

Online Course Catalogue

Course Title

Study Field

University

Myths, Tales, Legends, Narratives and Cultural Thinking

Arts and Humanities

Eötvös Loránd University

CHARM priority field

Faculty

Number of credit points:

European values, culture and language;

Faculty of Humanities

4

Department

Department of Russian Language and Literature

Course code

Name of instructor(s):

BMI-ENGSEMIO-210

Study Level:

MA/MSc

Gábor Tamás Molnár

Short description of the course

This course offers an overview of important modern theories (anthropological, religious, psychoanalytical, philosophical) of myth. The focus will be on the intersections between modern semiotic theories of narrative / culture and interpretations of myth. Each participant in the course brings their own cultural knowledge of folklore, mythology and legends. Important myths (from European as well as non-European cultures) will be reviewed as we discuss the analytical arguments based on them.

Full description of the course

This course is part of a Master's program in Semiotics but is open to students from other programs. The course focuses on modern theories of myths, legends, and related narrative genres. The course is structured as follows: Weeks 1-3. We will start with a brief overview of the history of the study of myth to understand the interdisciplinary nature of myth study, sampling philosophy, religious studies, anthropology and social studies. We will highlight the importance of myth as a counter-concept (Gegenbegriff) developed in modernity, with mythic thinking generally set in opposition to logic and rationality. The history of the modern concept will be briefly outlined at the beginning of the course, using relevant reference works such as Jensen 2014, Müller 2007, Hendy 2002, Lincoln 1999. Methodology: This part of the course is mostly lecture-based but student interaction is also encouraged, relevant excerpts from the literature will be provided so that students can prepare for the lessons. Weeks 4-12: We will review the most important modern theories of myth, focusing on the last 100-150 years. The main course book will be Jensen's reader (Jensen 2014), which groups theories according to their disciplinary and theoretical focus into philosophical, psychological, sociological, semiotic, and cognitive theories. We will sample texts from all these categories but will, of course, put the emphasis on semiotic theories, inspired by Saussurean linguistics or the Peircean theory of signs. The texts will be discussed roughly in chronological order, so that the historical development of theoretical

arguments can be perceived. Methodology: Students will be asked to give oral presentations at the beginning of each section. The online learning management system will be used to facilitate further communication. Readings will be uploaded into Canvas and quizzes and discussions will be used to assess students' understanding of the texts. Students will be asked to give brief presentations, followed by group discussions and brief lectures by the instructor when deemed necessary. Final assignment: a written interpretation of a narrative text (of folklore, film, music, literature), at least 3000 words in length, referencing at least three theoretical texts from the course syllabus, in addition to other relevant secondary literature. Students are encouraged to choose a topic relevant to their own interest and/or with which they are very familiar. In previous semesters, excellent papers have been written about literary works such as Dubravka Ugrešić's *Baba Yaga Laid an Egg*, Ann Carson's *Autobiography of Red*, mixed media narratives such as Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, but also on original legends and mythic tales from the students' respective traditions, from Ecuador to Kyrgyzstan.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, the learner will be able to n apply different methods and procedures of interpretation to mythic narratives. n combine narrative analysis with cultural and anthropological observations. n paraphrase and critique (orally or in writing) theoretical arguments pertaining to myths, legends and other related narrative genres. n understand the historical development of interpretive methods in the field of myth theory. n write a focused analysis of a narrative work using an interpretive framework derived from myth theory.

Additional information

Course requirements

None

Time zone

CET (Spain, France, Germany, Netherlands, Hungary, Norway)

Language of instruction

English

Mode of delivery:

hybrid (students of the CHARM partners join online, local students on campus)

Start date of course:

2024-09-09 00:00:00

Planned educational activities and teaching methods

seminars: out-of-class reading, student presentations, online quizzes and discussions

End date of course:

12/16/2024

Contact hours per week for the student:

2

Learning Management System

Canvas, Teams

Specific regular weekly teaching day/time

Monday 18-19:30 (6-7:30 pm)

Assessment methods

assignment

Certification

Transcript of records

Course literature (compulsory or recommended):

Course book: Jensen, Jeppe Sinding, ed. Myths and Mythologies: A Reader, London, Routledge, 2014. Secondary literature: Barthes, Roland. Mythologies, [1957/71], trans. Annette Lavers, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1972 Blumenberg, Hans. Work on Myth, translated by Robert M. Wallace, MIT Press, 1985. Gould, Eric. Mythical Intention in Modern Literature [1981], Princeton University Press, 2017. Müller, Ernst. "Mythos/mythisch/Mythologie" in Ästhetische Grundbegriffe, ed. Karlheinz Barck et al., Vol 4., Stuttgart, Metzler, 2007, pp. 309-336. Lincoln, Bruce. Theorizing Myth. Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1999. von Hendy, Andrew, Modern Construction of Myth, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002.

Number of places available for CHARM students

5

Other relevant information

None

CHARM-EU