School of International Letters & Cultures

SLC/GER 394 Germanic Mythology 3

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ELIGIBILITY: New courses must be approved by the Tempe Campus Curriculum Subcommittee and must have a regular course number. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact the General Studies Program Office at 931-0739.

AREA(S) PROPOSED COURSE WILL SERVE. A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study. (Please submit one designation per proposal)

Core Areas
Literacy and Critical Inquiry—L ☐
Mathematical Studies—MA ☐ CS ☐
Humanities, Fine Arts and Design—HU ☐
Social and Behavioral Sciences—SB ☐
Natural Sciences—SQ ☐ SG ☐

Awareness Areas
Global Awareness—G ☒
Historical Awareness—H ☐
Cultural Diversity in the United States—C ☐

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED.
(1) Course Description
(2) Course Syllabus
(3) Criteria Checklist for the area
(4) Table of Contents from the textbook used, if available

In the space provided below (or on a separate sheet), please also provide a description of how the course meets the specific criteria in the area for which the course is being proposed.

CROSS-LISTED COURSES: ☐ No ☐ Yes; Please identify courses: ____________________________

Is this an undergraduate course?: ☐ No ☐ Yes; Is it governed by a common syllabus? __________

Chair/Director (Print or Type) [Signature] 2/3/2011
Rationale and Objectives

Human organizations and relationships have evolved from being family and village centered to modern global interdependence. The greatest challenge in the nuclear age is developing and maintaining a global perspective which fosters international cooperation. While the modern world is comprised of politically independent states, people must transcend nationalism and recognize the significant interdependence among peoples of the world. The exposure of students to different cultural systems provides the background of thought necessary to developing a global perspective.

Cultural learning is present in many disciplines. Exposure to perspectives on art, business, engineering, music, and the natural and social sciences that lead to an understanding of the contemporary world supports the view that intercultural interaction has become a daily necessity. The complexity of American society forces people to balance regional and national goals with global concerns. Many of the most serious problems are world issues and require solutions which exhibit mutuality and reciprocity. No longer are hunger, ecology, health care delivery, language planning, information exchanges, economic and social developments, law, technology transfer, philosophy, and the arts solely national concerns; they affect all the people of the world. Survival may be dependent on the ability to generate global solutions to some of the most pressing problems.

The word university, from universitas, implies that knowledge comes from many sources and is not restricted to local, regional, or national perspectives. The Global Awareness Area recognizes the need for an understanding of the values, elements, and social processes of cultures other than the culture of the United States. Learning which recognizes the nature of others cultures and the relationship of America’s cultural system to generic human goals and welfare will help create the multicultural and global perspective necessary for effective interaction in the human community.

Courses which meet the requirement in global awareness are of one or more of the following types: (1) in-depth area studies which are concerned with an examination of culture-specific elements of a region of the world, country, or culture group, (2) the study of contemporary non-English language courses that have a significant cultural component, (3) comparative cultural studies with an emphasis on non-U.S. areas, and (4) in-depth studies of non-U.S. centered cultural interrelationships of global scope such as the global interdependence produced by problems of world ecology, multinational corporations, migration, and the threat of nuclear war.
Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

### ASU--[G] CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Global Awareness [G]</th>
<th>Identify Documentation Submitted</th>
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<td>I. Studies must be composed of subject matter that addresses or leads to an understanding of the contemporary world outside the U.S.</td>
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<td>2. Course must be one or more of following types (check all which may apply):</td>
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<td>a. In-depth area studies which are concerned with an examination of culture-specific elements of a region, country or culture group. The area or culture studied must be non-U.S. and the study must contribute to an understanding of the contemporary world.</td>
<td>Requirements.pdf</td>
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<td>b. Contemporary non-English language courses that have a significant cultural component.</td>
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<td>c. Comparative cultural studies in which most, i.e., more than half, of the material is devoted to non-U.S. areas.</td>
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<td>d. In-depth studies of non-U.S. centered cultural interrelationships of global scope, such as the global interdependence produced by problems of world ecology, multinational corporations, migration, and the threat of nuclear war. Most, i.e., more than half, of the material must be devoted to non-U.S.</td>
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Global Awareness [G]
Page 3

