Project One: Comparative Multimodal Essay

In this essay, your team will compare one or more aspects of a non-Western culture's cosmology to one or more aspects of Western cosmology. You will use the essay to create an enhanced podcast that will be an episode of a podcast series I will publish on a website.

> Western: Hebrew, Greco-Roman (historical), European, American (modern).

> Non-Western and/or Eastern: e.g., Babylonian, Chinese, Egyptian, Indian, Islamic, Meso-American, Native American, and Norse cosmologies.

Danielson covers Western cosmology exclusively, "from Heraclitus to Hawking." As he points out in his Introduction, modern cosmology, as a scientific subject, is synonymous with modern Western cosmology. In more politically correct terms, cosmology is now a common pursuit of scientists worldwide. The Western/Eastern or Western/non-Western distinctions, therefore, only make sense in historical and/or religious contexts.

Selection: Focus on just one non-Western culture (see the list above for examples of what qualifies as a "culture" for this essay). A culture such as China, however, is really a set of cultures that change over time, so you will probably want to narrow the focus to a particular region and/or time period. You can make comparisons, however, to other non-Western cultures in addition to historical or modern Western cosmologies.

Comparison: Aspects of comparison can include theories or models of the origin, structure, and evolution of the universe as well as the mythology, religion, or philosophy surrounding these aspects. Alternatively or in addition, you might compare methods or tools of practicing cosmology, astronomy, or time-keeping.

Thesis: In your thesis paragraph, introduce the major points of comparison you will discuss and make a claim stating the degree to which the non-Western culture's cosmology resembles those of other cultures. You may also claim that the non-Western culture has influenced or been influenced by Western cultures if you can find evidence supporting such a claim. In addition to providing a claim and points of comparison, establish your essay's purpose—why is the comparison worth making?

Sources: A good starting point is the Penprase textbook. If you have the North textbook, chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 may be relevant. In the "Bibliographical Survey" section, there is a note for each chapter recommending sources for further exploration of the subject. You will probably need to obtain these sources through inter-library loan. I have placed the North textbook on reserve at the library. For the second draft, you will need to refer to at least four sources in addition to Penprase. For the first draft, you can rely heavily but not exclusively on Penprase for your information about the non-Western cosmology.

Collaboration: On Wednesday, we will form teams of 2-4 students to collaborate on the project. Each group will choose a non-Western cosmology in an order determined by a lottery. You will all receive the same grade except in cases where I have good reason, based on observation and email correspondence, to assign different grades.

First Draft: Double-space, ragged right margin, with 12 point Times or similar readable font, one-inch margins, and 1,500-2,000 words. Include a works cited page—this page does not factor into the word count. For other formatting details, follow the examples of the MLA sample pages in EW. Use visuals to enhance your argument. Submission details will be in the drop box.

Second Draft: Web, podcast, and PDF formats. Details are below the rubric.

Examples: There are examples of comparative essays in the Camino Project One folder.

Grading: The comparative essay will be worth ten points. The multimodal aspect—podcast, PDF, and Web—will be worth another ten points and have its own rubric in the second draft dropbox instructions. Below is a rubric for the essay.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR ESSAY (10 Points)			
Criterion	**Comment**	**Reading**	**%**
Sentence Grammar	.5% penalty for each error, 1% if repeated	EW 60-90	10
Sentence Style, Language	.5% penalty for each error, 1% if repeated	EW 92-104, 142-155	10
Punctuation and Mechanics	.5% penalty for each error, 1% if repeated	EW 106-140	10
Documentation, Citation, and Format	Cite and document sources completely and accurately using MLA style. Formatting details for the first draft are given above, formatting details for the second draft will be posted in Camino. 5% penalty for each error, 1% if repeated or an element is missing.	EW 206-252 EA 20	10
Structure	Similar to Style and Language, but whereas that criterion focuses on words and sentences, this criterion looks at the essay as a whole. An ideally structured essay will not have abrupt transitions between the paragraphs and will have a thesis paragraph and a conclusion.	EA 7	10
Thesis	Your thesis paragraph should name the cultures being compared and contrasted and indicate whether the essay focuses on similarities, differences or both. There should be a main point of comparison and contrast.	EA 8	10
Evidence	Your claims of comparison/contrast should be supported by examples, quotations, summaries, and paraphrases of your sources as well as good reasons and logic. Use appropriate visuals to support your argument.	EA 8, 16	10
Organization	Comparison/contrast essays tend to follow one of two methods of organization. There is the one-side-at-a-time and the point-by-point method. Choose the method that makes your argument most effective.		10
Research	Choose reliable and appropriate sources. For the second draft, you need to cite at least four sources in addition to Penprase that deal with non-Western cosmology.	EA 19	10
Purpose	Comparison/contrast essays show that one thing is better than another, things that seem different are actually alike, or things that seem alike are actually different. Some comparisons set up a claim that one thing influenced or did not influence another. Your essay will be more engrossing if it stays focused on its purpose by using language to remind readers of the overall point.	EA 1	10
Total			100

The second draft has three components--a webpage, a podcast, and a PDF. Each should contain your essay of 1,800-2,200 words, not counting image captions or documentation of sources. The words should be the same in all three cases. Note: for the podcast you don't have to read aloud parenthetical citations, but you should probably avoid them anyway except for page numbers and instead cite your sources directly (e.g., "Bryan Penprase argues that...").

The webpage will link to the podcast and PDF, so all you need to do to submit all three components is to add the URL of your webpage in the message box below.

The formatting guidelines and specifications for each component are below. For a rubric and guidelines on the content of your essay, see the instructions document in the project one folder.

