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English 102-Spring 2008

Inquiry into Women and Myth

Our class's topic of inquiry is "Women and Myth." For the purpose of our course, the term "myth" is quite broad, encompassing Classical Greek and Roman myths; Biblical stories; historical personages--including ancestors--who have somehow become myths in themselves; fairy tale characters; literary characters, who have assumed importance above and beyond the works in which they were originally portrayed, etc. Using excerpts from Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, we'll compose a working definition of what "myth" is and discuss how myth plays a part in our own lives. We'll then move to explore how twentieth and twenty-first century women writers--including Angela Carter, Caryl Churchill, Sylvia Plath, and Tori Amos--use myth to make meaning in their own creative works. Assisted by your own ethnographic, historical, and academic research efforts, we'll approach our topic of inquiry from two vantage points, the personal and the public.