



İZMİR INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
GENERAL CULTURE COURSES DEPARTMENT

HUM 215 MYTHOLOGY

2026–2027 Fall Semester | Syllabus

Integrated with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 4 Quality Education	SDG 5 Gender Equality	SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities	SDG 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities	SDG 16 Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions	SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals
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Instructor Information

Instructor	Dr. Emine Yüksel
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Office Hours	By appointment

Course Description

This course introduces mythological traditions from around the world, examining myths as stories that explain origins, make sense of the world, and shape rituals, social values, power structures and collective identities. Throughout the course, students will study and examine theories, mythical journeys and stories related to cosmology, eschatology, gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines, supernatural beings, and modern mythological figures. They will also examine how myths are transmitted, interpreted, adapted, and represented within diverse historical and cultural contexts.

Course Learning Outcomes & SDG Alignment

HUM 215 Mythology introduces global mythological traditions and critical theories while directly integrating United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- **SDG 4 – Quality Education:** By the end of the course, students will be able to define myths and explain their social, religious, political, psychological, and ideological functions; apply interdisciplinary theoretical approaches to the analysis of mythological narratives; analyze and compare mythic characters and themes across cultures; improve their critical thinking skills; and present well-supported arguments in both written and oral forms.
- **SDG 5 – Gender Equality:** Students will investigate diverse representations of gender roles in myths, considering agency, social norms, and power relations in both historical and cultural contexts. This will increase students' awareness of how different understandings of gender are historically and culturally constructed.
- **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities:** Students will study mythography and examine the reasons behind the unequal representation of non-Western mythologies. They will assess different scholarly approaches to the study, representation, and interpretation of non-Western mythologies. Throughout this process, they will gain broader perspective on stories and recognize that no tradition is inherently superior to another.
- **SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Students will deepen their understanding of myth as both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, exploring its connections to geography and landscape, historical and sacred monuments, oral traditions, collective memory, and community identity.
- **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions:** Students will analyze institutions such as family, education, and religion, as well as concepts of justice, authority, social order, conflict, and legitimacy in different mythic traditions. Thus, they will understand how myths shape and legitimize social norms and institutions.

• **SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals:** Students will engage in collaborative activities that encourage them to share their own ideas, exchange knowledge, and develop their presentation and communication skills. These activities will introduce students to diverse cultural perspectives, expand their intellectual and cultural horizons, and foster intercultural dialogue.

Assessment

Assessment Component	Weight	Date / Notes
Attendance and participation in class discussions	%10	Throughout the semester
Presentations*	%20	Starts after mid-terms
Mid-Term	%30	Week 7
Final Exam	%40	End of semester

Devam / Attendance: According to the Institute's regulations, students must attend at least 70% of classes to pass the course.

*Presentations: Students will give 15-minute presentations on their chosen book, movie/tv series, work of art or architecture in groups. Presentations will start after mid-term exams.

Additional Evaluation: Students may improve their final grades by completing additional assignments in consultation with the instructor.

Weekly Course Outline & SDG Connections

Each week's topic is integrated with the relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

Hafta / Week	Konular ve İçerik / Topics & Readings	SKH / SDG Connection
Week 1	Introduction to course Overview of the syllabus, objectives, course expectations, and intro to mythology.	SDG 4
Week 2	The Definition of Myth, and its Functions What is Myth? The difference between myth, legend, and religion. Functions of Myth. Readings: Thury & Devinney (2017). What is myth? (pp. 3–17); Segal, R. A. (2004). Introduction: Theories of myth. In Myth: A very short introduction (pp. 1–10). Oxford University Press.	SDG 4, SDG 11
Week 3	Theories of Myth Structuralism, functionalism, psychoanalysis, ritual theory, ideology, myth in contemporary world. Magic, ritual, dreams, social norms, values, institutions, desires, archetypes, gender, pop culture, media, politics and myths. Readings: Thury & Devinney (2017). Ways of Understanding Myth (pp. 18–24); Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (pp. 217–224); The Structural Study of Myth (pp. 439–455); The Forest of Symbols (pp. 505–518); Man and His Symbols (pp. 609–628); Segal, R.A. (2020). The leading modern theories of myth (pp. 10–25). In Myth Analyzed. Routledge.	SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 16
Week 4	Mesopotamian Mythology Sumerian and Babylonian myths. The Epic of Gilgamesh, Enuma Elish and The Flood. Readings: Thury & Devinney (2017). Enuma Elish (pp. 64–84); Epic of Gilgamesh (pp. 225–231); The Flood: (183, 255-261, 196-203). Watch before class: The Epic of Gilgamesh, Lecture by Andrew George.	SDG 4, SDG 10, SDG 11
Week 5	Egyptian Mythology Egyptian Gods and Goddesses, Creation, Death, Resurrection, and Afterlife. Readings: Thury & Devinney (2017). Egypt: Isis and Osiris (pp. 538–553).	SDG 4, SDG 10, SDG 11

