govinda*: <http://srikrishnaradha.com/complete-gita-govinda-with-meaning/>

#### Week 7

**Oct. 10:**       **Columbus Day – Monday classes moved to Tuesday**

**Oct. 11:**       **Love and Infatuation (Part 2)**

**Oct. 12:**       **Animal Stories and Symbolism (Part 1)**

**Buddhist** “The Story of the Great Monkey” and “The Hare on the Moon” in *The Illustrated Jataka & Other Stories of the Buddha* by C.B. Varma.  
<http://ignca.nic.in/jatak.htm>

**Week 8**

**Oct. 17:**       **Animals Stories and Symbolism (Part 2)**

**Oct. 19:**       **Midterm**

**Week 9**

**Oct. 24:**       **War, Battle, and Monsters (Part 1)**

**Oct. 26:**       **War, Battle, and Monsters (Part 2)**

**Egypt** “The Legend of Horus and Set” V.H. Frater D.M.A. trans. In  
<http://www.goldendawnpedia.com/LiteraturePages/Egyptian/HorusandSet.htm>

**Greek** “Perseus and Medusa” in Robert Graves. *Greek Myths* vol2. 1-2. (Pelican Books, 1960)

**Week 10**

**Oct 31:**       **Tricksters and Liminal Divinities (Trick or Treat!)**

**Nov 2:**         **Tricksters and Liminal Divinities**

**Scandinavian** “The Creation of Thor’s Hammer” Dan McCoy trans. <http://norse-mythology.org/tales/thor-fishing-for-jormungand/>

**North America** “Raven Steals Fire” in *Raven Stories*  
<http://www.bsu.edu/eft/ancestors/p/teachers/downloads/ravenStories.pdf>

**West Africa** “Gods Hat” *Yoruba Tales*. [www.uuliveoak.org](http://www.uuliveoak.org)

**Week 11**

**Nov 7:**         **Princes and Farm-boys - the Hero’s Journey (Part 1) – archetypes**

Campbell, Joseph, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Bolligen Series (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1949) 30-40

**Nov 9:**         **Princes and Farm-boys - the Hero’s Journey (Part 2)**

View/ Read: *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars* (The old ones, episodes 4-6), and/or *Harry Potter*,

**Week 12**

**Nov 14:**       **Princesses, Witches, and Clever Maidens (Part 1)**

**Nov 16:**       **Princesses, Witches, and Clever Maidens (Part 2)**  
**Symbolism Paper Due**

View/Read: Alice in Wonderland and/or The Wizard of Oz.

**Week 13**

**Nov. 21: Flood and Fire**

**Hindu** “Matsya, The Fish: *Matysa Purana* International Gita Society trans.  
<http://www.gita-society.com/scriptures/ALL18MAJORPURANAS.IGS.pdf>

**Biblical** Genesis 6-8, The Bible: New International Edition.  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%201&version=NIV>

**Nov. 23: Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class**

**Week 14**

**Nov. 28: Death (Part 1)**

**Nov 30: Death (Part 2)**

**Scandinavia** “The Death of Baldur” Dan McCoy trans. <http://norse-mythology.org/tales/thor-fishing-for-jormungand/>

**Japan** “Izanagi and Izanami” Borgen, Robert and Marian Ury trans. “Readable Japanese Mythology: Selections from *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki*” *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*. 71-73.

**Week 15**

**Dec 5: The Afterlife (Part 2)**

**Dec. 7: The Afterlife (Part 3)**

**Egypt** “Chapter 125” *Coming into the Day: The Book of the Dead*.  
<http://richard-hooker.com/sites/worldcultures/EGYPT/BOD125.HTM>

**Final Exam**

**Dec. 14 1:30-4:15**