

**Communications Studies COMS 401.17 L27**  
**Special Topics in Communication Studies: Irish Myth and Culture**  
**Spring 2012**  
**Group Travel Study May 4-25, 2012**  
**Pre-departure sessions: February 28, March 13, March 27, April 10, 24**

**Instructor:** Prof. Lisa H. Bryce  
**Email:** bryce@ucalgary

**Course Description and Objectives**

In this course, students will start by reading Marie Heaney's collection of Irish myths to ground themselves in the fundamental stories and signs of Irish culture. Each student will identify a line of inquiry—a story, theme, or image of interest—and investigate its persistent appearance in Irish politics, arts, crafts, history, and so on.

Students will contemplate the uses and functions of these mythical recurrences in contemporary Irish culture. Possible research threads include warrior women, foster children, horses and dogs, *geasa* (obligations to do or not to do something), invasion, boy warriors, pigs and swans, poets, exile and return, satire, hunger, and the *Tuatha de Danaan* (the people of the goddess Dana, now "fairies").

**Textbooks and Readings**

Heaney, Marie. *Over Nine Waves*. Faber and Faber, 1994. (This book is required.)

The following versions give most of the same myths as Heaney's book, but with intriguing variations in the stories and writing styles:

Dooley, Ann, and Harry Roe. *Tales of the Elders of Ireland: A New Translation of Acallam na Senórach*. Oxford, 1999.

Gregory, Lady Augusta. *Cúchulain of Muirthemne*. 1902. Colin Smythe, 1970.

---. *Gods and Fighting Men*. 1904. Colin Smythe, 1970.

Kinsella, Thomas. *The Táin*. Oxford, 2002.

**Assignment Descriptions and Evaluation**

Following are the assignments, due dates, and percentage worth. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

**Orientation Talk 20%**

The orientation talk is a 5-10 minute presentation selected from a list of topics and attached to a date and location. The topic must be explained, analyzed, and situated in the context of this specific course and the Irish Studies' program. Talks must not be entirely expository or plot summary. They

are also expected to be presented at the same level of professionalism as when given in the classroom.

### **Research Journal 40%**

Three installments of 1250-1500 words each, submitted in the Digital Dropbox on **May 10, May 15, and May 22**. Each installment should include observations, considerations, and analysis of myth in culture; each installment **MUST** offer evidence of myth and culture research as described in “Course Description and Objectives.” Entries must not be dominated by plot summary or exposition.

### **Cumulative Project 40%**

The one-page proposal for the final project is due in the Digital Dropbox **before** leaving the field. The proposal—whether for an essay or another project—needs to be prepared in consultation with the instructors (and must be approved subsequently).

Proposals must include quantitative specifics: the length, scope, parts, and form of the final projects. Proposals must also include a brief explanation of students’ ability to execute the plan; finished projects must demonstrate learning and understanding of the course and must contain course data and synthesis. Projects will be photographed or prepared with some other digital means and organized in a powerpoint presentation or other software and deposited in the digital dropbox, so that each project will appear as one item in the dropbox. Projects are due **June 10, 2012**.

**There is no registrar-scheduled final examination for this course.**

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended. For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

### **Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

### **Grading System**

In this class, you will receive grades in the 4-point scale (2.7, 3.0, 3.3) *rather than* percentages. Sometimes you may receive grade points between letter grades. For example, 3.5 is the mathematical mid-point between a B+ (3.3) and an A- (3.7) and 3.15 is the mid-point between a B (3.0) and a B+ (3.3), and so on

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture: (Revised, effective September 2008)

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Grade Point Value (see U of C Calendar: <a href="#">Academic Standing</a> )
A+	96-100	4
A	90-95.99	4
A -	85-89.99	3.7
B+	80-84.99	3.3
B	75-79.99	3
B-	70-74.99	2.7
C+	65-69.99	2.3
C	60-64.99	2
C-	55-59.99	1.7
D+	53-54.99	1.3
D	50-52.99	1
F	0-49	0

### **Plagiarism**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Taylor Digital Family Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

### **Academic Misconduct**

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link; <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

### **Students' Union**

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

**Student Ombudsman**

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

**Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points**

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

**"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

**Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:

<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics> or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

**Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

Pre-Departure Sessions: 28 February, 13 & 27 March, 10 & 24 April from 4:00-6:30

In-Field Session: May 4-25.