

IS 306: Myth and Music Winter 2021/2022

Professors:

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12/20/21-1/9/22

Materials:

All readings, music, video links etc. posted electronically via Blackboard

Course Description:

Mythology – stories passed from generation to generation because they were culturally meaningful – can be found all over the world. This course explores myth and its musical manifestations primarily through case studies of the myths of medieval Scandinavia and of the Vikings, and their appropriation by composer Richard Wagner and others. Musical adaptations of these mythological texts have had a profound impact upon the circulation of media worldwide (e.g. in film and popular culture).

The musical aspect of this course involves first an introduction to the basic listening fundamentals of music (melody, rhythm, tone color, dynamics, etc.). Once students have acquired some of these basic fundamentals, we will use them in order to enhance our listening experiences of various musical settings of mythological texts. The idea that cultural myth could be conveyed universally through music was developed through Johann Gottfried Herder's invention of the concept of *Volkslied* ("folksong"). Our primary examples consist of the music of Wagner, settings of Scottish/Herderian folk songs, and other musical examples of myth found in popular culture (e.g. Eurovision Song Contest, *Star Wars*, and Looney Tunes). Of particular interest will be excerpts taken from the operas of Wagner, particularly his "Ring Cycle" (comprising *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*). The Wagnerian theory of *Leitmotif* central to these operas is still vital to much music in film today.

The mythological aspect of this course comprises an introduction to the myths and mythological figures of early Germanic Europe, turning its attention thereafter to the collections of myths and legends left behind by the descendants of the Vikings. Although a brutal scourge of Europe between 800-1100 C.E., the Vikings possess a rich and complex literature which was only set into writing generations later by medieval Scandinavians. In addition to selections from the *Poetic Edda* and Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*, we will read *The Saga of the Völsungs*, in which the dragon-slaying hero rises to glory and tragedy through a complex love-story involving a king, his sister, and a Valkyrie. We can see echoes of Scandinavian myth and Wagnerian themes in the works of silent movie maker, Fritz Lang, and the novels of J.R.R. Tolkien, and their film adaptations in recent years by Peter Jackson, and continuing influence on such modern works as

George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones*. We will also include a number of approaches to these myths and topic from newer perspectives, such as through the lens of gender studies. Moreover, we will also look at ways in which appropriations of these myths by (neo)nationalists and right-wing radicals are used and abused in the present.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course it is expected that students are not only familiar with the characters and plots of the texts and/or music covered, but equally as important, students should become acquainted with the medieval and modern worlds and how they continue to interact, rather than viewing them as separate from one another. Students should also acquire a sense of how music plays an important role in conveying myth in our world.

Also, by the end of the course, students are expected to:

- 1) Be able to compare and contrast texts of similar type
- 2) Be able to formulate and express opinions regarding the textual similarities
- 3) Be able to address challenging notions such as “heroic,” “medieval,” and “modern”
- 4) Be able to appreciate and understand trans-semiotic notions such as the *Leitmotiv*
- 5) Be able to conduct research using a variety of primary and secondary source materials in learning and writing about literature
- 6) Be able to see how the study of literature from a variety of cultures and eras can enrich their lives in the here-and-now
- 7) Be able to use some basic fundamentals to describe, identify, and interpret music
- 8) Be able to use these fundamentals of music in listening contexts in and outside of class (e.g. concerts, digital media, etc.)
- 9) Be able to relate musical listening experiences (using musical fundamentals) to mythological themes and ideas
- 10) Be able to construct arguments about music & myth in written work (e.g. final essay)

Communication with Professors:

As this course has two professors, it is imperative that when communicating with one to copy an e-mail to the other so that every person is informed. If you find video-conferencing useful, we are both trained in the use of Zoom, video-conferencing software supported by SIUE. Each of us will hold virtual office hours during the week. Outside of these office hours, and specific appointments you make, e-mail is the preferred method of contact. Please do not hesitate in contacting us with any questions or concerns about the course.

Student Responsibilities:

It is expected that students will take responsibility for completing material in a timely fashion as per the syllabus. Please contact the professors should a problem or question arise. Please consult the following link, as it explains expectations for students of online courses at SIUE and what is needed for success in an online course:

<http://www.siue.edu/its/idlt/learning/success.shtml>

Final Grade:

Grades are calculated according to a 100 pt. scale (A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, etc...). The individual components of the final grade are weighted thusly:

Discussion Board	30%
Weekly Quizzes (3)	30%
Final Project	30%
Participation	10%

Quizzes:

Three quizzes will be given in total: one every week during the course in order to check students' progress. Each quiz will be available via Blackboard, beginning the Wednesday of each week, to be completed by 11:59 p.m. the following Sunday. Quizzes will contain approximately 30 questions and you will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz. The third quiz will be comprehensive, where 2/3 of the questions will be from material from week 3, and 1/3 will come from material during the first two weeks. **Note: Once you begin the quiz you may not stop or restart. Because of this, please make sure you have proper internet connectivity, as we are unable to accommodate technical difficulties on your end: Quiz re-takes are not permitted.**

Discussion Board:

Students are required to engage in discussions with each other and the professors via Blackboard's Discussion Board in week of the course. Professors will interact with students to a great extent via the Discussion Board, so please make full use of this feature, it's a great way to learn and ask questions. Items we discuss here will be very relevant to the final project.

