Course Description

Myths from many cultures contain descriptions of phenomena or events that bear a striking resemblance to natural disasters including (but not limited to) flooding, earthquakes, tsunami, and volcanic eruptions. In this course we will explore the possibility that some of these mythological accounts may be based on actual events that occurred in the distant past. Specific objectives of the course are:

1. to familiarize you with the settings and causes of catastrophic geologic events, their associated phenomena, and the types of evidence these events leave behind
2. to acquaint you with the methods used to study these kinds of events so that you are able to formulate hypotheses about past events, devise means of testing your hypotheses, and also recognize when an idea is not testable
3. to practice critically reading and analyzing myths from different cultures with the goals of appreciating their societal significance and assessing the extent to which they may record actual events
4. to instill in each of you an awareness and appreciation of your natural surroundings and of the different ways in which one can look at the landscape

Readings:
The required text for this course are selected papers made available to you in form of a class reader. You can pick up the reader at Printing Plant, 606 South Illinois Ave (next to Don Tacos and across from Melange). First come first serve. Latecomers can order the reader. The reader is organized with papers assigned on a weekly basis (see syllabus).

I also strongly recommend “When they severed Earth from Sky” by Elizabeth Wayland Barber and Paul T. Barber, Princeton: Princeton University Press. You can order this from www.amazon.com. This is not a required reading but very helpful in understanding how the human mind shapes myths.

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings every week.

Readings in Italic on the syllabus are reference readings containing geology background. These readings are not required but made available to brush up on your geology knowledge should you have gaps.

Attendance / lecture discussions / video assignments:
Regular attendance and participation in the class discussions is not only essential for your individual success in this course, but also for the success of the class as a whole. Students who miss a significant portion of this class will not pass it. You are allowed to accumulate 3 absences. More than 3 absences will lower your final grade by one full grade for each additional absence. Attendance will be checked and recorded using the “daily question” method. Keep track of your
absences. I do not necessarily warn you, if you are about to exceed your allowed absences. If you do not attend lecture discussions or video class assignments you will receive a 0 for that date. Any assignments passed out on these days cannot be made up!

Discussion Papers: These papers will require you to synthesize knowledge after each of the discussion sessions (at least 3 pages, typed, Fond Times 12, double spaced). In essence, I am asking you to state a position with regard to the discussion topic and summarize evidence that supports your view. More detailed instructions and guidelines will be provided for each topic. There are 5 lecture discussions. Writing discussion paper 1 is mandatory. In addition to discussion paper 1, you need to choose 2 more from the additional 4 discussion topics. I do not recommend to put off writing discussion papers until later in the semester as you will run into timing issues with assignments from other classes and your final project.

Final Project: In your final project you will examine ways in which regional geology influenced civilizations, and explore the possibility that some of their myths and legends may preserve a record of actual geologic events. The project will be presented to the class during the last week of classes. Form, specific requirements and grading method will be disclosed at a later date.

Honesty: The work you turn in must be your own. I encourage you to discuss the course material with your classmates and to study and work together on assignments, but a quiz or turned in assignment must reflect your own efforts. Any coursework that shows evidence of academic dishonesty will receive a grade of 0 and may be reported.

Desire to Learn: Announcements, class notes and assignments will be posted on D2L. Please check daily.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 Exams (1 Midterm and 1 Final)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion papers (choose 3 out of 5 topics)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Lecture discussion assignments (5 total)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Video assignments, lecture activities, homework</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>10%</td>
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100 – 90 % = A
89 – 80 % = B
79 – 70 % = C
69 – 60 % = D
59 % and lower = F
# Course Schedule for Geomythology, Geo 329-I

