# UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
# PULASKI TECH

## Assessment Report:
## 2020-2021
## ENGL 2340: Mythology

1. Name of course: ENGL 2340 - Mythology

2. Name of individual(s) compiling report: Jonathan Purkiss-Jones

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4. Academic year: 2020-2021

# Course-Level Learning Outcomes

## 1. What are the Course-Level Outcomes (CLOs)?

The course had seven learning outcomes (updated in 2020-2021). The student will:

1. Read, analyze, and interpret key myths from around the world
2. Apply different interpretative approaches to a variety of myths
3. Identify key mythological figures and types of myths
4. Compare mythological themes as they are represented across cultures
5. Analyze the persistence of myths in literature, arts, and culture.
6. Discuss the role of mythology in the societies that shaped them and illustrate how myths reflect culture, history, values, and/or ideas
7. Write at least one interpretive research paper about myths

## Which CLOs were addressed for this academic year? (2018-2019)

All course learning outcomes are assessed in the course through various assignments. CLOs 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 are assessed through smaller writing assignments, and CLO 3 is assessed through unit tests. CLOs 1, 6, and 7 are also assessed through a larger analytical paper assignment. For this report and to keep consistent with previous reporting for the course on learning outcomes, only CLOs 6 and 7 will be covered.

## Which CLOs are being addressed in your assessment plan next academic year?

As per the action plan on the last assessment report, the CLOs for the class changed in the 2020-2021 academic year. With the new CLOs, the plan is to continue with assessing all outcomes but reporting on CLOs 6 and 7, which overlap a great deal with the previous CLOs for the course. We will be working on new assessments for CLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The plan is to be able to actively report on all CLOs in the future.

## 2. Explain the assessment cycle.

Since there has only been one instructor for the course for past five years, the cycle of assessment each year has been simple. The learning outcomes are established for the course, assessments designed, data gathered and then analyzed, and the recommendations made and changes implemented by only one instructor up to 2020-2021. Since a new instructor has taken over the

course for the 2021-2022 school year, the old and new instructors have worked together to establish the standard learning outcomes and assessments and go over previous recommendations and action plans. The two instructors will work together for the upcoming academic year to continue to plan for the course and either may teach the course in the future.

Though learning outcomes changed for the course in the 2020-2021 school year, two outcomes were kept relatively the same to align with two previous learning outcomes that have been actively measured and reported on for years. This also aligns carefully with the active learning outcomes being measured in other similar literature courses in the ENGL discipline. At this time, the plan is continue working on these for at least another two years to have a full set of five years' worth of data to show growth and improvement.

The final paper will remain as a primary assessment method until the new CLOs are fine-tuned and new assessment methods designed and piloted. The current primary assessment method of the final paper is at least planned to continue from the 2020-2021 academic year through to the 2021-2022 academic year until such time as the other assessments are perfected and we are able to start gathering data and reporting on them on the annual report.

## 3. What are the assessment methods?  Are they direct or indirect?

All CLOs were assessed using the following standards. These standards are communicated through syllabi templates and are the same for all ENGL 2340 courses.

> Students will study a variety of myths from around the world with a focus on comparing myths from different cultures in order to determine shared types, themes, and traditions. Students will also learn about the development of myths, their purposes in societies, and the primary characters and character types. This class requires students to read and discuss primary and secondary sources critically, with an awareness of cultural and historical significance and contexts. Students will write a minimum of 10 pages total in analytical assignments that will be divided between a number of shorter responses and at least one longer analytical research essay. Students will demonstrate good scholarship by using the conventions of MLA style and documentation. Midterm/final/unit tests will cover content of selected readings, general factual knowledge of history and culture for each unit, and some interpretation of excerpts from the readings.

The final paper assessment had standard guidelines, which included the following:

> Student will prepare a 4-6 page analytical research paper that articulates a clear thesis statement, uses supporting examples from primary and secondary sources to generate a critical, well-organized, clearly written interpretation of at least one myth through the use of those sources, demonstrate close analysis of the text, accurately discuss and make connections to the literary and/or cultural context of the myth, and demonstrates a mastery of both MLA formatting, citation and documentation.

## 4. What are the assessment goal(s), including benchmarks?

The threshold of success was 75% scoring adequate proficiency or higher in both areas of Critical Thinking – the generation of a clear interpretation of at least one myth using cited textual support and the being able to accurately discuss and make connections to the literary and/or cultural context of the myth in forming the interpretation - of the standard rubric for the final paper.

## 5. What were the findings for this academic year? (2018-2019)

A total of 53 students were enrolled in the class in the 2020-2021 school year (23 for fall, 21 for spring, and 9 in the summer). Out of the 53 enrolled, 45 submitted final papers for assessment (17 in the fall and 16 for the spring). This means 85% of the total number of students enrolled were assessed.

