

## English 160 Section 11

### Preface

#### Learning Outcomes

The material in this preface consists of information the College requires instructors to

include their materials for the purposes of consistency across all sections of this course. The information you'll find beginning on page 4 consists of material I've prepared for you; it builds on the core concepts in the preface.

#### Approved Course Description

##### **1. Course Abbreviation, Number & Title**

ENGL 160 - Introduction to Literature

##### **2. Calendar Description**

This course, which is a discussion of fiction, poetry, and drama, introduces students to the study and analysis of literature. Students will be exposed to a diverse and challenging range of materials, and will be assigned a minimum of 3 essays. Finished assignments total 4000-5000 words. (T)

##### **3. Pre-requisites**

ENGL 150

##### **4. Co-requisites**

None

**5. Pre/Co-Requisite** (a course that **must** be taken either at the same time **or** before this course)

None

##### **6. Credits**

Three

##### **7. Mode and Hours of Delivery**

Page 2

[3] Direct Instruction

Classroom 3; lab 0; seminar 0; no practicum

Estimated out-of-class 6

Number of weeks 14

[ ] Distributed education (online, web-based)

[ ] Self-paced

##### **8. Is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) available for this course?**

No

##### **9. Intended Learning Outcomes (Core Learning Objectives)**

Students in English 160 are expected to develop the following abilities.

**In reading literature**, students will be encouraged to make connections, consider meaning, make and support inferences, and evaluate.

Instructors will select course materials and provide information that will enable students to:

- read literature in the genres of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama from different periods;

- recognize literary forms, elements, and techniques

**In discussing literature**, students will be given the opportunity to develop and communicate responses and interpretations using various methods and resources. Students will be expected to:

- distinguish between literal and figurative meaning;

- use literary terms such as metaphor, irony, character, setting and plot;

- use vocabulary associated with analyzing fiction, poetry, drama and non-fiction;

- analyze themes;

- be aware of a variety of literary theories;

- develop an informed critical response.

**In writing about literature**, students will be expected to explain, support and illustrate points in essays by:

English 160: Literature - Steve Good Page 3

- using a critical approach with appropriate language;

- comparing pieces of literature in English;

- documenting sources using current MLA bibliographic conventions.

### **10. Grading System (select one)**

Letter grades

Mastery

Practicum

Page 4

## **Archetypal Patterns in Literature & Culture**

### **Course Description and Objectives**

#### **General Description**

English 160 is intended to provide students with a general introduction to literature in

terms of basic elements of experience, technique, genre, plot structure, characterization,

context and the like. This particular section of English 160 is based on an archetypal

and mythic approach to literature and to cultural issues. It is therefore less traditional than you might expect if your previous experience has been limited to typical secondary school literature classes. Material to be covered in the course includes poetry, drama and a novel, together with specific works to which I'll direct your attention from time to time.

The course is intended not only to expose you to literary works in a new and different way, but to help you understand the role of myth and archetype in your lives as people living in this culture. I also want to encourage

you to develop your abilities to see more clearly the world in which you live, and to discuss and analyse your insights as you see them reflected in the works we will study.

The course is about 14 weeks long, and involves two classes a week. You are expected to attend and to have done the readings. Later in this outline, you will find detailed information as to course assignments, due dates and the like.

### Course Objectives

In the most general sense, this course is intended to familiarize you with some basic

elements of experience, thought, belief, myth and characterization used in literature,

with particular emphasis on the role of archetypes and archetypal patterns.

Beyond the general objective of having you read and begin to appreciate works of literature, there are some specific objectives you should keep in mind. If you spend

some time and effort during the course, you will learn to:

1. use the vocabulary and tools of literary criticism;
2. interpret a work based on evidence (explicit or reasonably implicit) that you find in the text;
3. use the principles of archetypal criticism and the mythical archetypes as tools for literary analysis and discussion;
4. understand and analyse aspects of popular culture in terms of these archetypes as they appear in literature, and thereby, come to an enhanced understanding or awareness of your own role in the culture; and
5. write clear and coherent analytical papers.

**Please note:** in order to take English 160, you must have completed English 150. Therefore, I will make some assumptions about your ability to produce a basic essay.

