Because the field of mythology and symbolism is so vast, we will limit ourselves to texts in the Western tradition, broadly defined (Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Norse, Anglo-Saxon, Celtic). Our main themes are Creation, Angels and Eros. I have selected critical readings to represent major 20th-c. schools of thought on mythology.

Please come to class having read both the assigned texts and the critic for that day. I will present Birenbaum’s and Frazier’s theories in class, but the other critics will be assigned to two students each. One student will be responsible for presenting the critic’s argument and the other for presenting objections to this argument. Each student should prepare a brief, one page handout outlining the major ideas or objections. With this approach, I hope to stimulate a lively debate over varying approaches to the criticism of mythology.

Our final class will consist of brief presentations of your final paper topics. Though these will last no more than 10 minutes, they should be of the quality of a paper presented at an academic conference, i.e. with attention to textual evidence and previous scholarship supporting your thesis.

Grading:

- Oral report on 20th-century critic: 20%
- Final presentation: 20%
- Class participation: 20%
- Final Paper: 40%

Texts:

- Lewis, C. S. *Till We Have Faces* (any edition is fine)

Schedule of Readings:

**August 26**

Creation Stories  
Genesis. John (other Gospel openings).  
Critic: Birenbaum  
(texts supplied in class)

**Sept 2**

Creation Stories: Gnostic Gospels (Nag Hammadi Library):  
On the Origin of the World, The Thunder Perfect Mind  
(www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhlalpha.html)  
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book One  
(etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/trans/Ovhome.htm)  
Critic: Frazier, *Golden Bough*
Sept 9  Creation: Finish Ovid as needed. Hildegard, Montaillou, Aldhelm, Voluspá (handout)  
Critic: Malinowski

Sept 16  Angels: Gregory the Great (handout)  
Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book VII (any edition is fine)  
Critic: Eliade

Sept 23  Eros: Song of Songs (any translation is fine) and Egyptian Love Songs  
www.humanistictexts.org/egyptlov.htm  
Critic: Campbell

Sept 30  Red Riding Hood: Readings and Criticism from Norton Critical Edition

Oct 7  Beauty and the Beast: Readings from Norton  
Critic: Turner

Oct 14  Snow White: Readings from Norton  
Critic: Tolkien

Oct 21  Bluebeard: Readings from Norton  
Critic: Frye

Oct 28  *Wife of Bath’s Tale* ([www librarius com/canttran/wftltrfs htm](http://www.librarius.com/canttran/wftltrfs.htm))  
*Tam Lin* (tam-lin.org)  
Critic: Geertz

Nov 4  Apuleius, *Cupid and Psyche*, Adlington, Translator  
(www.sacredtexts.com/cla/cap/index.htm.)  
Critic: Levi-Strauss

Nov 11  Veteran’s Day - no class

Nov 18  *Till We Have Faces*  
Critic: Barthes

Nov 25  Thanksgiving - no class

Dec 2  *Till We Have Faces* (finish if needed)  
Begin student presentations

Dec 9  Student presentations

Papers Due: Friday, December 17, by NOON