

# *FES 40004a Archetypes and the Environment*

*Course Description and Syllabus for Fall Term 2009*

*Sage Hall 32      Thursdays      1:00 – 3:40 p.m.*

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## *Course Description*

**This is a course about myth, culture, psychology and the environment.**

The course examines the theory that each person's reaction to nature, and by extension their behavior toward the environment, are shaped in an important way by personal, social and historical mythologies that define norms, ideals, archetypes and values, as well as by individual and group fears and prejudices.

We begin by considering how a variety of societies define reality by reference to nature, and how their arts, literatures and religions tend toward either representational or conceptual depictions of the world. We proceed to a consideration of where people fit into their worlds, and whether they perceive their health and personal efficacy to be linked to some aspect of nature. We conclude by discussing cultural models – archetypes – that provide persuasive and compelling lessons for our own relationship with nature, and that can guide our actions in enlightening others about the importance of the environment.

## *Class Structure and Credits*

**This course is a seminar that can be taken for one or three credits.**

Students taking the course for one credit complete the readings, attend classes, and take part in field trips. For the full three credits, students additionally complete a midterm project and final project. All students are encouraged to keep a journal in which they record and review their observations on the lectures, field trips, discussions and readings.

## *Textbooks, Readings and Field Trips*

**All readings will be made available online or in digital format on a flash memory stick (to be provided). There are no required textbooks to be purchased.**

An *Agenda* will be distributed each week.

Field trips will include visits to the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the SML Map Library, the Yale Art Gallery, the Yale Center for British Art, and a field site.



## *Syllabus*

*NOTE: All field trip dates will announced at the 10 September class. (The timing of class visits will be affected by class size .)*

*Part 1: The Golden Bough: Magic, Religion, Art and Nature.*

**Class 1      3 September**

*Introduction; class structure and goals; student requirements.  
Course Themes, Definitions and Motifs.*

Myth and Nature; lies and truths in Nature; early humans, nature, hunting and agriculture. The study of mythology. Myth, Religion and Science. Psychology, Nature and the Arts. Yale's collections.

**Class 2      10 September**

*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*

Joseph Campbell

Nature, cosmology and myth. Shamanism and spatial description. Archetypes and heroes in history and myth. Deity and place. Concepts of sacred space. Architecture, Nature and Imagination. Mythic imagination and the collective unconscious.

**Class 3      17 September**

**The Sacred Tree**

Shakyamuni Buddha and the Bodhi Tree. Trees in the Garden of Eden. Ygdrasil: the World Tree in Nordic Mythology; Wotan (Odin) and the runic alphabet. Charles II, the Royal Oak and Oak Apple Day; the Charter Oak in Connecticut folklore and history. Ogham: the Celtic language of trees.



**Part 2:**     *The Perils of the Soul: Shadow and Quest in Nature.*

**Class 4**     **24 September**

**Symbolism and Nature**

*La nature est un temple où vivants piliers  
Laisser parfois sortir de confuses paroles;  
L'homme y passé à travers des forêt des symboles  
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers...*

Charles Baudelaire, "Correspondence" in *Les Fleurs du Mal*

"Reading" nature: Ecosemiotics. Theme, motif and language in nature. Language and culture of the city and the wilderness. Nature and transcendence. Symbolism in art and literature. *Axel's Castle*. The Fashion of Nature.

**Class 5**     **1 October**

*The White Goddess*

Robert Graves

The goddess and poetry. The Green Man. Druids, Merlin and the cult of nature in Britain. The Quest and the Grail. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

**Class 6**     **8 October**

*Twin Peaks, Tibet and Milarepa*

*Rje-btsun-mi-la-ras-pa'i mgur-'bum: The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* Collection of mystic songs attributed to the Tibetan poet and mystic Milarepa, compiled by Gtsang-smyon Heruka ("the Mad Yogi of Tsang") in 1488.

Nature and the shadow. Nature as a place of both good and evil. Buddhist concepts of nature and the nature of Nirvana. Feng Shui,

Earth Spirits and nature magic. The forest as sanctuary or abyss.  
The White Lodge and the Black Lodge in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*.