While we will be talking quite a bit about your essays and the writing process generally,

I want to remind you that this is a literature course. If your skills are very weak (that is, below what one would expect from a student who has successfully completed

English 150), you may be in danger of failing on that basis alone.

A common theme in literature is, as you will discover, the Quest. This theme takes many forms: at various times it has focused on the 'Holy Grail,' 'Eternal Life,' 'True

Love', 'Perfect Being', or 'Ultimate Knowledge'. The Quest is carried on by the individual,

the culture and the species. What is it? How is it expressed in art and literature?

Is it relevant today? How is it expressed at this time in this culture? Ultimately, it may prove to be a quest to determine our own identities.

The course is designed around the texts, and around outside reading you will be asked

to do periodically. We will use arguments or hypotheses about various cultural trends

as benchmarks in our progress, and you can expect to deal with material from other

media, including film. I take an interdisciplinary approach to the examination of patterns and themes within literature, so we will regularly be considering archetypes

and specific works, not only in terms of the literature itself, but in terms of law, history,

philosophy, political science, anthropology and the like.

Page 6

## Papers

All papers will include a cover sheet displaying the material shown in the box at the right.

## Marking Criteria

Your grade on essay work is based on some or all of the following elements, depending

on the nature of the assignment:

### 1. Thesis & Statement

Did you tell the reader what you are going to write about? Did you explain to the reader why it is important (why they should read your paper)? Did you clearly explain

how the essay will be organized (how the topic will be broken down to facilitate a clear logical discussion)? Remember to provide a clear thesis with path statement!

### 2. Clarity & Organization

Have you presented your material in a clear and coherent fashion?

Is it logical? Are your points well made?

Are your arguments supported within the primary text and by your research?

Is the subject that you are dealing with appropriate for the length of paper?

Did you follow the structure that you suggested in your thesis/path statement?

### 3. Notes & References

You will be doing some research work. I will expect you to use proper documentation

format (the **MLA Parenthetical System**). I will also evaluate you on use of resources,

the appropriateness of resources used, and the appropriateness of the material quoted to the point that you are trying to make in your essay. If you've never had to

do this sort of thing, you should seriously consider investing in a copy of Trimmer's

*Date Submitted*

*Assignment Number*

*Assignment Title*

*Your Name*

*English 160 Section* \_\_

Page 8

### **Guide to MLA Documentation.**

#### **4. Grammar & Spelling**

Have you used correct English and correct spelling? Please note: even the best ideas

can be ruined by problems in this area, as can your grades. Be systematic and consistent.

#### **5. Aesthetics**

Was your paper well written? Is the use of language pleasing? Is it witty and interesting

(and appropriate to context)? Is the reasoning precise and well put?

#### **6. Clarity and Quality of Criticism & Analysis**

Your paper may well be clearly written from the technical and organizational perspective;

but if your analysis is unclear, unsound or illogical, or if your criticisms are not well founded and well supported, your paper will still be a failure. Therefore, you must put yourself in the position of the intelligent but uninformed reader for the purpose

of evaluating your own efforts. Does your analysis follow sound and accepted principles? Have you proceeded in a way that makes your logic understandable and acceptable to the members of your chosen audience?

Does your analysis flow from a central proposition or hypothesis that you set out in your thesis statement?

Have you been careful to narrow your focus sufficiently so that the reader will not perceive logical gaps between the various stages in your analysis? Have you got the sequence of analytical steps in an appropriate order for your audience? When you criticize, have you based your points on clear and intensive reading of

the primary material, and  
have you based your  
views on sound and  
clearly identified research materials (where applicable)?  
English 160: Literature - Steve Good Page 9

---

## What I Expect From You

### Attendance

You cannot participate meaningfully in the course if you do not attend. There may be in-class exercises and quizzes that count toward your grade **and that you cannot “make up”** if you are away. We have too few class sessions as it is in a course of this length. If there is an emergency and you simply must miss a class, please phone, or discuss it with me ahead of time if at all possible. If you choose to be chronically absent, that is your privilege and your responsibility. However, you should understand that (**except in the case of verified medical problems**), no extensions are available. You should also take careful note of the **Late Assignment Policy** that appears later in this outline.