Webpage: one student from each team should publish a webpage on blogs.scu.edu on behalf of the whole team. Details are below.

- Banner: create an image with the title of your podcast against a colored background with a visual element reflecting an aspect of your non-western cosmology. The title should indicate your non-western cosmology and, ideally, the essence of your argument about it. The text and background should stand out from the rest of the page but fit the overall design and color scheme of the page.
- Title: The site title should be "Non-Western Cosmologies." The banner title should catch the audience's attention. For example, "The Tree of the Cosmos." The page title should be a subtitle stating your subject matter. For example, "Norse Cosmology Compared to Greek Cosmology."
- Player: embed the video and controls for playing it. In the plugin settings, adjust the size of the player to the size of your movie. Below the player, add a link for downloading the video file. The player and link should be placed above the rest of the content.
- Text: wrap text around images but not too tightly. Use block paragraphs of single space lines with a blank line between--no indents except for long quotations. Text should be legible--make sure it is large enough but not too large, contrasts sufficiently with the background, and is free of character encoding errors. Do not use the MLA heading info or headers--you can omit names, date, class info, etc.
- Images: include at least three images in addition to your banner. Each image should be optimized for the web (i.e., no wider than your paragraphs and less than 500kb). Resize them, if necessary, but you should do so outside of WordPress. Place captions below or beside the images that describe them and cite their sources. Begin each caption with a label (e.g., Figure 2) and refer to these labels in your text. Then add the caption itself. If you describe the image in your text, you can keep this caption short (e.g., Astrolabe). Finally, add a MLA-style parenthetical citation (not a URL). If a figure/caption does not take up the whole page, wrap text around it to create a more professional look.If an image does not take up the whole width of the page, wrap text around the images to save space and create a more professional look.
- PDF link: add a link to your PDF version. The link should be noticeable--use bold text or a PDF icon and seperate from the rest of the text.
- Works cited: To reduce the length of your page, put your list on a separate page. include the URLs of online sources as hyperlinks to those sources. These links should open in a

new window or tab. Above your list, add the following note: "The images that appear in this essay were used in the spirit of open access and the fair use doctrine. If we have used your copyrighted material in a way that you feel does not qualify as fair use, please contact our instructor, Olin Bjork at objork at scu dot edu."

- WordPress: This is not a blog, so you should remove the widgets (meta, links, archive, etc.) from the site and the theme, and you can also turn off the comments feature. You should delete any pages you don't need, such as sample or practice pages.

Podcast: each team will create one enhanced podcast. Recommended software are iMovie on Mac OSX or Movie Maker on Windows. Details are below.

- Voiceover: one or more team members should voice record the essay. Read at a pace for listeners, even though the listener will have the option of reading along on your website. When doing the recording, try to eliminate background noise. Even a fan, heater, or air conditioner will be noticeable.
- Slides: you should display the three or more images required for the second draft of your essay at the points in your recording when they are most relevant, such as when you are discussing them. In addition to these images, use thematic images that you find online. To reduce potential copyright issues, use creative commons or royalty-free images. You want to change slides every 30 seconds on average, so for a 15 minute podcast, you should have about 30 images. You can change slides faster if you wish, but not so fast that the viewer can't process them or they are out of synch with the voiceover.
- Sound: use music strategically, such as at the beginning and end of your podcast and during transitions between subject matters. If appropriate, you can use occasional sound effects for atmosphere or emphasis.
- Visual effects: use for transitions between images, or to pan, zoom or scroll images. If you have many images, use visual effects prudently so as not to distract or annoy the viewer.
- Text: use on-screen text for your title slide and key phrases and terms
- Credits: You should reproduce your works cited list from your essay at the end of your podcast. In addition, give a list of titles and URLS for all of the images you used in order of appearance. Before your credits, add this note: "We have attempted to use public domain, creative commons, or royalty free images whenever possible. However, due to the scarcity of images directly relating to the subject matter, we have used some images in the spirit of open access and the fair use doctrine. If we have used your copyrighted material in a way that you feel does not qualify as fair use, please contact our instructor, Olin Bjork at objork@scu.edu."
- Format: From iMovie, export as QuickTime (.mov) or MPEG (.m4v or .mp4). The movie should have dimensions of at least 480x320 and the file size should be less than 100MB (less than 50MB is preferable as long as the quality is acceptable). Upload the file to iTunesU. I will get it from iTunesU and upload it to a web server. The URL for your podcast will then be http://webpages.scu.edu/ftp/cosmos/ followed by the name and extension of your file. For example, http://webpages.scu.edu/ftp/cosmos/egyptian.mov
- NB: if your movie file is more than 50MB even at 480x320, try resaving with different compression or stream settings and if the file gets smaller check to see that the podcast still looks and sounds good. Another way to reduce size is to adjust the size of images

that are significantly larger than the viewing dimensions of your podcast. If an image is too big, reduce its resolution to between 72 and 95 pixels per inch in Photoshop or a free online image resizer. If the image is still too big at 72 pixels per inch, reduce its dimensions.

PDF: each team will create one PDF version of their projects. Here are details:

- Format: double-space, ragged right margin, with 12 point Times or similar readable font, one-inch margins, and works cited page. Use the same title and subtitle as on your webpage. For other formatting details, follow the examples of the MLA sample pages in EW.
- Figures: include at least three images. Place captions below or beside the images that describe them and cite their sources. Begin each caption with a label (e.g., Figure 2) and refer to these labels in your text. Then add the caption itself. If you describe the image in your text, you can keep this caption short (e.g., Astrolabe). Finally, add an MLA-style parenthetical citation (not a URL). If a figure/caption does not take up the whole page, wrap text around it to create a more professional look.