Subject to Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Course Topic</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reads: Readings to be read before the associated lecture)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>1/21 – 1/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Introduction, Course Logistics, What is a Myth?</td>
<td>Krajick, K</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The nature of myth and its role in science</td>
<td>Masse W.B. et. al. (MOST important paper!)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Homework 1</strong></td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>1/26 – 1/30</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Earth Origin</td>
<td>Lanza, T &amp; Negrete</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>Origin Myths</td>
<td>Bible Genesis Ch. 1&amp;2</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td><strong>Discussion 1</strong>: The Antiquity and Reliability of Myths</td>
<td>Ovid, p 1-36</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>2/2 – 2/6</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Tectonics of the Earth</td>
<td>Tillery, B., Ch. 15 (excerpt)</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>Mediterranean Geology</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Old World Civilization and Mythology</td>
<td>Clendenon, Ch. 3</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>2/9 - 2/13 (Discussion paper 1 due)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Greek Mythology: River Gods and the Environment</td>
<td>Clendenon, Ch. 10 (excerpt)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>New World Civilization and Mythology</td>
<td>Mackenzie, F.T.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Holocene Culture and Climate and Climate</td>
<td>Hamblin, D.H.</td>
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<td>Ponting, C.</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>2/16 – 2/20</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Case Study: Easter Islands</td>
<td>Harris, M.</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td><strong>Discussion 2</strong>: The Garden Eden and the Golden Age</td>
<td>Diamond, J.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Comets and Other Heavenly Bodies</td>
<td>Bible, Genesis Ch. 2&amp;3 (in week 1)</td>
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<td>Ovid, p. 31-37 (in week 1)</td>
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<td>Abbott, Ch.15 (excerpt)</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>2/23 – 2/27</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Ragnarok: A Celestial Memory?</td>
<td>Crossley-Holland, K.</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>Mythical Creatures</td>
<td>Agnesi, V. et. al.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Dragons</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>3/2 – 3/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>The Griffin</td>
<td>Mayor, A, Ch.1</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>Video: Ancient Monster Hunters</td>
<td>Kovach, R. Ch. 8 &amp; 9</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Floods</td>
<td>Soroka, L.G</td>
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<td><strong>Homework 2: Flood Frequency due 3/20</strong></td>
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Spring Break 3/9 – 3-13
Week 8 3/16 – 3/20 (Discussion Paper 2 due)
M  MIDTERM
W  The Flood Theme in Old World Mythology
   Noble, J.W
F  The Deluge: Flooding of the Black Sea as myth foundation
   Ovid, p. 37 – 43 (in week 1 readings)

Week 9 3/23 – 3/27
M  Discussion 3: Flood Myths
W  Faults and Earthquake
   Homework 3: Locating an epicenter due 4/3
   Abbott Ch. 3 & 4 (exerpts)
F  Faults and Earthquake Legends in Japan and the Pacific North West
   Ludwin, R.S. & Smith

Week 10 3/30 – 4/3
M  Tectonics of the Dead Sea Region
   Trifonov, V.
W  Video: “The Walls Came Tumbling Down”
   Bentor, Y.K.
F  Discussion 4: Destruction of Jericho and Sodom and Gomorra
   Whitaker, J. H. M
Bible, Genesis, Ch. 18
Bible, Joshua, Ch. 1-6

Week 11 4/6 – 4/10 (Discussion Paper 3 due)
M  Oracle of Delphi
   DeBoer, J.Z. et. al.
W  Introduction to final project: Pick your topic
F  Volcanoes
   Homework 4: Volcanoes due 4/17
   Abbott, Ch. 7

Week 12 4/13 – 4/17
M  Volcanic Hazards
   Vitaliano, D. Ch.6
W  Volcanic Lore
F  Case Study: Hawaii and the Goddess Pele

Week 13 4/20 – 4/24 (Discussion Paper 4 due)
M  The Eruption of Santorini and its effects
   Vitaliano, D. Ch. 8
W  The Minoans: Who were they and where did they go?
   Vitaliano, F.W
F  Plato and the Legend of Atlantis
   Plato
   Hesiod

Week 14 5/27 – 5/1
M  Video “Lost Atlantis”: Fact, Fiction and Fantasy - lets evaluate!!!
   Vitaliano, D., Ch. 10
W  Discussion 5: Atlantis – Fact or fiction?
F  The 10 Plaques and the Exodus
   Bible, Exodus, Ch.14

Week 15 5/4 – 5/8
ALL student presentations due Monday 5/4
Discussion Paper 5 due, Friday 5/48
Student Presentations

Week 16 Final Exam: 5/15
Time: 12:30 – 2:30
Bibliography (includes suggested readings)


Bible, King James version


Plato

Ponting, C. (1990) Historical Perspectives on sustainable development: Environment, v.32, no 9, p.4-9, 31-33


Internet Resources
http://classics.mit.edu//Plato/critias.html
www.activemind.com/Mysterious/Topics/Atlantis/timaeus_and_critias.html