### Assignments

You must do all required class work and submit all assignments in order to complete the course. Assignments are due at the **beginning** of the class time on the date that they are due. Any exceptions must be negotiated in advance. You will maintain an ordinary pocket folder with all your returned assignments and my comments on them. You will hand in the entire folder with each new assignment.

### Class participation

You are encouraged to participate in class discussion. This gives you a chance to test an idea or opinion, and provides me with some measure of how well you are understanding the material. Your class contribution can also be a major factor when it comes to making a difficult decision over a grade on an essay. You should begin reading through the text materials as soon as possible. This outline contains additional information about specific selections and dates.

Page 10

Grading System, Assignment Structure & “Weighting”

I will assign grades in the course in accordance with the college-mandated structure

set out below. If there is any change in college policy, I'll let you know.

A+ = 95 - 100 A = 90 - 94 A- = 85 - 89 B+ = 80 - 84

B = 75 - 79 B- = 70 - 74 C+ = 65 - 69 C = 60 - 64

D = 50 - 59 F = 0 - 49

Your work in the course consists of two home assignments during the term. **Each** of

these assignments is worth 20% of your final grade in the course. In addition, there are various in-class activities and/or quizzes worth a **total** of 20% of your grade.

Finally, there is a final assignment in the form of a research essay worth 40% of your

final grade.

Please note that work for other courses, extracurricular commitments, etc., do not constitute acceptable excuses for late or missed assignments.

### What You Can Expect In Class

You can expect that we will spend class time dealing with some or all of the following

on any given day:

1. review of key concepts covered in the previous session(s), and discussion of any assigned homework;
2. explanation of material to be covered in the current class in terms of objectives, scope and relationship to overall course objectives;
3. lecture, discussion and/or activities designed to clarify and create opportunities to practice the specific skills being addressed or to express your own responses and insights;
4. summary of the material covered, together with responses to any questions that arise;
5. clarification of homework or assignments;
6. overview of the material to be covered during the next class, together with any assignment of any homework necessary to prepare for that class.

English 160: Literature - Steve Good Page 11

WordsWordsWordsWords

Our approach will be based on the following assumptions about

language, literature and writing:

Language is, on its face, a serial experience that occurs through time. We have cognitive

and affective responses to language; and a skilful writer differentiates between

these types of responses, shaping language to create a series of reactions to a continuing message. That message takes shape within a particular cultural context that invites (or requires) the reader to interpret in particular ways. While any reader of literature can be a successful reader in the sense that anyone can have a subjectively positive experience of particular work, it is possible to become a learned or "fit" reader. This process is one of self-instruction and qualification: by acquiring an understanding of the critical process in the context of many disciplines and by examining the relationships between fields of human thought in a culture, one greatly enriches one's own reading experiences.

In view of the nature of language, we can recognize writing as a process that requires one to make conscious decisions about purpose, audience, content, organization and style, while keeping in mind the quality of the reader's experience. When one views writing in this context, one can see it for what it is: a difficult and complex process requiring sensitivity, skill and clarity of thought. It is also frustrating. Only perseverance can overcome the frustration, and the rewards are well worth the effort. This truth is unchanging, no matter how talented a writer is. It applies equally to readers, who must make a "willing suspension of disbelief" in order to achieve the level of experience most writers desire for them.

Writing, reading, criticism and analyses without purpose are empty intellectual exercises. This does not mean that everything you write must be complete, perfect or profound, or that everything you read must be defined as "great literature". It does mean that you must care about what you are doing, and you must want to convince or be convinced, persuade or be persuaded -- or even enchant or be enchanted. Never stop trying to improve the depth and sensitivity of your reading or the quality of your writing. If you set goals only in terms of marks, you automatically impose limitations on growth and development. Don't confuse your ego with your work or your

