

CS3211F - Ancient Tricksters, Global Perspectives Fall 2014



INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Charles H. Stocking, cstockin@uwo.ca

Office: Lawson 3207

CLASS HOURS: MWF 1:30-2:30pm, P&AB 117

OFFICE HOURS: Monday 2:30-3:30 or by appointment

GRADE ASSESSMENT:

Class Participation/Preparation:	10%
Close Reading Assignments:	10%
Midterm (in Class, Oct. 15):	20%
Final (Date TBA):	35%
Final Essay (Due December 3rd):	25%

COURSE PREREQUISITES: CS1000 or Permission of Department

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course seeks to explore how lies, cheating, and all forms of deviancy become part of cultural identity in the Ancient Greek world through representation of the trickster figure. Specifically, we will consider how tricksters in Ancient Greek literature function as agents of mediation in the distribution of power. Because the category of trickster is pervasive throughout many cultures and traditions, we will also consider comparison of ancient tricksters with West African, Native American, and modern trickster figures. In many ways, the trickster can be considered the emblematic deity of interdisciplinary studies. Because students will be exposed to a wide variety of world literature with a single thematic focus, students will also have the opportunity to consider how the trickster figure as a transnational, border-crossing agent relates to our own modern perspectives on globalized society.

COURSE TEXTS:

- Daryl Hine. *The works of Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns*. Chicago Press, 2007.
- Lewis Hyde. *Trickster Makes this World*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.
- *The Odyssey of Homer* translated by Richmond Lattimore
- Robert Pelton. *The Trickster in West Africa: A Study of Mythic Irony and Sacred Delight*. University of California Press, 1980.
- Paul Radin. *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology*. Schocken Books, 1987.
- Derek Walcott. *The Odyssey, A Play*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course students will have a working knowledge of:

- The unique role of deception in Greek Religion and Mythology and its relationship to the social and political history of Ancient Greece.
- Native American Mythological Traditions related to deception along with the social and ethnographic contexts involved in the collection of these traditions.
- How Ancient Greek Mythology related to deception has influenced the history of scholarship in anthropology and folklore concerning the Trickster as a type of universal category of analysis in the comparison of cultures.
- The role of deception in the religious traditions of West Africa including Ashanti, Yoruba, and Fon cultures.
- The relationship between West African religious traditions and the transformation of these traditions in the Caribbean through the African Diaspora.
- The continued influence of the Classical Tradition in African and African Diasporic Traditions.
- The effects of the folklore category of trickster in modern society.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES/ TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Ask and articulate relevant questions that are generated out of the students' own research and observations on the material presented in class.
- Perform close readings, which explicate specific details of texts in light of the socio-historical contexts of the cultures from which these texts derive.
- Perform comparative analysis of narratives and texts from disparate cultures with a view to thematic similarities, while maintaining and respecting the difference in cultural contexts.
- Explain the difference between inherited traditions, cultural contact, and typological categories in discussing and applying methods of comparative analysis.
- Demonstrate effective writing and communication skills through a final essay, which provides a clearly articulated argument, an effective analysis of primary sources, and a critical engagement with relevant scholarship.

EVALUATION:

Participation:

Participation in class discussion is required for every class, except for cases of illness and other emergencies that can be verified through appropriate documentation.

Close Reading Assignments:

Two Close Reading Assignments will be assigned during the Fall Term.

The Close Readings Assignments will be due Friday. 10/10; Friday 11/14

Each Close Reading Assignment will be 250 words in length (not including text of the primary source): 1 page double spaced, 12pt. font.

The Close Reading Assignments may serve as a basis for the final research paper.

Assignment:

Choose a passage (length is entirely based on your discretion) from one of the primary texts we have read that is particularly striking to you and answer the following questions:

- 1) What specific details of the passage you chose are striking to you? What is the significance of this passage and what is its thematic force?
- 2) How do the details of this passage relate to the larger thematic issues of the text or narrative from which this passage was taken?
- 3) Explain how this passage relates to what we know of the socio-historical context of the text or narrative from which this passage was taken.
- 4) How does this passage relate to larger thematic issues in other texts or narratives we have encountered throughout this course?

Grading Rubric For Close Reading Assignment:

An “A” close reading provides a clear and well-articulated analysis of a given passage and is able to answer the four questions listed above in a way that elucidates on the details of the selected passage.