**Part 3: *The Golden Fleece: Kingship, Power and the Sacred Hunt***

**Class 7 15 October**

***Historia Eustachio-Mariana***

Hagiography of St. Eustace with notes on the author's purported discovery of the place of the saint's conversion by the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher, written 1665.

The sacred hunt. Animal helpers. The forest as a place of epiphany. Pagan and Christian hunting . Cernunnos, the stag god.

**Class 8 22 October**

**Alchemy: the Royal Art**

Monarchy and Nature. The Golden Fleece and the King of the Wood. The Cult of Diana at Lake Nemi. Carl Larsson's *Midvinterblot*. Metaphor and Symbol in Alchemical Literature and Art. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.

**Class 9 29 October**

***De Arte Venandi cum Avibus***

Treatise on falconry written by Emperor Frederick II (1198-1250).

The hunt and early medieval science. Islamic science, architecture and falconry. The formal hunt and its language. Orthodoxy and Science in the medieval and modern worlds. The St. Hubert cult in medieval and modern Europe.



**Part 4:**      *Aftermath: The Wasteland and the Grail.*

**Class 10**      **5 November**

*Der Freischütz* (Opera by Carl Maria von Weber)

German romanticism, nationalism and the hunt. Folktale, language and the shadow in the works of the Brothers Grimm. Richard Wagner and the Mythology of the Apocalypse. The Vienna *Internationale Jagausstellung* of 1912. *Hofjagd*: the royal hunt in culture and politics. The forester in German popular culture.

**Class 11**      **12 November**

*Do ye ken John Peel in his coat so grey?*

English fox-hunting song by William Woodcock Graves, 19<sup>th</sup> cen.

Celtic archetypes and nature. Agriculture, horses and the hunt in the British Isles. Archetypes and stereotypes in 19<sup>th</sup> cen. English literature and art. The problem of Robin Hood. Charles II and the arts of the Restoration.

**Class 12**      **19 November**

*Apocalypse Now*

Film by Francis Ford Coppola

Rachel Carson and the politics and practice of environmental writing. *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot. Sacred kingship and fertility rites of sacrifice. Parzival and the quest hero. *Katabasis*, or the descent into hell. Memory and the quest.

**Class 13**      **3 December**

Presentation of Student Class Projects.



## Glossary

- Alchemy** Sometimes dismissed as a superstitious tradition aimed at turning base metals into gold, or perhaps as a primitive precursor to the science of chemistry, alchemy is rooted in a consideration of the relationship of the individual (or microcosm) to a larger universe (macrocosm), and its wide literature is rich in allegory and complex symbolism. Alchemical texts can be found in Greek, Latin, Arabic, Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit, and most medieval and modern European languages. See this site for more information: <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/home.html>
- Archetype** The Swiss Psychologist Carl Gustav Jung established the concept of archetype as a fundamental psychological image or model on which we shape our experience and through which we define ourselves and others. See this site for more information: <http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/jung.html>
- Gilgamesh** Historical king of Uruk, in Babylonia, who lived around 2700 B.C. The Epic of Gilgamesh, written in cuneiform on clay tablets, is arguably the first literary work ever written. See: <http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/MESO/GILG.HTM>
- Grail** Historically believed to be the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper and the vessel into which Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood of Christ on the cross, the grail became a central feature of medieval Arthurian romance literature as the ultimate goal of the knightly quest. In many romances such as Wolfram's *Parzival*, the restoration of the Grail healed a wounded king and brought abundance to the Wasteland. For more information, see: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/grlmenu.htm>
- Romanticism** A movement in philosophy, art and literature dating from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and arising as a reaction to the classicism and order of the Enlightenment. Romanticism stressed the individual, imagination, a subjective appreciation of reality, and a deep appreciation of nature. For more information and a variety of useful links, see: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook15.html>



**Shadow**

In Jungian terms, that part of our ego that represents a dark side, deriving from a prehuman, animal past in which imperatives to survive and reproduce displaced any consciousness of the self.