Page 12

## The Archetypes

### 1. The Shadow

The Shadow is sometimes defined simply as 'an opposite.' Often, it is a character in a



story or tale who is the opposite of the hero or heroine. Sometimes, as in **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**, it is possible to argue that the Shadow is the alter ego or other self of the hero or protagonist. We can also think of the shadow as a quality or thing, in the sense of darkness (the absence of light) being the opposite of light -- and here you should consider the oriental symbol of the Yin and the Yang. The Shadow may be pure evil; or it may be simply different but not necessarily evil. Jung's conception of the *animus* and *anima* (the interlocking male and female principles respectively) reflects this balance/tension. We see examples of the Shadow in stories about feuding brothers (one good and the other bad), or in situations where there is a dark and mysterious stranger whose behaviour can cause all kinds of reactions. Think, for example, of Darth Vader in the **Star Wars** trilogy. One could say that each of us has a Shadow. Jung would have agreed, though he probably would have said that our shadows are part of some collective shadow of all humanity. Perhaps, then, for most of us, Shadow may be that which we can't or won't see within ourselves or others. Consider: how many stories or situations are there in which the whole action is based on the hero running from, going into, or confronting Shadow? Henry Jekyll, Sparrowhawk in LeGuin's **A Wizard of Earthsea**, Prospero and Caliban in Shakespeare's **The Tempest**, Roland in King's **Dark Tower** trilogy....

## 2. The Trickster

The figure of the Trickster is a very old one, appearing as it does everywhere from ancient Greece to Norse legend (in the form of Loki), to aboriginal tales about animal tricksters like Coyote and Raven, to the medieval jester and that more modern troublemaker, Dennis the Menace.

Early or primitive Tricksters were often characterized as animals, born mischief-seekers who think with their appetites.

The Temptress embodies everything that is alluring and erotic. She is also frequently lethal and immoral, or completely amoral, motivated completely by her own desires and interests. In some legends and myths, she is a vampire-like being who destroys men by literally draining them dry.

sexually. In other stories, she is like the modern 'Black Widow' -- one who destroys her mates for her own purposes. Sometimes she is controlled by her own libido, like Messalina, the wife of Emperor Claudius. She can also act out of sheer pique, to her ultimate undoing, like Delilah in the biblical tale of Samson.

The Temptress is frequently put on display as an advertising device, intended to lure males into certain behaviours on the erroneous assumption that if they act in a particular way, they will get to share the Temptress's erotic favours.

There are things about women that I suspect men will never understand because they are not physiologically or psychologically capable of doing so. Of course, the reverse may well be true; and while there has been a centuries-long pro-masculine bias, there is also a mystique about women and their true powers. Hence our own fascination with and fear of Anne Rice's **The Queen of the Damned**, or H. Rider Haggard's **She**.

They titillate instead of their brains. They are generally humorous, but they can be cruel -- sometimes extremely so. In humorous tales, the Trickster is the practical joker like Brer Rabbit, likeable even though he sometimes causes damage to others. In more serious works, the Trickster can be a murderous villain who toys with his victims, humiliating and often destroying them. Think of the Joker, Jack Napier, in **Batman** . . .

. . .

### 3. The Temptress

For a variety of complicated reasons, the validity of which we could debate endlessly, our culture has been traditionally male-dominated. This may be the explanation for the representation of male fantasies in myths, literary works and modern media productions.

The fantasies very often (almost always?) have an erotic overtone; they are also frequently destructive to the male, although sometimes he destroys himself through his own stupidity or immaturity.

Page 14

### 4. The Mother

If the Temptress is evil or amoral or lethal, the Mother is life-giving, caring, loving and powerful -- in fact, at times, she can virtually take on the world. Women do play

other archetypal roles than those of Mother and Temptress: heroine, shaman, angel of mercy, amazon, nurse, even the prostitute with the heart of gold (a curious mixture that appeals to males). But the Mother is the major role, and in our culture tends to be identified strongly with the Virgin Mary, the embodiment of generosity and forgiveness, and the source of hope of rebirth. In primitive cultures, the Mother is the great fertility principle, sometimes equated with Nature. She oversees all life, in all its forms; she can be powerful and destructive, but not evil. When she is destructive, the purpose is usually to restore some semblance of balance. She is also the maker of sacrifices, the longsuffering one who gives everything. Rose Kennedy is often seen as the quintessential mother, a living example of the ideals in the Christian tradition. You should consider that our feelings about this, and the very strength of the archetypal character, may be what underlies our sense of the earth as our Mother and our desire to protect her so that she can continue to nourish us.

