

The Power of Mythology: Stories, Belief and Civilization

Wednesday, January 13 to March 17, 2021 – 10:00am to 12:00 noon

ZOOM Session

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Cordinator and Presenter: Dr. David Chandross, Scholar in Residence at Ryerson University

In this course we will learn about the great mythologies in history and how they impact our lives. Myths can take the form of ideas in social media and often supersede rational thought, taking the form of racism, evangelical movements, social media memes, religious movements, cults and social revolutions. Many myths are deeply embedded in our minds and may even be genetically determined based on the ideas of Carl Jung and his archetypes. Mythology shapes society and our behaviours to this date and form the basis of great novels, video games and spiritual practice. Understanding our own mythologies and those of others can form the basis of seeing life in a whole new way.

January 13: Defining Mythology, Ancient Greek Myths - What does mythology constitute as a discipline? Are religions mythological? The ancient Greeks are the example of mythology that forms the basis of Western civilization.

Jan 20: Celtic and Druid History, Carl Jung - Celtic mythology and religion ruled all of Europe for thousands of years, from the Gauls to the Irish. Carl G. Jung, a former student of Freud, broke from him and founded the field of 'transpersonal psychology'.

Jan 27: Norse Myths - From Thor to Odin and Ymir, the days of the week we use now are named for these gods of the 'Danes'. The ancient Norsemen feared a coming battle called Ragnarok in which the powers of good will be tested and has not yet come. .

February 3: George Steiner, The Power of Symbols, African Myths - George Steiner is a literary scholar who describes a myth as the prevalent historical, explanatory, religious and sensory whole of a society. In the second part of this talk we discuss the myths of the 700 nations which we now call Africa.

February 10: Hawaii and Mythology - The Micronesian and Hawaiian islands provide a view of the world that is mysterious and rich with symbols we use every day in modern life. . We also discuss the work of archeologist/anthropologist Graham Hancock who states that the use of psychedelic drugs from plants such as Datura shaped not only all early religion, but entire civilizations.

February 17: Aboriginal Myths of North America - The Cree, Sioux, Haida, Hopi and a hundred other nations of North America have lived here for 10,000 years. In this session we will listen to the words of first nations elders as they recount creation, the meaning of the Great Lakes (water walkers) and the final days where the white man must give up his guns and enter the 'shaking tent'.

February 24: Joseph Campbell - Joseph Campbell's 'Hero with a Thousand Faces' and other great works describe the role of mythology in our lives.

March 3: Vivency, Chinese Mythology - Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese mythology all refer to alchemy and a relationship with nature that is not seen in Western literature (myths are considered to be a form of literature, albeit verbal or visual in many cases). Asian culture of Japan and China in particular, have rich mythologies which appear in Tai Chi, Kung Fu and modern philosophy such as Zen today.

March 10: Dystopian Literature and Post Modern Mythology - In this session we explore the idea of dystopia and how it resonates with all mythologies over time.

March 17: The Ascent of Consciousness - Biocentrism, complexity theory and the Many Worlds theory of quantum mechanics now provide a rich framework for understanding reality and take us far beyond stories and into the deep experiential world of Ramakrishna and David Bohm's 'Implicit Order'.

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