



# PISCATAWAY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

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## Composition and Mythology

**Content Area:** English

**Grade Span:** 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Revised by:** Cathline Tanis

**Presented by:** Robert Coleman

**Approval date:** 2019

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

Description		
<p><i>Composition and Mythology</i> strives to provide students with a rigorous learning environment with a focus on creativity. The course will incorporate critical, non-fiction texts alongside classical mythology and require students to draft and revise expository essays in order to prepare for college. Students will also engage in creative writing activities and projects in order to more completely enter the world of mythological stories, heroes, and creatures. The course will offer students choice of how to manage their time during each cycle. The course will utilize “learning logs” to chart their progress and set an agenda for each cycle. This will give students a sense of ownership and independence in their academic development. Students will engage in groups, and independently, to complete goals each day while retaining opportunities for choice and differentiated and individual growth.</p>		
Goals		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will prepare for the rigors of college level writing by reading critical non-fiction texts paired with mythology and other works of fiction, drama, and film to write expository essay.</li> <li>● Students will read independently and maintain a portfolio and independent learning logs for each cycle.</li> <li>● Students will work collaboratively and independently to develop college-ready study skills.</li> <li>● Students will read and analyze works of classic and modern Mythology to discover the patterns and codes embedded in the stories in order to determine their ability to shape modern day perceptions and ideas.</li> </ul>		
Scope and Sequence		
Unit	Topic	Length
Unit 1	Finding Yourself and Celebrating Diversity: Perpetuation of Identity through recycled myths	6 cycles
Unit 2	Navigating Multiple Worlds: Who You Are vs. Who You Are Expected to Be	6 cycles
Unit 3	Myth and Drama	6 cycles
Unit 4	Lifting the Veil: Exploring the Hidden Social Codes in Myth and Media	6 cycles
Resources		
<p><b>Core Text: Titles include but are not limited to:</b> <i>American Born Chinese</i> (Yang), "Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights" (Yoshino), "Speaking in Tongues" (Zadie Smith), <i>Ceremony</i> (Silko), <i>Things Fall Apart</i> (Achebe), <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> (Hurston), <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> (Anaya), <i>Sula</i> (Morrison), "In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development" (Gilligan), <i>The Oedipus Cycle</i> (Sophocles), <i>Medea</i> (Euripides), <i>Lysistrata</i> (Aristophanes), "Breaking the Disney Spell" (Zipes), various Walt Disney films (student choice), <i>The Hero with a Thousand Faces</i> (Campbell), <i>World Mythology</i> textbook (Rosenberg), <i>The Iliad</i> (Homer).</p> <p><b>Suggested Resources:</b> <i>Gilgamesh</i>, <i>Norse Mythology</i> (Gaiman), <i>Sandman</i> (Gaiman), Black Panther comics, various short creation myths, Dungeons and Dragons character creation sheets, "Yokai Attack!" (Yoda and Alt), various poems (teacher choice), public domain critical essays and philosophical texts, <i>American Gods</i> (Gaiman), <i>Moby Dick</i> (Melville), <i>Beloved</i> (Morrison), <i>The Hobbit</i> (Tolkien), <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> (Tolkien) <i>Mythology</i> (Hamilton) <i>Le Morte d’Arthur</i> (Mallory).</p>		

## Summary and Rationale

### Finding Yourself and Celebrating Diversity

This unit will ask students to consider “identity” and all of the beauty and baggage that come with it. Text pairings may vary from year to year. A sample pairing might be *American Born Chinese* (Yang) and “Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights” (Yoshino). Students will also be asked to create their own avatar based on reading World Mythology. Who do you want to be this year? Who is the champion that will represent you on your quest through Composition and Mythology? Students will visualize their original character. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? How does your character connect with the myths you have read? What are the connections between your character and the culture you have researched? The character will hang in our classroom “Hall of Heroes” for the year and will be revisited in later projects. Students will be encouraged to explore a variety of myth and recognize how these myths continue to inform social values today.

## Recommended Pacing

6 cycles

Pacing should be determined by the primary classroom teacher and students. These activities could be conducted as whole group instruction or in small groups. Student groups will determine how and when they will accomplish the tasks required for the assignment. This will allow students more choice in how they utilize their classroom time and a greater feeling of ownership over the process.