## 5. The Wise Old Man

In many ways, this figure is the male side of the Good Mother. He is the old man with the long white robe who appears at crucial moments in moral fables. He is the one who trains the immature young hunter to pursue the Great Buffalo; he is Yoda, teaching young Luke Skywalker the ways of the Force. He is also the crusty, foul-smelling old fight manager who takes young Rocky Balboa and makes him a champion. He fills a vital gap by giving the hero information or insight that is essential in order for the archetypal quest or journey to be completed successfully.

English 160: Literature - Steve Good Page 15

Our popular literature, even today, is full of wise old wizards and shamans (male and female), old teachers, grizzled drill sergeants, saintly grandfathers and the like. But the basic archetypal character doesn't need magic and often doesn't have it. What he or she does have is knowledge, based on experience and insight, and these are things the young hero

or heroine must learn.

## 6. The Helpful Animal and The Holy Fool

In myths and legends, help sometimes comes from unexpected sources. We have a long tradition of storybook creatures who seem almost human in their ability to assist

people: the household animals in **Cinderella**, the Cheshire Cat in **Alice in Wonderland**,

Pegasus the flying horse in the tale of Bellerophon, Lassie, Rin-Tin-Tin, Old Yeller, Roy Rogers' horse Trigger, the Lone Ranger's Silver, and many others. Of course, in old folk-tales and in other cultures, there are other creatures we tend not to

remember or recognize as quickly: the mongoose Riki-Tiki in Kipling's stories is an example. Often the creatures are magical -- unicorns, helpful dragons and so on.

Our fascination with animals is endless. Perhaps that's why movies like Disney's **Bambi** and **Dumbo** are so popular. It may also be the reason why we all feel strangely enchanted when we hear a true story of dolphins protecting lost sailors from sharks and then ferrying these people to land. Heroes and heroines all have their trusty steeds and animal companions, with whom they share a special bond.

Sometimes it is that ability to share the bond that separates the heroic characters from ordinary people who are incapable of embarking on the great quests. In the 21st century, consider R2D2 and C3PO

....

The Holy Fool is the obvious 'odd man out' -- the harmless, often childlike character who is frequently scorned as being stupid or even "defective," but who has profound insights he or she

would gladly share, if only someone would ask. This is the Simpleton, who would not harm a fly, and who is concerned about things others think unimportant or insignificant.

Page 16

He or she lives according to 'higher' values, and is sometimes able to help the main character restore a sense of perspective and balance. The Fool is also a spiritual being who sees the connection between physical nature and the human soul.

He doesn't merely see it; he lives it, and therefore sits on the sidelines of humanity's

'normal' activities. A fine example is the Fool on the Hill in the Beatles' song.

## 7. The Quest

Life is a journey. It is next to impossible (outside the writings of existentialists or absurdists) to find a work suggesting that life consists of sitting still and doing nothing,

of absolutely denying change. The journey is physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual. In our culture, it is also sometimes viewed as financial, social or political, as when one sets out to "climb the ladder of success." The archetypal quest or journey tends to be circular in nature, to the extent that the hero or heroine usually tries to bring back the fruits of the quest to the place from which he or she started. Sometimes this doesn't work: the quest is unfilled, and despair is the result, as in the case of Gilgamesh. Sometimes the quest is misdirected, and disaster is the result, as it is for Henry Jekyll. In a great many cases, the quest results in the death of the main character; but that death either enables the hero's world to continue to exist, or it lets the hero move on to a higher plane of existence. Examples are **The New Testament** and **Jonathan Livingston Seagull**.

The quest pattern is powerful. We see it in the legends of medieval knights pursuing

the Grail or going on Crusades to take Jerusalem; we see it in **Batman** and **Indiana**

**Jones and the Last Crusade**; we see it in the ambitious young businessperson determined

to reach his or her financial goals. We simply cannot escape it. And remember this: the quest is always internal, even when it appears not to be. The external landscape

is a reflection of what's inside . . . .