	Watch before class: Robert Ritner A Game of Thrones and Coffins: The Death and Resurrection of Osiris; Moon Knight, Episode 5 (2022).	
Week 6	Anatolian Mythology Hittite and Phrygian Mythologies. Cosmogony, Cybele and Anatolian mother goddess traditions, Sky-Storm gods, Dragon-Slaying Myths. Readings: Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (1998). Old Anatolian Myths (pp. 10-40). In Hittite Myths (2nd ed.). Scholars Press; Roller, L. E. (1999). The cult of the Mother Goddess in Phrygia. In In search of God the mother: The cult of Anatolian Cybele (pp. 63–116). University of California Press.	SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 11
Week 7	Mid-Term Exam Assessment covering first 6 weeks' theoretical and mythological topics.	—
Week 8	Greek Mythology Cosmogony, The Olympian Pantheon, Myths of Heroes and Heroines, Supernatural beings (satyrs, nymphs, mermaids). Readings: Thury & Devinney (2017). Greece: Hesiod (pp. 29–44); Greece: Prometheus (pp. 483–489); Greece: Demeter and Persephone (pp. 519–537); Selected Passages from Homer (1990). The Iliad and The Odyssey (R. Fagles, Trans.).	SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 11, SDG 16
Week 9	Roman Mythology Roman pantheon, Romulus and Remus, Household gods, Foundation Myths. Readings: Thury & Devinney (2017). Rome: Ovid (Creation) (pp. 48-55); Rome: Ovid (Flood) (pp. 185-195); Rome: Cupid and Psyche (pp. 695-713); Rosenberg, D. (1999). The Aeneid (pp. 255-289).	SDG 4, SDG 11, SDG 16
Week 10	Norse Mythology Yggdrasil, Odin, Thor, Loki, Ragnarok. Heroic Ethos and Courage, Violence, Honor, and Warrior Ethics, Fate and Apocalypse. Readings: Thury & Devinney (2017). Icelandic/Norse: Prose Edda (Creation) (pp. 85-97); Poetic Edda (Ragnarok) (pp. 204-210); Prose Edda (Heroes) (pp. 292-307); The Rituals of Iceland (pp. 566-585). Watch before class: The Northman (2022).	SDG 4, SDG 11, SDG 16
Week 11	Turkic Mythology Creation, Gods and Goddesses of Sky, Water, Fire, Life and Birth and Underworld, Animal spirits, sacred mountains and rivers, Origin Myth. Readings: Selected readings from Ögel, B. (1993). Türk mitolojisi; Roux, J.P. (2011). Eski Türk mitolojisi; Çoruhlu, Y. (2002). Türk mitolojisinin ana hatları.	SDG 4, SDG 11
Week 12	East Asian Mythology Creation and Cosmic Order, Dragons, Nature Spirits, Divine Ancestors, Tricksters, Underworld myths from China and Japan. Readings: Rosenberg, D. (1999). Amaterasu (pp. 335-339); Kotan Utunnai (Ainu) (pp. 339-351); Thury & Devinney (2017). China: Nü Kwa, Kuan Yin, and Monkey (pp. 130-158). Watch before class: Spirited Away (2001).	SDG 4, SDG 10, SDG 11
Week 13	Indian Mythology Vedic / Early Hindu and Puranic Myths, The Ramayana and The Mahabharata. Readings: Rosenberg, D. (1999). India: The Creation, Dearth and Rebirth of the Universe (pp. 291-296); Thury & Devinney (2017). The Ramayana (pp. 273-292). Watch before class: Sita Sings the Blues (2008).	SDG 4, SDG 10, SDG 11
Week 14	Mythologies of the Americas Maya, Aztec, Inca, and North America Myths. Cosmogony, Cyclical Time, Death and	SDG 4, SDG 10, SDG 11

the Afterlife, Ritual Human Sacrifice, Eschatology.
Readings: Thury & Devinney (2017). Mesoamerica: Popol Vuh (pp. 158-181); North America: Raven (pp. 456-467); Rosenberg, D. (1999). Peru: The Children of the Sun (Inca) (pp. 574-578); Mexico: The Creation Cycle (Toltec/Aztec) (pp. 600-609); Quetzalcoatl (pp. 609-615).

Week 15

Final Exam

Comprehensive final examination.

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Course Material & Textbooks

Course Material: The instructor will provide students with visual and textual materials, including PowerPoints and readings. While the course primarily follows world mythology textbooks, the instructor will assign additional relevant texts when necessary. Students will also receive an extensive list of recommended readings for further study. Alongside discussions of myth-related themes and theories, students will analyze videos, films, images, and artworks, with material titles announced in advance.

Textbooks & Core References:

- Rosenberg, D. (1999). World mythology: An anthology of the great myths and epics (3rd ed.). NTC Publishing Group.
- Thury, E. M., & Devinney, M. K. (2017). Introduction to mythology: Contemporary approaches to classical and world myths (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

About the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) referenced throughout this syllabus represent the 17 global goals adopted by 193 member states in 2015 to be realized by 2030. In HUM 215 Mythology, these goals serve as an interdisciplinary critical framework. By examining tangible and intangible cultural narratives, questioning gender constructs, highlighting non-Western and underrepresented traditions, and critically engaging with institutional structures and ethics across civilizations, the course directly bridges ancient narratives with contemporary global challenges.

Best wishes,

Dr. Emine Yüksel | İzmir Institute of Technology