A “B” close reading provides a clear and well-articulated analysis of a given passage, but fails to answer all four questions listed above.

A “C” close reading provides an analysis of a given passage, but lacks in clarity and relevancy to the four questions listed above.

A “D” close reading fails to explicate on any details of the text and fails to articulate how the selected passage relates to larger thematic issues of the course.

An “F” close reading fails to provide a specific passage for analysis.

MIDTERM and FINAL EXAM:

The format for the midterm and final will include slide identifications based on class lectures as well as multiple choice and short answer questions on passages from primary and secondary readings.

FINAL ESSAY:

The Final Paper is due Wed. Dec. 3rd. Only a valid medical or family emergency will be accepted as an excuse for an extension otherwise a late penalty of 3 marks per day will be deducted (including weekends).

The paper must be at least 2000 words in length, with appropriate bibliographic referencing using the MLA format.

ESSAY TOPICS:

Essay Topics will be given to students in class along with relevant bibliographic information required for the essays.

All direct quotes and close paraphrasing must be acknowledged in your paper - failure to do so will be considered plagiarism:

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2011/pg113.html#>

You must submit on the due date both a paper copy of your essay and an electronic copy to turnitin.com (see below) – papers submitted as e-mail attachments will not be accepted.

You must also submit your essay paper in electronic form on the due date to Turnitin.com for textual similarity review for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). See class webct (webct.uwo.ca) homepage for instructions on how to upload papers to turnitin.com.

Dept. of Classical Studies: Grading Criteria for Honours-Level Essays

90 – 100 / A+ (Outstanding)

Writing strongly demonstrates: i) significant originality and high degree of critical engagement with primary sources and secondary scholarly literature, ii) sophisticated synthesis and analysis of theoretical and conceptual dimensions of topic, iii) all major primary and secondary sources have been consulted, iv) prescribed format of paper including proper citation of sources is rigorously followed; mature prose style free of grammatical error.

80 – 89 / A (Excellent)

Writing clearly demonstrates: i) originality and high degree of critical engagement with primary sources (written or material) and the secondary scholarly literature, ii) writing is perceptive and probing in its conceptual analysis, iii) topic is focused, logically organized, and thesis effectively presented and argued, iv) majority of primary and secondary sources have been consulted, v) prescribed format of paper including proper citation of sources is followed; well developed prose style virtually free of grammatical error.

75 – 79 / B+ (Very Good)

Writing demonstrates: i) above average analysis, critical thinking, and independent thought, ii) topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth, thesis is well presented and clearly argued, iii) representative selection of primary and secondary sources has been consulted, iv) prescribed format of

paper including proper citation of sources is followed; good intelligible prose style relatively free of grammatical error.

70 – 74 / B (Good)

Writing demonstrates: i) satisfactory attempt at analysis and critical thinking; arguments supported by reasonable evidence, ii) topic has been addressed in some depth and/or breadth, iii) somewhat limited selection of primary and secondary sources has been consulted, iv) text is generally well written; some problems with grammar and prose style.

60 – 69 / C (Competent)

Writing demonstrates: i) only adequate engagement with the topic, ii) limited depth and/or breadth in conceptualization and discussion of topic, iii) insufficient number of primary and/or secondary sources has been consulted, iv) paper has numerous problems of organization, clarity of argument, and grammar.

50 – 59 / D (Poor)

Writing demonstrates: i) inadequate engagement with topic, ii) factual errors regarding primary sources and lack of understanding of secondary literature, iii) few of key primary and secondary sources have been consulted, iv) prose style is difficult to follow, improper format for paper, incorrect citation of sources, many grammatical errors.

Below 50 / F (Unacceptable)

Writing demonstrates: i) failure to comprehend the topic, ii) topic is not clear, text is disorganized and/or unintelligible, iii) few or no relevant primary and/or secondary sources have been consulted, iv) writing skills do not meet the minimum university entrance-level standards.

0 (No Grade due to plagiarism or no paper submitted)

NOTE FROM THE DEAN OF ARTS and HUMANITIES: You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as basis of appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

PLAGIARISM: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATION FOR MEDICAL ILLNESS:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf [downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> [under the Medical Documentation heading] Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Office of the Dean of their home faculty and provide documentation.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION CANNOT BE GRANTED BY THE INSTRUCTOR OR DEPARTMENT.