During each week each student is required minimally to make **six postings**, divided equally between Prof. Simms' and Prof. Greenwood's material. Each student should post:

- A question for discussion. This question needs to be an open-ended question about the material under examination for the week posted as a separate thread. **No yes/no questions and no questions with specific answers will count towards this requirement.**
- Two (2) responses to other students' questions.
- Note:
 - Off-topic postings, or postings without any depth or effort will not count.
 - Postings which have questions more-or-less the same as a previous posting's question will not count. Please read all existing posts before adding yours. Note SIUE policies concerning plagiarism below.
- To recap, **each student needs to post 1 question and 2 responses for Prof. Simms' material and 1 question and 2 responses for Prof. Greenwood's material per week**
- **Questions are due no later than 12noon each Wednesday**
- **Responses are due no later than 12noon each Friday**
- The "week" for Discussions ends each Friday at 12noon (Please pay attention to the time...a posting made at 12:02 p.m. Friday does not count!) – Although it might seem persnickety, there has to be a deadline at some point.

Netiquette (Adapted from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/netiquette-rules-behavior-internet/>):

- **Avoid sarcasm.** People who don't know you may misinterpret its meaning.
- **Respect others' privacy.** Do not quote or forward personal email without the original author's permission.
- **Acknowledge and return messages promptly.**
- **Be concise.** Keep messages concise—about one screen, as a rule of thumb.
- **Use appropriate language:**
 - Avoid coarse, rough, or rude language.
 - Observe good grammar and spelling.
- **Use appropriate emoticons (emotion icons) to help convey meaning.** Use “smiley’s” or punctuation such as :-) to convey emotions. See website list of emoticons at <http://netlingo.com/smiley.cfm> and <http://www.robelle.com/smugbook/smiley.html>.
- **Use only appropriate intensifiers to help convey meaning.** No all-caps shouting.

Discussion Board Posting Rubric

Discussion board posts will be graded according to the following rubric:

Grade	Questions	Responses
A	Thoughtful and thought-provoking, generates strong discussions, open-ended	Thoughtful response, generates additional replies
B	Thoughtful question, generates moderate discussion	Response that thoughtfully considers question in its reply
C	Variation of previously-posted question	Variation of previous response or “ditto”-type response
D	Yes-No question or asks for a specific answer rather than an open-ended question to further discussions	Responds without much thought, very little thought put into reply or single-word replies
F	No question, off-topic posting	No response, off-topic reply

Musical Listening:

Vital to our course is careful listening and thoughtful reflections about music, and sharing these experiences and encounters with others through the Discussion Board. Our collective thoughts, reflections, and questions about our listening experiences are fundamental to the class as a whole, and participating in those discussions is a critical part of this success. Students will at first learn some basic elements of music necessary for critically engaging and listening to the music we will study. You will need to listen to the musical examples numerous times in order to become sufficiently acquainted with them in order to fulfill the course objectives above. Translations and other listening guides will be posted as appropriate. In part, by listening carefully and repeatedly, you will begin to gain a sense for yourself that you know the musical examples well.

Final Project:

One final project will be due on Friday January 7, for a total of one third of your course final grade. The project topic will be provided during the first week of the course.

Note: Failure to submit the final essay will result in a grade of **F** for the final.

Accommodations:

Students needing accommodations because of medical diagnosis or major life impairment will need to register with **Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support (ACCESS)** and complete an intake process before accommodations will be given. Students who believe they have a diagnosis but do not have documentation should contact ACCESS for assistance and/or appropriate referral. The ACCESS office is located in the Student Success Center, Room 1270. You can also reach the office by e-mail at myaccess@siue.edu or by calling 618.650.3726. For more information on policies, procedures, or necessary forms, please visit the ACCESS website at www.siue.edu/access.

SIUE Policies:

Students enrolling in the University assume responsibility for conduct compatible with the learning environment of the University. Students are expected to be familiar with Student Conduct and Student Grievances: Rights and Responsibility. This policy describes the University's expectations for student conduct, sanctions imposed for violations of the standards, and procedures which students may follow in filing grievances.