- Creative Project- Create Your Avatar!
- Cornell Notes- *American Born Chinese* and Yoshino
- Expository Essay- Rough and Final drafts (*American Born Chinese* and Yoshino)
- Learning Logs
- Vocabulary.com Mastery
- Small Group Discussions

## NJ State Student Learning Standards

### Standard

NJSLSA. R1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
NJSLSA. R2	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
NJSLSA W 11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
NJSLSA W 11-12.6	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
RI.11-12.1.	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

## Instructional Focus

### Unit Enduring Understandings

- Identity is constantly in a state of flux.
- The person you are now is not the person you must remain.
- You can take an active role in changing your identity and becoming the person you want to be.

- Society often asks us to “cover” our identity both implicitly and explicitly.
- People may assume something about your identity based on what they perceive about your culture.

### Unit Essential Questions

- How do myths continue to dictate who and what is valued in society?
- How is society asking me to “cover” my identity?
- What kind of identities are more often asked to “cover”? Why?
- How are stereotypes harmful to society?
- What things have helped shape my identity?
- Who am I? Who would I like to be?

### Objectives

#### Students will know:

The definition of avatar (both historical/cultural ties to Hinduism and in the context of the RPG world) .  
 The concept of “covering.”  
 The damage caused by forcing individuals to “cover” their identities.  
 The criteria for writing clear topic sentences and thesis statements.

#### Students will be able to:

Analyze connections between literature and nonfiction.  
 Utilize reading strategies in order to better understand challenging texts.  
 Take notes that will help in the writing process.  
 Synthesize arguments using multiple sources.  
 Draft and revise Expository essays.  
 Create and follow an agenda.  
 Maintain accurate logs to demonstrate progress and completion of goals.  
 Engage in an academic community.  
 Make connections within a text and between texts.  
 Improve writing through drafting and revision.  
 Cite textual evidence to support analysis.  
 Demonstrate command of Standard American English conventions.

### Resources

#### Core Text:

*American Born Chinese* (Yang)  
 “Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights” (Yoshino)  
 World Mythology (Rosenberg)

#### Suggested Resources:

Assorted Chinese Mythology (Student choice)  
*The Sandman* (Gaiman)  
 Public domain critical essay and other works on non-fiction  
*Black Panther* (various comics)

## UNIT 2: Navigating Multiple Worlds: Who You Are vs. Who You Are Expected to Be

### Summary and Rationale

#### **Navigating Multiple Worlds: Who You Are vs. Who You Are Expected to Be**

The identities that we spend so much of our lives building (both consciously and unconsciously) are shaped by the world around us. This unit will ask students to consider what their true identity is. What does it mean to live in a world where we are asked to wear so many different masks? Are we any less ourselves when we speak to an authority figure than when we speak with a peer? How is it possible to straddle both worlds and remain true to ourselves? Text pairings are subject to change. Possible non-fiction text to use is Zadie Smith’s text “Speaking in Tongues.” This text can serve as the foundation for a look at “code-switching,” or the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation. As students grapple with finding their own voices, we will ask them to select a text that speaks to them. Students will choose from several core texts including but not limited to: *Ceremony* (Silko), *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Hurston), *Bless Me, Ultima* (Anaya), *Sula* (Morrison).

In this unit, students will explore poems from various cultures and mythologies. Students will explore and create: Tankas, Sapphics, Haiku, Ghazals, and more. Students may work toward assembling a “Poetry Portfolio” of their own original work based on samples and models from antiquity. Students will also continue to work with their avatars as they create their own worlds and quests in a collaborative creative project. Students will then work together to turn their quests into a story.

### Recommended Pacing

6 cycles

Pacing should be determined by the primary classroom teacher. These activities could be conducted as whole group instruction or in small groups. I recommend spending time setting up groups and allowing students to determine how and when they will accomplish the tasks required for the assignment. For example, if a student chooses to work on the Expository essay and another student wishes to work on their Cornell notes, they should be given the time and space to work on these. This will allow students more choice in how they utilize their classroom time and a greater feeling of ownership over the process.

