

Hum/En 029 Dream Narratives -- preliminary syllabus

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Feel free to contact me with any questions before the beginning of the quarter!

[there might be some slight changes in the readings between now and the beginning of the quarter, but they will not increase the workload]

Overview:

If you ask a psychologist, a poet, a theologian, and a philosopher to define what a dream is from their point of view, and also ask them to explain why dreams are important to human life, you will receive very different answers. In this course, we investigate how dreams have been narrated and interpreted at various moments in history and from different disciplinary perspectives. We will take a close look at the language of dream visions as well as their symbols and structure, and think about the distinctions between dreams, delirium, and other kinds of visions. We will also consider the ways dreams have been used as metaphors to question the foundations of our knowledge and our perception of reality.

Goals & objectives

In this class, you will:

- improve your reading, writing, and analytical skills with feedback from both me and your peers
- learn how literature intersects with other fields, such as the history of psychology and religion
- see how different literary genres approach the topic of dreaming in different ways and become comfortable working with historical sources
- develop your own ideas about why dream narratives are fundamental to human culture!

requirement to pass the course -- more details will be on the final copy of the syllabus

- completion two short essays (around 1,000 words each)
- comments on the readings (we use a pdf annotation app)
- completion of a final writing project (around 2,000 words)
- course attendance and participation

September 26	Introduction
September 28	Artemidorus on the interpretation of dreams
October 3	Giovanni Boccaccio, selected stories from the <i>Decameron</i> (Day 4, stories 5 and 6; Day 9, story 7)
October 5	No class (conference trip)
October 10	Descartes on the distinction between reality and dreaming
October 12	Pedro Calderón de la Barca, <i>Life is a Dream</i> (day 1)
October 17	<i>Life is a Dream</i> (day 2)
October 19	<i>Life is a Dream</i> (day 3)
October 24	Diderot, "D'Alembert's Dream"
October 26	Diderot, "D'Alembert's Dream"
October 31	Nightmares! A survey of scary (literary) dreams for Halloween
November 2	Sigmund Freud, <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> (excerpt)
November 4	Jorge Luis Borges, "The Circular Ruins"
November 7	Ursula K. Le Guin, <i>The Lathe of Heaven</i>

November 9	<i>The Lathe of Heaven</i>
November 14	<i>The Lathe of Heaven</i>
November 16	<i>The Lathe of Heaven</i>
November 21	Neil Gaiman and Yoshitako Amano, <i>The Dream Hunters</i>
November 23	Thanksgiving
November 28	Neil Gaiman and Yoshitako Amano, <i>The Dream Hunters</i>
November 30	Course review