

**Northern Marianas College**  
**CURRICULUM ACTION REQUEST**

**Effective Semester / Session:** Spring 2011

**Type of Action:**

- New
- Modification
- Move to Inactive (Stop Out)
- Cancellation

**Course Alpha and Number:** LI 260

**Course Title:** Folklore and Mythology

**Reason for initiating, revising, or canceling:**

This is a new course that diversifies humanities course offerings, contributes to cross cultural awareness and understanding, and promotes reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

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*JIM KLINE Jimm T Kline* 7-16-10  
Proposer Date

*JIM KLINE Jimm T Kline* 7-16-10  
Department Chair Date

*Andres M. B. Merafan* 7-16-10  
Dean of Academic Programs and Services Date

# Northern Marianas College

## Course Guide

Course: LI 260 Folklore and Mythology

### 1. Department

Languages and Humanities

### 2. Purpose

This course was developed to address the need for citizens and residents to better understand diverse folkloric and mythological traditions present in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and throughout the world. This course helps students recognize universal story patterns that appear in myths, fairy tales, folk tales, urban legends, and in the cinema. Recognizing these universal patterns fosters critical thinking skills relevant to comprehending the contents of other humanities and social science courses such as philosophy, literature, fine arts, history, and psychology. This course also prepares students to be more understanding and tolerant of the culturally specific story patterns and belief systems of other cultures.

### 3. Description

#### A. Required/Recommended Textbook(s) and Related Materials

Required:

Brunvand, Jan Harold. *Be Afraid, Be Very Afraid: The Book of Scary Urban Legends*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.

Readability level: Grade 11.5

Campbell, Joseph. *The Power of Myth*. New York: Doubleday, 1991.

Readability level: Grade 12.0

Cole, Joanna. *Best-Loved Folktales of the World*. New York: Doubleday, 1983. Readability level: Grade 11.0

In addition, selected readings will be taken from a variety of sources such as Nancy Bo Flood's *Marianas Island Legends: Myth and Magic*, Marie-Louise von Franz's *Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, Bruno Bettelheim's *Uses of Enchantment*, Homer's *The Odyssey*, the website *snopes.com*, as well as excerpts from films with mythological and folkloric themes such as *The Secret of Roan Inish*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Company of Wolves*, *O Brother Where Art Thou*, *Whale Rider*, and *Avatar*.

# Northern Marianas College

## Course Guide

Course: LI 260 Folklore and Mythology

### B. Contact Hours

1. **Lecture:** 3 hours per week / 45 hours per semester
2. **Lab:**
3. **Other:**

### C. Credits

1. **Number:** 3
2. **Type:** Regular degree credits

### D. Catalogue Course Description

This course is designed to familiarize the student with oral, written, and dramatic expressions of universal story patterns found in myths, folk tales, and legends of world cultures. Readings, visual representations, and discussions demonstrate how cultures from various historical time periods have expressed these universal story patterns in fairy tales, folk tales, hero myths, urban legends, and movies. Students will read, analyze, research, and write about various mythic and folkloric traditions. Prerequisites: None. English Placement Level: EN 101. Math Placement Level: None.

### E. Degree or Certificate Requirements Met by Course

This course satisfies the Literature or Philosophy General Education Requirement for the A.A. Degree in Liberal Arts, and the Arts and Humanities General Education Requirement for the A.A.S. Degree in Business Administration—Accounting Emphasis, Business Management Emphasis, and Computer Applications Emphasis, for the A.A.S. Degree in Hospitality Management, and for the A.S. Degree in Natural Resource Management.

### F. Course Activities and Design

This course incorporates lectures, discussions, demonstrations, reading and writing assignments, and a research project. Students will be required to compare and contrast storytelling patterns from various mediums and cultures, noting their similarities and presenting their findings to the class orally, or as a PowerPoint presentation.