WESTERN ACCESSIBILITY POLICY. Western has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social and academic needs of students with disabilities. For more information and links to these services: <http://accessibility.uwo.ca/>

WESTERN SUPPORT SERVICES: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND LECTURE TOPICS:

Wk. 1 Sept. 5: Introduction- Cultures of Deception

Wk.2 Sept 8-Sept.12

Topic: Deception and the Origins of the Greek Cosmos

Readings:

Hesiod *Theogony* (Hine, pp.53-87)

Marcel Detienne and J.P. Vernant *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* (selections-available on course website)

Wk. 3 Sept.15- Sept. 19

Topic: Prometheus, Power, and Alternate Origins

Readings:

Prometheus Bound (Available on Course Website)

Marcel Detienne and J.P. Vernant *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* (selections-available on course website)

Wk. 4 Sept. 22-Sept.26

Topic: Hermes – Birth of the Trickster

Readings:

Homeric Hymn to Hermes (Hine pp.135-154)

Norman Brown, *Hermes the Thief* (Selections – Course website)

William G. Doty, “A Life-Time of Trouble Making: Hermes as Trickster” (Course Website)

Wk.5 Sept. 29-Oct. 3rd

Topic: North American Trickster Tales

Readings:

Radin, *The Trickster*-

Part One: “Trickster Myth of Winnebago Indians” (Radin, pp.3-53)

Part Three: “The Nature and Meaning of the Myth” (Radin, pp. 134-169)

Wk.6 Oct. 6-Oct.10: **First Close Reading Assignment due Oct. 10th**

Topic: Trickster and the Comparison of Cultures

Readings:

Paul Radin, *The Trickster*-

Part Four: Kerenyi “The Trickster in Relation to Greek Mythology.” (Radin, pp.173-191)

Part Five: Jung, “On the Psychology of the Trickster” (Radin, pp.195-211)

Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World* –

Introduction; Part One: “Trap of Nature” (Hyde, pp. 17-55)

Wk.7 Oct. 13th- Thanksgiving, **Oct. 15 Midterm**

Oct. 17th- **Introduction to West African Tricksters**

Readings:

Michael Pelton, *Trickster in West Africa*-

Part One: “Interpreting the Trickster” (Pelton, pp.1-24)

Wk. 8 Oct. 20-Oct. 24

Topic: Tricksters Deities and Transversal Identities in West Africa.

Readings:

Michael Pelton, *Trickster in West Africa*-

Part Two: "Ananse, Spinner of Ashanti Doubteness" (Pelton, pp.25-70)

Part Three: "Legba: Master of the Fon Dialect" (Pelton, pp.71-112)

Part Four: "Legba and Eshu: Writers of Destiny" (Pelton, pp.113-1630)

Wk. 9 Oct. 27-Oct.29, **Oct.30- Oct.31 Fall Break**

Topic: Odysseus and the Paradigm for Mortal Tricksters, Part One.

Readings:

Odyssey (selections)

Wk. 10 Nov. 3 -Nov.7

Topic: Odysseus and the Paradigm for Mortal Tricksters, Part Two

Readings:

Odyssey (selection)

Wk. 11 Nov. 10- Nov. 14. **2nd Close Reading Assignment due Nov. 14th**

Topic: *Odyssey* Applied- Trickster Today

Readings:

Derek Walcott, *The Odyssey A Stage Version*

Donald Cosentino, "Who is that Fellow in the Many Colored Cap? Transformations of Eshu."
(Course Website)

Edouard Glissant *Poetics of Relation*, pp.11-35 (Course Website)

Wk. 12 Nov. 17- Nov. 21

Topic: The Wish Fulfillment of a Mortal Trickster

Readings:

Aristophanes' *Birds*

Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World*-

Interlude; Part Two: "Two-Road Chance." (Hyde, pp.95-150)

Wk. 13 Nov. 24-Nov. 28

Topic: Tricksters Compared, Part Three.

Readings:

Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World*-

Part Three: "Dirt Work" (pp.153-199)

Part Four "Trap of Culture" (pp.203-280)

Wk.14 Dec. 3rd – **Final Papers Due, Final Review**