## 8. Rebirth

It seems that we aren't happy unless we have the prospect of something better somewhere

in the future. Every culture has notions of resurrection or reincarnation; every culture has initiation rites into a higher state of existence; every culture has devices it

believes will permit spiritual rebirth. The concept is tied to death, that great barrier that only the true hero or heroine can cross. Rebirth always has a purpose and is

English 160: Literature - Steve Good Page 17

generally associated with salvation, not just of the individual, but of the whole society.

In Christian tradition, Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected; he died for

humankind's sins, so that all could be born again into the Kingdom of Heaven.

'Bornagain'

Christians undergo a symbolic and spiritual process that mirrors the pattern.

Sometimes rebirth focuses on justice and punishment rather than salvation.

Batman

goes through hell as a child and emerges into adulthood as something new and different

-- and dangerous to evildoers. Yeats' poem, "The Second Coming", looks toward the second coming in the Christian tradition -- only this time, there will be justice and

retribution, rather than mercy:

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,

Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?

There are other archetypal patterns and figures to which we relate whether we realize

it or not. Use this material as your starting point.

Page 18

Myth

The mythic view is the largest view. It compels us to view the cultural history of mankind as a unit; for we find that such themes as the theft of fire, the deluge, the land of the dead, virgin birth, and the resurrected hero have a worldwide distribution -

appearing everywhere in new combinations while remaining, like the elements of a

kaleidoscope, only a few and always the same.

No human society has yet been found in which such mythological motifs have not been rehearsed in liturgies; interpreted by seers, poets, theologians or philosophers;

presented in art; magnified in song; and ecstatically experienced in life-empowering

vision. Indeed, the chronicle of our species, from its earliest page, has been much more than simply an account of the progress of man the tool-maker.

Man, apparently, cannot maintain himself in the universe without a belief in some arrangement of the general inheritance of myth. In fact, the fullness of his life would

even seem to stand in a direct ratio to the depth and range, not of his rational thought,

but of his local mythology.

A myth is not so much an expression of one particular time as it is an expression of

time itself. What is ancient for us was in its own time a reworking of what was ancient

for the ancients. A myth is always about the old days. Specialized, scientific

knowledge is about pieces; but mythology is about the whole, the beginning and ending of things.

A mythic narrative works through a system of correspondences, so a god is at once a

principle of order, a number, a geometrical figure, a dancing measure, a mantram, a

special planet, and a heavenly body.

Myth is the history of the soul and each stage of the evolution of consciousness generates its appropriate story. As the spiral of history turns, one archetypal story becomes the overture to what is to come. As a story, the myth of Isis and Osiris is a recapitulation of the myth of the Neolithic Mother Goddess and the dying adolescent son-lover. . . the story of Isis and Osiris is also an overture to the story of Mary and Jesus.

*Isis*

English 160: Literature - Steve Good Page 19

## Ritual

You need to be certain about your understanding of the term 'ritual.'

"The function of ritual is to give form to human life, not in the way of a mere surface arrangement, but in depth. In ancient times, every social occasion was ritually structured and the sense of depth was rendered through the maintenance of a religious tone.

"Today the religious tone is reserved for exceptional, very special, 'sacred' occasions. And yet even in the patterns of our secular life, ritual survives. It can be recognized, for example, not only in the decorum of courts and regulations of military life, but also in the manners of people sitting down to table together."

*The Resurrection of Osiris*

Page 20

grades.

## Late Assignment Policy

# Read This Carefully!

In order to get me to accept a late assignment, you must:

1. have a truly valid excuse. This does not mean a headache, a rugby game, a vacation or a visitor from out of town. I will accept

a medical excuse, if it is substantiated and sufficiently serious. Other course obligations are not acceptable excuses, nor are last-minute computer or printer problems.

2. speak with me in person or by telephone prior to the time you are to hand in the assignment, except in the case of a verifiable emergency.

3. be prepared to state an alternate time by which you will hand in the assignment.

If I decide that you may hand the assignment in late, then I expect a commitment from you.

English 160: Literature - Steve Good Page 21

### Assignment Schedule and Topics

The following is a tentative listing of assignment topics and due dates for the term.

If

it becomes necessary to make changes as the course progresses, I will make certain

that you have plenty of prior notice.