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<tr>
<th>Course Prefix</th>
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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>SLC/GER</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>Germanic Mythology</td>
<td>G</td>
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Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the specific designation criteria. Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criteria (from checksheet)</th>
<th>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</th>
<th>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Subject matter outside US</td>
<td>To understand German culture better, one must understand the old Germanic religion which pre-existed Christianity but which left a lasting imprint on German thinking, particularly during the National Socialist period, and which is still practiced today.</td>
<td>The Icelandic Eddas and sagas, along with various works of literature including Beowulf, The Song of the Nibelungs and the Saga of the Völsungs, provide the primary sources for the stories about the Germanic gods.</td>
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<td>2a. Cultural differences</td>
<td>Understanding the historic values, beliefs and practices of the German(ic) people gives us insight into the high value placed on nature and into such problems as those posed by White Supremacy groups.</td>
<td>White Supremacy and Neo-Nazi groups use this warrior religion combined with racism to justify their actions in support of their identity which stands in opposition to globalization.</td>
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SLC/GER 394: Germanic Mythology

Professor: John Alexander
Room: 
Time: 
Office: LL 408
Office Hours: 
Telephone: 965-6281
E-mail: john.alexander@asu.edu
Website: http://www.public.asu.edu/~atija

Method: This semester will be devoted to the study of the pre-Christian German religion, including the pantheon of gods, beliefs, practices and values of the Germanic tribes as well as the various manifestations of this religion that has been much used and abused by various groups, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries. A close reading of the first written texts will allow you to understand the common values and beliefs of the Germanic tribes and to discern how this set of beliefs is manipulated by various groups for their own ideological purposes. The course begins with lectures on the life and thought of the tribes, nature and the gods, the runes to be followed by discussions on the stories of the gods and their meaning in light of the various theories discussed by Robert Segal (handouts). After week nine we will see how elements of this religion are reflected in three works of medieval literature (Beowulf, Song of the Nibelungs, Saga of the Volsungs) before moving into the reception of the literature from medieval times until the present, with a focus on the literature of the Romantics, the operas of Richard Wagner, and the conflation of this religion under the National Socialists. The final internet project will allow you to select a group that uses/abuses this religion today. This course will be a mixture of lectures and discussion of texts. It will be supplemented by DVDs, video tapes and CD music. The reading assignments for each day are listed on the syllabus. Students who take this course as GER must do all reading and writing assignments in the target language.

Grade:

Discussion Board entries: 10%
One book report: 10%
Midterm exam: 20%
Quizzes: 20%
Two internet projects: 20% (each worth 10%)
Term Paper based on MLA Stylesheet (7th edition) as final exam: 20%

The grade is reduced by 10% for any item(s) submitted or taken past midnight on the due date.

Discussion Board entries
Every two weeks you will need to contribute at least one comment of no less than 80 words in response to the topic given and based on your readings and general knowledge or ability to google the information. Cutting and pasting as well as quotations are not permitted, i.e. everything must be in your own words. The deadline for the forum responses will be midnight of the given date.

Quizzes

There will be five quizzes given during the course of the semester. Each is worth 4% of the grade. Make-ups come with a -10% deduction. Quizzes may be taken early provided that I received an e-mail 3 days before the due date. The quizzes are a check to make sure that you have been doing the reading.

Book Report

For the written reports, please select 1 books (of at least 200 pages) by our next meeting. Please e-mail your selections to me no later than midnight on this date. These reports are due to be read in class. A schedule will be handed out after I receive the choices.

Each report must be 3-4 type-written pages, double-spaced throughout and in 12 font; it is to be handed in for a grade immediately after the report is given. The report should summarize the main points of the book and offer your own critical reactions, both positive and negative.