- Cornell notes- (Zadie Smith and choice novel)
- Expository Essay- Rough and Final drafts (Zadie Smith and choice novel)
- Poetry Portfolio
- Socratic Seminars
- Small group discussions

### State Standards

#### **Standard**

NJSLSA. R1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
NJSLSA. 21	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
NJSLSA W 11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
RI.11-12.1.	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.11-12.7	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
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**Instructional Focus**

**Unit Enduring Understandings**

- Language can change based on our audience.
- People “code-switch” both consciously and unconsciously.
- Society pressures individuals to fit certain molds.
- “Code-switching” can sometimes feel like a necessity in certain societies.
- Authors, and their characters, sometimes exist in multi-lingual worlds and understanding the impact of this is key to understanding the text.
- Studying the poetry of a society is a necessary part of understanding the culture of a society.

**Unit Essential Questions**

- What factors might cause individuals to feel the need to “code-switch?”
- How and to what extent might “code-switching” be considered a useful skill?
- How can I use poetry to express myself?
- How can studying the poetry of a culture better help me understand that culture?

**Objectives**

**Students will know:**  
 The meaning of the term “code-switching.”  
 Major plot points of a choice novel (see list of choices).  
 Various poems from the mythologies of world cultures (heroes, mothers, nature, love).  
 Various forms of poetry (Sapphics, Haiku, Ghazals, and more).

**Students will be able to:**  
 Analyze connections between literature and nonfiction.  
 Compose original poetry.  
 Utilize reading strategies in order to better understand challenging texts.  
 Take notes that will help in the writing process.  
 Synthesize arguments using multiple sources.  
 Draft and revise Expository essays.  
 Cite textual evidence to support analysis.  
 Demonstrate command of Standard American English conventions.

**Resources**

**Core Texts:**  
 "Speaking in Tongues" (Zadie Smith)  
*Ceremony* (Silko)  
*Things Fall Apart* (Achebe)  
*Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Hurston)  
*Bless Me, Ultima* (Anaya)  
*Sula* (Morrison)  
 World Mythology (Rosenberg)

**Suggested Resources:**  
 African Mythology

Native American Mythology (Student choice)  
 Central and South American Mythology (Student choice)  
 Selected poems (teacher/student choice)

## UNIT 3: Drama

### Summary and Rationale

#### Drama

This unit will focus on Greek Drama. Students may choose a play to read in their groups. Sample text choices might include: *Antigone* (Sophocles), *Lysistrata* (Aristophanes) and *Medea* (Euripides). These plays will be positioned with the essay, “In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development” by Carol Gilligan. Gilligan challenges readers and academics to consider the life experiences and development of women when “charting the course of human growth” and to not merely rely on the “imagery of men’s lives” (Gilligan 1

### Recommended Pacing

6 cycles

Pacing should be determined by the primary classroom teacher and students. These activities could be conducted as whole group instruction or in small groups.

- Cornell notes- (Gilligan and choice play)
- Expository Essay- (Rough and Final drafts) *Medea* or *Antigone* (student choice) and Gilligan
- Creative Project: Write, Stage and perform a play based on a myth from antiquity.
- Research: Research the mythological foundation of *Medea*, *Lysistrata* and *Antigone*.
- Learning Logs
- Socratic Seminars
- Small group discussions

### State Standards

#### Standard

NJSLSA. R1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
NJSLSA. R2	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
NJSLSA W 11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
NJSLSA W11-12.6	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
RI.11-12.1.	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

NJSLSA.SL6.	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
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**Instructional Focus**

**Unit Enduring Understandings**

- Provocative literature stems from complex characters that can be interpreted in different ways.
- Relationships can shape the way in which an individual interacts with the world.
- One’s conception of morality can shift based on the situation.
- One’s interpretation of a situation is influenced by their life experience.
- Timeless and enduring literature contains universal themes about life, death, love, power, and fate.

**Unit Essential Questions**

- What unique cultural traits are revealed in myths?
- How can a tragedy be optimistic?
- Is ambition a positive or negative thing?
- What is my moral compass?
- Is morality objective or relative?
- How do relationships affect one’s response to moral/ethical questions?

**Objectives**

**Students will know:**  
 Various myths from many cultures (student choice).  
 What is required to write and stage a short play.  
 Tactics for writing successful dialogue and a monologue  
 An effective structure for writing a conclusion.  
 The power of tragedy lies in its ability to inspire and uplift, though often through examining flaw and folly.