Out of 45 students assessed with the final paper in 2020-2021,

- 89% of them displayed adequate or higher proficiency in the area of being able to generate a clear interpretation of at least one myth using cited textual support, which means 11% scored either weak or no proficiency in this area.
- 82% of them displayed adequate or higher proficiency in being able to accurately discuss and make connections to the literary and/or cultural context of the myth in forming an interpretation, which means 18% of them scored weak or no proficiency.

This means that for the first outcome, the target was exceeded by a wide margin, but for the second outcome, the target are met a by a slightly lower margin.

## What is your analysis of the findings?

The results break down to the following:

**Analysis**

- Fall 2020 - 94% of students scored adequate or higher proficiency in being able to interpret at least one myth using a literary analysis approach. 56% of these scored strong proficiency.
- Spring  - 79% of students scored adequate or higher proficiency in being able to interpret at least one myth using a literary analysis approach, 50% of these scored strong proficiency.
- Summer - 100% of students scored adequate or higher proficiency in being able to interpret at least one myth using a literary analysis approach. 56% of these scored strong proficiency.

**Cultural Context**

- Fall - 83% of students scored adequate or higher proficiency in being able to discuss cultural and/or historical context of at least one myth. 50% of these scored strong proficiency.
- Spring - 83% of students scored adequate or higher proficiency in being able to discuss cultural and/or historical context of at least one myth; 44% of these scored strong proficiency.
- Summer - 78% of students scored adequate or higher proficiency in being able to discuss cultural and/or historical context of at least one myth. Only 11% scored strong proficiency.

**In comparison to last year's data**

Compared to previous data, a similar pattern emerges. For the past few years, students have scored higher in one learning outcome area than the other. They traditionally have performed better when it comes to interpreting a myth using literary analysis approaches than being able to discuss cultural and/or historical context of at least one myth. The data from last year (2020-2021) reflects this traditional pattern.

Also, compared to previous data, a similar pattern emerges regarding performance semester to semester. Fall students typically outperform sprint students in both learning outcome areas.

However, put in context of previous data, it appears that there has been a gradual improvement in the skill areas over the years, demonstrating that recommendations and action plans have been effective in improving performance across the board.

For instance, in 2017-2018, only 60% of students were able to demonstrate being able to interpret at least one myth. That number improved to 79% for 2018-2019 and then 82% in 2019-2020. For 2020-2021, it was 89%.

Additionally, in 2019-2020, less than half of the students assessed scored strong proficiency. That number has improved in 2020-2021 to more than half.

In terms of being able to discuss cultural and/or historical context, in Spring 2020, only 62% of students assessed could demonstrate adequate or higher proficiency in this area. In Spring 2021, that number improved to 82%. In total for the entire 2019-2020 school year, only 61% demonstrated adequate proficiency or higher; in 2020-2021, that number improved to 82%, which more than half scored strong proficiency (compared to 40% in the previous academic year).

This comparison of data reflects a gradual improvement in both areas over the years as more focus in put on these two learning outcomes and that recommendations and action plans have bee effective in improving student learning.

### Summer

The class was offered for the first time during a summer term in Summer 2020, and it had 9 students. The class was a four-week course with the standard learning outcomes, reading assignments, and assessments as the 16-week course. Though the class was rigorous in the short time, the students performed well, exceeding the benchmarks in both CLOs and all successfully completing the course. Much emphasis was put in the course on practicing the assessed skills through smaller writing assignments (as outlined in previous recommendations) as well as early emphasis on different interpretive approaches to mythology.

### Comp II Connection

As pointed out on previous assessment reports, it is not surprising that students demonstrate stronger analytical skills in the course. Literary analysis is a skill introduced in many Comp II classes, so students are formally taught how to do the skill in that class and it is reinforced in this class. Students likely are better able to analyze and provide textual support since they have likely already worked with this skill in the prerequisite class. However, the second outcome measured is not likely introduced in Comp II and takes the first skill a step further. It would make sense that students would struggle with it more if being introduced to it in the class and having limited writing assignments to practice the skill before being assessed on it.

### Online Only

The course is only taught online, so there is no comparison that can drawn between online and traditional classes.

## 6. What is the action plan for the next academic year? (2020 - 2021) Explain.

It is recommended that changes from previous reports be continued since they showed marked improvement in the course. These recommendations include early exposure to a number of

interpretative approaches to myth and giving students practice in the form of smaller writing assignments that emphasize both close analysis of texts and making small cultural connections.

A new instructor has taken over the course for the 2021-2022 academic year. The learning outcomes remain standard for the course with one small exception in phrasing for CLO 7 (i.e. focusing more on an overall project than paper). The new instructor also plans on implementing a few other small changes, including additional writing opportunities each unit to improve metacognitive skills. Because the old textbook for the course went out of print in 2020-2021as well, starting with the 2021-2022 school year, a new textbook has been introduced to the class as well, which takes a different approach to how the course is organized and which myths are covered in the course. The effects of the changes to instructor, approach, and textbook will be carefully measured on the 2021-2022 report next year.