Internet Projects

For the Internet Projects you will need to research two groups that use Germanic mythology for its goals. Your report will need to be presented in class and then handed in no later than midnight on the same day as a written report on one of the figures below in terms of his or her relationship to Germanic mythology, of no less than 750 words (excluding quotes), type-written and double-spaced, using 12 font. Please e-mail me your choice from the following list by September 21 (Assignments will be on a first-come, first-served basis): Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (Theosophical Society), Anton Langgassner (Germanenbund), Rudolf Steiner (Anthroposophical Society), Guido von List (Wotanism, List Society, Armanenschaft), Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (Theozooology, Order of the New Templars), Theodor Fritsch (Germanenorden) Rudolf von Sebottendorf (The Thule Society), Rudolph John Gorsleben (Edda Society), Karl Maria Willigut (Illuminist religion), Otto Sigfrid Reuter (Deutschgläubige Gemeinschaft), Alexander Rud Mills (Anglecyn Church of Odin), Else Christensen (Odinist Study Group or Fellowship), Steve McNallen (Asatru Free Assembly), Mike Murray (Asatru Alliance), Tom Metzger (White Aryan Resistance), Wyatt Kaldenberg (Pagan Revival), Jost Turner (National Socialist Kindred), Edred Thorsson (Ring of Troth), Diana Paxson (The Troth), David and Katja Lane and Ron McVan (Wotansfolk), John and Monica Post (Temple of Wotan, National Prison Kindred Alliance), White Power Records, Adolf Schlepfer (Armanen Orden), Sigrun von Schlichting (Arbeitsgemeinschaft naturreligiöser Stammesverbänder Europas), Geza von Nemenyi (Heidnische Gemeinschaft und Germanische

Midterm Exam

For the 50-minute midterm on Monday you will be given some names and concepts to identify. You should also be able to relate these to works read in class, including the pdf files on theory. You will need to write a paragraph for each name or concept.

Paper as Final Exam

Term Paper Requirements A term paper is required for GER 315. You should propose a topic for this paper in a short, specific statement (1-2 paragraphs) to which you append a partial bibliography (3-4 items). For each of these sources, include a short statement on how you found it. This proposal is due via E-mail (johnalexander3@cox.net) or in hard copy by October xx. There is a 10% reduction on this grade, i.e. 2.5% of the overall grade, for any proposals received after midnight on this date.

The paper itself must be at least 2500 words in length, prepared on a word-processor, and be error-free (no typo's, misspellings, etc.). Your grade will be lowered if you turn in sloppy work. You should follow the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th edition (2009), in the body of your paper, in your citations and in your bibliography [A summary is included in this packet]. Be especially careful to correctly reference your sources. Double-space everything and leave margins of 1" on all four sides.

Write an introduction defining the topic and outlining the direction of the essay. Give reasons for your point-of-view. Use quotations from primary and secondary literature to support your arguments. Avoid plot summary. The conclusion should summarize the major points of the paper and provide a concise answer to the problem(s) discussed. Have someone read your paper and make suggestions.

The bibliography should consist of at least one (1) article published since 2000, the more the better. In exceptional cases, I will waive the "1 current article" requirement, but you must check out the electronic resources at ASU (see below) and clear this with me before turning in the paper.

To identify articles of interest, spend time now with one of the many electronic resources available at Hayden Library. Select "No" if asked if you want to view only a secure website: http://library.lib.asu.edu/search/y, including WorldCat (OCLC First Search), Lexis-Nexis Academic, Ingenta, RLG Union Catalog, RLG Cultural Materials,
Dissertation Abstracts International, German National Bibliography and MLA Bibliography. Grimm's Dictionary is available online at the University of Trier and has some good information for those who read German.

Papers are to be read in class on December 7. There is a -10% penalty for papers not read in class. The final day to hand in or e-mail the paper is midnight on December 7. If your paper is late, your grade will be reduced by one letter per day.

Some Suggested Topics:

1. Are Frigg and Freya two separate goddesses? What are the arguments for and against?

2. Compare the Norse giants with giants from another culture such as the New Zealand Maori. Are they gods from an older religion and what can they represent psychologically?

3. Compare Freya to Venus. Comment on similarities and differences.

4. Describe the effects of Christianization on the old Germanic religion.

5. To what extent are the Germanic gods and goddesses a reflection of Germanic society?

6. What forces of nature can the gods represent?

7. Do a history of the term 'Ragnarök.' To what extent does it coincide with the Christian view of the Day of Judgment?

8. Discuss Balder and Arminius as models for Siegfried.

9. How do place names in England, Scandinavia and the German-speaking area reflect the old religion?

10. Discuss the apple as a symbol of immortality in the various and mythologies, including Germanic.

11. Discuss the Germanic goddess(es) Holda, Perchta (Bertha), Nehaleanna, Nerthus and Ostara (Eostre). What do they represent? How many other goddesses are there?