**Students will be able to:**  
 Interpret characters and scenes from multiple angles and perspectives.  
 Analyze the myth systems revealed in comparison with those previously studied...what is common?  
 Speak with confidence in front of an audience of their peers.  
 Read independently and track their own progress.  
 Engage in an academic community.  
 Make connections within a text and between texts.  
 Improve writing through drafting and revision.  
 Cite textual evidence to support analysis.  
 Demonstrate command of Standard American English conventions.

**Resources**

**Core Text:**  
 “In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development” (Carol Gilligan)  
*Medea* (Euripides)  
*Antigone* (Sophocles)  
*Lysistrata* (Aristophanes)  
*World Mythology* (Rosenberg)  
 Various short myths for playwriting project

**Suggested Resources:**



## UNIT 4: Lifting the Veil: Exploring the Hidden Social Codes in Media

### Summary and Rationale

#### **Lifting the Veil: Exploring the Hidden Social Codes in Media**

In this unit, students will explore the traditional structure of Joseph Campbell’s “Hero’s Journey.” Students will work with this structure to produce their own work of creative writing. Students will also work to trace the “Hero’s Journey” structure in modern stories and traditional myths visually (posters, websites, presentations, etc.). Our goal is to have students realize that cultures have been telling similar stories for as long as we have been communicating.

This unit will then ask students to explore the hidden social codes in folk tales, fairy tales, and modern films. Jack Zipe’s “Breaking the Disney Spell” will allow students to explore the ways in which Disney films might actually deliver hidden messages to audiences (regarding gender, class, race, etc.). Throughout the unit, students will be asked to keep “Learning Logs” to show their accomplishments each day and set their agenda. During each cycle, students will also be required to sit for a small group lesson. Students will sign up for the day that they would like to attend the lesson.

### Recommended Pacing

6 cycles

Pacing should be determined by the primary classroom teacher and students. These activities could be conducted as whole group instruction or in small groups.

- Cornell notes- (Zipes and choice film/folk tale)
- Expository Essay- (Rough and Final drafts) (student choice) and Zipes
- Creative Writing Project: Write a short story utilizing Joseph Campbell’s “Hero’s Journey”
- Creative Visual Project: Present the steps of Campbell’s “Hero’s Journey” using a modern film or novel.
- Learning Logs
- Socratic Seminars
- Small group discussions

### State Standards

#### **Standard**

NJSLSA. R1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
NJSLSA. R2	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

NJSLSA W 11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
NJSLSA W 11-12.6	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

### Instructional Focus

#### Unit Enduring Understandings

- Challenges we face offer potential for personal growth.
- Timeless and enduring literature/myths contains universal themes about life, death, love, power, and fate.
- The “Hero’s Journey” is just one pattern of human experience reflected in literature and film.
- The stages of the Hero’s Journey usually follow a standard sequence.
- We all go through many journeys in our lives as we grow and learn.
- Challenges we face offer potential for personal growth.

#### Unit Essential Questions

- How do we define heroism?
- What constitutes effective writing?
- What is our moral obligation to our fellow human beings?
- What hidden messages are present in modern media?
- How does our exposure to these messages shape our worldview?
- What is the relationship between mythology and the society that creates them?
- How can our own lives be viewed in terms of a quest narrative?
- How can an individual mature and change through taking heroic action?

#### Objectives

##### Students will know:

The steps of Joseph Campbell’s “Hero’s Journey.”  
 The influence that forms of media like film and literature can have on society.  
 Effective peer editing strategies.  
 Elements of Creative Writing.  
 The mythological foundation of many modern day hero narratives.

##### Students will be able to:

Analyze a variety of media sources for the purpose of establishing an interdisciplinary approach to the topic.  
 Make cultural connections between literature and the modern world.  
 Engage in an academic community.  
 Make connections within a text and between texts.  
 Improve writing through drafting and revision.  
 Cite textual evidence to support analysis.  
 Demonstrate command of Standard American English conventions.

### Resources

#### Core Text:

“Breaking the Disney Spell” (Zipes)  
 Various Walt Disney films  
*Gilgamesh*  
*The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien)  
*The Hobbit* (Tolkien)

**Suggested Resources:**

*World Mythology* (Rosenberg)

*Black Panther* (comics)

*Black Panther* (film)

*Le Morte d'Arthur* (Mallory)

*The Iliad* (Homer)

*The Fellowship of the Ring* (Lord of the Rings)

*Norse Mythology* (Gaiman)