You will have noticed from your course outline that your grade in the course consists

of marks for two essay assignments, some in-class work and the final paper.

**Please**

**remember that you must complete all required work satisfactorily in order to get**

**credit for the course.**

As you look over the material below, remember to comply with the essay format requirements described in your course outline. If you are uncertain about how to write a proper essay, get hold of a copy of **The Students Only Essay-Writing**

**Survival**

**Guide**, by Good and Jensen (available in the Bookstore). Also, please remember that **all essays must be TYPED, DOUBLE SPACED, AND SUBMITTED IN A POCKET FOLDER, TOGETHER WITH A CHECKLIST THAT I WILL PROVIDE.**

I. First Assignment - essay due beginning of class, last class day of Week 5 (20% of final grade).

Remember as you begin to work on this essay that you need a topic that's narrow enough for you to be able to give the reader information that is both new, complete



and specific. If your topic is too wide, you will be unable to deliver on your obligations to the reader.

You will write an essay (**minimum of four typed pages**) about a fable or children's story of your choice. You will try to interpret it based on the following excerpt from

Joseph Campbell:

...the human infant is born - biologically considered - some ten or twelve years too soon. It acquires its human character, upright stature, ability to speak, and the vocabulary of its thinking under the influence of a specific culture, the features of which are engraved, as it were, upon its nerve; so that the constitutional patternings which in the animal world are biologically inherited are in the human species matched largely by socially transmitted forms, imprinted during what have been long known as the "impressionable years," and rituals have been everywhere the recognized means of such imprinting. Myths

Page 22

are the mental supports of rites; rites, the physical enactments of myths. By absorbing the myths of his social group and participating in its rites, the youngster is structured to accord with his social as well as natural environment, and turned from an amorphous nature product, prematurely born, into a defined and competent member of some specific, efficiently functioning social order.

Your first assignment requires you to interpret Campbell's comments through exploration

of a myth in modern culture. Using the fable or story you have selected, you are to discuss how cultural conditioning is taking place in it on the level Campbell discusses

in the quotation. Given the 'artifact' you have chosen, you should consider one or more of the following questions in planning your paper (though you needn't attempt

to answer all the questions in the paper itself):

What are the characteristics of the dominant myth?

What kinds of ritual activities take place in the work?

What rituals within our culture are suggested by the work?

What kinds of behaviour do you think are likely to result?

In order for the lesson in the story to be correct, what things must you assume to be true?

Is there a disparity between the values suggested in the

work on one hand, and 'real-life' values on the other?  
Remember to use proper essay form. You'll need a clear thesis and path statement for your paper, and you'll have to provide the reader with a clear and specific discussion, using appropriate details and support. If you are unsure what that means, or if you have no sense of how to structure or limit your thesis based on the information given in the assignment, consult your outline. I will grade your work in accordance with the criteria set out in the outline.

## II. Second Assignment - essay due beginning of class period, last class day of week 9 (20% of final grade).

No human society has yet been found in which...mythological motifs have not been rehearsed in liturgies; interpreted by seers, poets, theologians, or philosophers; presented in art; magnified in song; and ecstatically experienced in life empowering visions. Indeed the chronicle of our species, from its earliest page, has been not simply an account of the progress of man the tool-maker, but - more tragically - a history of the pouring of blazing into the minds of seers and the efforts of earthly communities to incarnate unearthly covenants. Every people has received its own seal and sign of supernatural designation, communicated to its heroes and daily proved in the lives and experience of its folk. And though many who bow with closed eyes in the sanctuaries of their own tradition rationally scrutinize and disqualify the sacraments of others, an honest comparison immediately reveals that all have been built from one fund of mythological motifs - variously selected, organized, interpreted, and ritualized according to local need, but revered by every people on earth.

Joseph Campbell

We have been discussing archetypal patterns (motifs) and ritualized behaviour at some length, and you have been reading works which reflect (among other things) a kind of awareness of or sensitivity to the existence of the patterns at a very deep level.

We dress the patterns in costumes and act them out through rituals that are acceptable

in this culture. Just as there are heroes and heroines in the mythic patterns, so to there are evildoers or negative forces that play a ritualized role. From these we assign attributes to their modern counterparts, the criminals and monsters of modern fact and fiction.