# Northern Marianas College Course Guide

Course: LI 260 Folklore and Mythology

**4. Course Prerequisite(s); Concurrent Course Enrollment;  
Required English/Mathematics Placement Level(s)**

Prerequisites: None

English Placement Level: EN 101

Math Placement Level: None

**5. Estimated Cost of Course; Instructional Resources Needed**

Cost to the Student: Tuition for a 3-credit course, the cost of the textbooks, and the student activities fee.

Cost to the College: Instructor's salary

Instructional resources needed for this course include chalk and chalkboard, TV/DVD and videotaped programs, overhead projector, and other materials as may be necessary.

**6. Method of Evaluation**

Student grades will be based on the regular letter grade system as described below:

A: Excellent – grade points: 4.0;

B: Above average – grade points: 3.0;

C: Average – grade points: 2.0;

D: Below average – grade points: 1.0;

F: Failure – grade points: 0.0.

NMC's grading and attendance policies will be followed.

# Northern Marianas College

## Course Guide

Course: LI 260 Folklore and Mythology

### 7. Course Outline

This is a topical outline and does not necessarily indicate the sequence in which the material will be presented.

- 1.0 Introduction to Storytelling Patterns
  - 1.1 Origins of storytelling patterns
  - 1.2 Dreams and shamanic visions
  - 1.3 Supernatural experiences and superstitions
  - 1.4 Historically inspired events
  - 1.5 Religious and spiritual traditions
  
- 2.0 Traditional Storytellers
  - 2.1 The Shaman
  - 2.2 Grandmother and Wise Women Tales
  - 2.3 Homer
  - 2.4 Scheherazade (in the *Arabian Nights*)
  - 2.5 The Troubadour
  
- 3.0 Interpreting Folk Tales, Fairy Tales, and Mythic Tales
  - 3.1 Basic structure of folk tales and myths
  - 3.2 Psychological interpretation
  - 3.3 Cultural, historical, regional, and environmental influences
  
- 4.0 Identification and Classification of Story and Mythic Patterns
  - 4.1 Animal tales
  - 4.2 Supernatural and ghost tales
  - 4.3 Initiation and transformation tales
  - 4.4 Visionary/Otherworld tales
  - 4.5 Trickster tales
  
- 5.0 The Hero's Journey Story Pattern
  - 5.1 The hero cycle
  - 5.2 The inner hero
  - 5.3 The hero as outcast
  - 5.4 Adventures into the unknown
  - 5.5 Journey to the underworld and battles with death
  
- 6.0 Modern Folk Tales
  - 6.1 Urban Legends
  - 6.2 Internet Legends
  - 6.3 Conspiracy theories and alien invasions

# Northern Marianas College

## Course Guide

Course: LI 260 Folklore and Mythology

6.4 Modern monsters

7.0 Folklore and Mythology in Film

7.1 The cinematic hero

7.2 Traditional folk tales in the cinema

7.3 Modern versions of traditional story patterns in the cinema

### 8. Instructional Goals

This course will introduce students to:

- 1.0 The influences of psychology, environment, historical events, religious and spiritual traditions, and cultural values on universal storytelling patterns;
- 2.0 The basic storytelling motifs and how they are expressed in oral, written, and movie forms;
- 3.0 The structural, stylistic, and thematic elements in folk tales, fairy tales, and myths;
- 4.0 Methods of interpreting folk tales, myths, and urban legends; and
- 5.0 Research information about folklore, mythology, and urban legends.

### 9. Student Learning Outcomes

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

- 1.0 Identify universal story patterns expressed in folk tales, fairy tales, mythology, urban legends, and films;
- 2.0 Explain psychological, cultural, historical, and environmental influences on universal story patterns;
- 3.0 Identify and describe structural, stylistic, and thematic elements in folk tales, myths, and urban legends;
- 4.0 Define, compare, analyze, and interpret universal story patterns in oral, written, and visual/dramatic mediums; and
- 5.0 Conduct research in comparing folkloric and mythological traditions.

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## 10. **Assessment Measures**

Assessment of student learning may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1.0 Class attendance and participation;
- 2.0 In-class projects;
- 3.0 Analysis and reflection essays; and
- 4.0 Final research project presented as an oral or PowerPoint presentation.