12. Discuss the resurrection of 'Wotanism' or the modern re-imaging of the old religion around the world today.

13. Interpret the picture of the Yggdrasil or World Ash or Irminsul. You may want to look at the various illustrations through the centuries and compare to the texts we have read.
14. Compare the Germanic creation myth to the creation myths of other cultures. Elaborate on similarities and differences.

15. What was the function of the 'Thing' and when and where did it meet? What religious and social functions were connected with it?

16. Describe the funeral rites of the Germanic peoples. Did they believe in an afterlife? Please give evidence for your position.

17. How were women regarded in Germanic society and what social role did they play?

18. Analyze the theme of honor and love in at least two Icelandic sagas.

19. Discuss the theme of justice and its administration in Germanic society.

20. Why were the National Socialists so intrigued with the old religion?

21. Discuss the significance of trees in Germanic religion.

22. Compare Loki to the trickster figure in other mythologies, e.g. Coyote.

23. What is the role of dwarves in Germanic and other mythologies?

24. Examine the role of Germanic mythology in popular culture, e.g. comic books, music (Manowar etc.)

25. Discuss the role of runes in the modern imagination.

26. What functions do squirrels have in mythology, with special reference to Germanic beliefs?

27. Analyze the significance of the raven in Celtic and Germanic mythology.

28. What is the role of the wolf/dog in mythology, especially Germanic mythology.

29. Compare runic symbols from pictures with Hindu symbols.

30. Characterize the relationship between Adam Oehlenschläger's epic cycle *Gods of the North* (1819) with the sculptures of Hermann Ernst Freund (1786-1840) that use figures from Germanic mythology as their topic.

31. Compare the *Norse Odes* (1768) by Thomas Gray to the *Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology* (1790) by Frank Sayers. What aspects of Germanic mythology interest these two authors? What do they have in common? How do they differ? How do their works fit into the re-born interest in the second half of the 18th century?
32. Thomas Percy's *Northern Antiquities* (1770) is a translation of Paul-Henri Mallet's *Monuments de la mythologie de la poésie des Celtes* (1766). What aspects of Germanic mythology are presented that have not been covered in class and how influential was this English translation?

33. Analyse Richard Wagner's view of Germanic mythology as represented in his Ring Trilogy (1848-52).

**Texts** (at ASU Bookstore)

Syllabus for SLC/GER 394

NB: All reading assignments are for the following week:

Week 1: Read the following lecture notes for the first quiz: Introduction, Life and Thought of the Germanic Tribes, Snorri Sturluson's biography as well as the introduction in Ellis-Davidson, pp. 9-22.


Week 3: QUIZ 2. Go over file with the three main runic alphabets for September 17. Internet-Project I is due by midnight.

Week 4: Read the following for September 24: Ynglinga Saga (pdf files lower on this page); Introduction to the world of the Germanic gods II: Read Sturluson's Prose Edda pp. 3-79, 119-122; as well as the Poetic Edda pp. x-xxix. Wodan/Odin: Read Ellis Davidson pp. 48-72, 110-114; Poetic Edda 14-60, 114-122 and Sturluson pp. 85-86. Discussion Board entries due.


Week 6 BOOK REPORT due to be read in class and handed in. Prepare for Midterm exam on October 8. Discussion Board entries due.


Week 9: QUIZ 4. Read the following for October 29: Lecture notes summarizing Segal's introduction to theories on myth and Beowulf, checking for Germanic religious elements.

Week 10: Read the following for November 5: Nibelungenlied. Check for Germanic and Christian elements. Discussion Board entries due. Internet-Project II is due by midnight.

Week 11: QUIZ 5. Read for November 19 the Saga of the Volsungs and compare to the Nibelungenlied.

Week 12: Lecture on reception of Germanic mythology from 1250-1830. Discussion Board entries due.

Week 14: Lecture on reception of Germanic mythology from 1840 until the present.

Week 15: **FINAL PAPER** to be read in class and handed or e-mailed in by midnight.

Week 16: Student evaluations.