The University gives high priority to matters of academic ethics and abhors all types of cheating, including plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of representing the work of another as one's own and may consist of copying, paraphrasing, or otherwise using written or oral work of another without proper acknowledgment of the source or presenting oral or written material prepared by another as one's own.

Instructors may impose sanctions for academic cheating in accordance with Student Conduct and Student Grievances: Rights and Responsibilities. In the case of plagiarism, the minimum sanction of the first instance of plagiarism is disciplinary probation; for the second instance of plagiarism, the minimum sanction is separation from the University for one term; and for a third instance of plagiarism, the minimum sanction is permanent separation from the University.

Students who wish to understand matters relative to academic ethics and plagiarism should consult their advisers or instructors.

Copies of the policy are available in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Graduate School, the Service Center, and in the Office of the Dean, School of Dental Medicine.

Upon registration, students accept responsibility for attending all class sessions and completing course work. Attendance at all sessions of a class is expected. It is especially important to attend the first meeting of a class. Failure to attend the first session could result in your place being

assigned to another student. It is your responsibility to ascertain the policies of instructors with regard to absence from class, and to make arrangements satisfactory to instructors with regard to incomplete course work. Although absence from a class does not constitute dropping a class or withdrawing from the University, faculty have the authority to request removal of undergraduate students who fail to meet attendance requirements, as published in their syllabus. This results in a grade of WR (Withdrawal by Registrar) being recorded. Faculty who choose not to drop for failure to attend class will assign an appropriate grade at the end of the term. Under no circumstances will non-attendance in any course or courses be considered a valid reason to permit dropping the course from a student's schedule after the second week. Dropping a class that you do not plan to take or complete is your responsibility. You must submit your request to drop classes within the established deadlines to avoid punitive grades.

The University recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism, the act of representing the work of another as one's own, may take two forms. It may consist of copying, paraphrasing or otherwise using the written or oral work of another without acknowledging the source, or it may consist of presenting oral or written course work prepared by another as one's own.

Normally a student who plagiarizes shall receive a grade of F in the course in which the act occurs. The offense shall also be reported to the Provost. In addition, any graduate student who has been found to have committed an act of plagiarism may be dropped from his or her graduate degree program by his or her department. A student who is reported a second time shall be suspended from the University for a period of not less than one term. Should a student who has been suspended for plagiarism be readmitted and be again found guilty of the offense, he/she shall be permanently expelled from the University.

This policy statement shall appear in the University catalogs and course announcements, shall be called to the attention of advisers, shall be explained during the program of new student orientation, and shall be published in the Alestle at least once during the beginning of each fall term.

The Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs is charged with administrative responsibility for handling complaints, allegations, or grievances against students concerning plagiarism, according to the Student Academic Code (Policy 3C2).

COVID-19 Pandemic Policies Related to Classroom Instruction (Fall 2020)

Health and Safety

Consistent with the Illinois Board of Higher Education guidance contained in "Safely Launching Academic Year 2020" released on June 23, 2020 and guidelines established by Governor J. B. Pritzker and *Restore Illinois*, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville has implemented a new policy to help ensure the safety of all students, faculty and employees during the pandemic. The measures outlined below are required and any student who does not comply may be in violation of the *COVID-19 People-Focused Health and Safety Policy*, as well as the University's *Student Code of Conduct*.

The full text of the *COVID-19 People-Focused Health and Safety Policy* can be found here: <https://www.siue.edu/policies/Covid.shtml>.

Classrooms, Labs, Studios, and Other Academic Spaces

While in the classroom, lab, studio, or other academic spaces, students shall practice social distancing measures by maintaining a distance of at least six feet from others in the classroom and wearing a face covering. Extra care should be taken upon entering and leaving the classroom spaces. Classroom furniture should not be rearranged, and furniture that has been taped off or covered should not be used.

Students who forget to wear a face mask or face shield will be reminded of their obligation to comply with SIUE's *COVID-19 People-Focused Health and Safety Policy* and temporarily asked to leave the class until they are able to conform to the policy. Students who forget or lose their face coverings may be able to obtain replacements from a friend, a faculty member, or a nearby departmental office. Face coverings are also available for purchase in the Cougar Store (MUC).

Students who refuse to wear a face covering will be asked to leave the classroom and referred to the Dean of Students for non-compliance with community health and safety protocols. Repeated non-compliance may result in disciplinary actions, including the student being administratively dropped from an on-ground/face-to-face course or courses without refund if no alternative course format is available.