In this assignment, you will be examining a poem you have been reading in order to identify and analyze ritualized behaviour that depends in some way on one or more of the archetypal patterns or characters. The piece you choose need not be one that you find in the course text; but in that case, you should check with me before going ahead.

Do NOT use a poem that we have discussed in class. If you choose a work from a book other than your texts, please attach a copy of the poem to your essay. The task will require you to look at the cultural context of the specific piece so that you can figure out the cultural standards that are in force; and you will have to 'get down to' the prevailing mythological motif(s) on which you will base your analysis. It is the mythological base and its connection to the ritualized behaviour you detect in the piece with which you should be most concerned. Your essay must be a **minimum of four typed pages**.

III. Final Assignment/Exam - research paper, DUE NOT LATER THAN 12:00 NOON, FIRST DAY OF SCHEDULED EXAMINATION PERIOD (40% of final grade).

Page 24

Your paper will be a **minimum of ten typed, doubled-spaced pages** (this doesn't mean just eight or nine, or nine and a bit), not counting your Works Cited page. In your paper, you must take a clear position and present an intelligible and well supported

argument. In making your argument, you will use as many reference works as you feel appropriate (this is a research paper). References to pulp publications (e.g.,

Reader's Digest, The National Enquirer, Biker) are unacceptable. Since this paper is

the final exam, it should demonstrate the best work you can produce -- remember that

it will count for 40% of your grade in the course. Take your time and be careful: you

will be graded on your thesis statement and path statement, organization and clarity of your argument, grammar and punctuation, spelling, use of citations/references, quality of insight and logic, etc. Typographical errors will be marked, so proofread carefully!

The due date is noted above. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON** (other than **VERIFIED** medical emergency). You will find the details of your final assignment below. Good luck with your work!

Modern literature is devoted, in great measure, to a courageous, open-eyed observation of the sickeningly broken figurations that abound before us, around us, and within. Where the natural impulse to complain against the holocaust has been suppressed -- to cry out blame, or to announce panaceas -- the magnitude of an art of tragedy more potent (for us) than the Greek finds realization: the realistic, intimate, and variously interesting tragedy of democracy, where the god is beheld crucified in the catastrophes not of the great houses only but of every common home, every scourged and lacerated face. And there is no make-believe about heaven, future bliss, and compensation, to alleviate the bitter majesty, but only utter darkness, the void of unfulfilment, to receive and eat back the lives that have been tossed forth from the womb only to fail. ... The happy ending of the fairy tale, the myth and the divine comedy of the soul, is to be read, not as a contradiction, but as a transcendence of the universal tragedy of man.

Joseph Campbell

Many thinkers and writers have frequently expressed a less-than-optimistic view of life in the context of 'organized' culture. Edgar Allan Poe suggested that the play

of Life "...is the tragedy 'Man', and its hero, the Conqueror Worm." Nietzsche, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, argued that there are two views of the universe: one based on order,

English 160: Literature - Steve Good Page 25  
structure, rhythm, grace and (selfimposed) illusion (the 'Apollonian' view); and another based on the perception that the universe is in reality a chaotic, amoral place where things are neither right nor wrong -- they simply

are (the 'Dionysian' view). Sartre, in *La Nausee*, called life "The Nausea", and expressed an existential view that apparently offered little in the way of hope or coherent action from which people can draw meaning or truth.

For your final, you will select a literary work and analyze it in terms of Campbell's view, as you interpret that view based on your reading of the above quotation. In doing so, you should first explain your interpretation, being careful to consider (among other things) whether Campbell's view is as pessimistic as it appears to be on first reading.

The final paper requires you to do considerable reading in order to select an appropriate work for the assignment. Since the assignment requires you to do some research, you may want to consider other works from which you can draw support, including other literary works and critical works. The usual criteria apply (narrow clear thesis in the form of an arguable assertion, proper path statement, etc.).

**You must remember that this is a research paper; accordingly, I will expect to see references to AT LEAST three outside sources or works.** You can earn extra points by properly using material drawn from juried academic journals.