If a student has a documented health condition which makes wearing a face covering medically intolerable, that student should contact ACCESS to explore options with the understanding that ACCESS will not grant accommodations which excuse the need for a face covering while on campus or in the classroom. ACCESS will work with qualifying individuals to find reasonable alternatives, whenever such solutions are available. Please call or contact the ACCESS Office via email to schedule an online appointment to discuss potential alternatives. ACCESS office (Student Success Center, Room 1203, 618-650-3726, and myaccess@siue.edu).

General Health Measures

At all times, students should engage in recommended health and safety measures, which include:

- Conducting a daily health assessment. If you have COVID-19 symptoms, but not yet tested positive, have had COVID-19 close contact exposure, or are COVID-19 diagnosed as presumptive or confirmed positive, stay home and contact your health provider or SIUE Health Service at cougarcare@siue.edu or 618-650-2842. More information is available on the [SIUE COVID-19 website](#).
- Frequent washing or disinfecting of hands.
- Social distancing by maintaining a distance of at least six feet from others.
- Face masks or face coverings that cover the nose and mouth are required in indoor public spaces regardless of the ability to maintain social distance. Indoor public spaces include common spaces or community settings that anyone can access, such as reception areas with walk-in access, restrooms, hallways, classrooms, teaching and

research laboratories, as well as common spaces in residence halls, conference rooms, lobbies, and break rooms.

- Adhere to directional signs and traffic flow patterns in buildings and offices. Doors for entering and exiting buildings will be designated. Where multiple doors exist, in and out doors will be marked with “Entrance” and “Exit” signs. Plans that consider traffic flow in and out of buildings, and within buildings (i.e. stairs, hallways, etc. where possible) will be marked.

[See over for Schedule of Readings and Topics]

Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Listening* All required readings and listenings are to found in the folder for the corresponding week in Blackboard *students will be notified of any subsequent changes		
	Vikings & Myth – Simms	Music & Myth – Greenwood
Week 1 12.20.2021 to 12.24.2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to course • Germanic – what is that? • Myth – what is that? • Days of the Week • Overview of Germanic Myth • Reading – Jan Puhvel “Germanic Mythology” • Reading – Gardell, Introduction to “Gods of the Blood” • Reading – Dorothy Kim, “White Supremacists Have Weaponized an Imaginary Viking Past. It's Time to Reclaim the Real History” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to course • Fundamentals of Music • Music, Myth, & Nation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Herder, World & Folk Music ◦ Eurovision Song Contest • Reading – Kerman/Tomlinson, <i>Listen</i>, 7th edition, Bedford St. Martins [excerpt] • Listening – examples corresponding to above as posted as links • Reading – Tragaki, “The Monsters’ Dream” • Listening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Schubert, <i>The Erlking</i> ◦ Lordi, “Hard Rock Hallelujah” ◦ Other selections from Eurovision
Week 2 12.27.2021 to 12.31.2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prose Edda Reading – Pages to be announced • Poetic Edda • Reading – Haymes, <i>Wagner’s Ring in 1848</i> [excerpt] • Reading – Selections available under the folder for that week • Podcast – <i>Vikings are Gay</i> (link in Blackboard) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wagner, Myth, and <i>Leitmotif</i> • <i>Gesamtkunstwerk</i> (“Total work of art”) • Reading – Ross, <i>Wagnerism</i> [excerpt] • Reading – Donington, <i>Wagner’s Ring and its Symbols</i> [excerpt] • Reading – Taruskin, “Form and Content” Reading – “Leitmotif” (<i>Oxford Music</i>) • Listening – Wagner’s Operas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Das Rheingold</i> (opening) ◦ <i>Die Walküre</i> (selection) ◦ <i>Siegfried</i> (selection) ◦ <i>Götterdämmerung</i> (conclusion)

Week 3 1.3.2022 1.7.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Volsunga saga</i>, Reading on Blackboard– Only the text, no need to read the “Introduction” • Lang’s <i>Nibelungen</i> Viewing – Links to these two films are available under the folder and are from YouTube 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myth in Film and Musical Media • Reading – Bribitzer-Stull, <i>From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music</i> [excerpt] • Reading – Buhler, “<i>Star Wars</i>, Music, and Myth” • Listening – “What’s Opera, Doc?”; <i>Star Wars</i> [excerpts] • Video selections from popular musical culture using Leitmotif
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Worried?:

If at any point during the semester you have concerns, please feel free to make use of our office hours, or contact either of us via e-mail (dsimms@siue.edu or agreenw@siue.edu), or phone (DS: 618-650-2177 or AG: 618-650-2026, although e-mail is best). Should you think you might like to need the university’s counseling services, they can be reached at: 618-650-2179. The sooner a problem is noticed, the sooner it can be resolved, whereas leaving things to the last minute can multiply difficulties. Above all, we hope that this course is an enjoyable and enlightening one.