



Great Mythologies of the World

Grant L. Voth, Julius H. Bailey, Kathryn McClymond, Robert André LaFleur

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The deep-seated origins and wide-reaching lessons of ancient myths built the foundation for our modern legacies. Explore the mythologies of Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Learn what makes these stories so important, distinctive, and able to withstand the test of time. Discover how, despite geographical implausibilities, many myths from across the oceans share themes, morals, and archetypes.

Listening Length: 31 hours and 35 minutes

Great Mythologies of the World Details

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From Reader Review Great Mythologies of the World for online ebook

Diogo Muller says

This is a long, long audiobook on Mythologies, with a few professors specialists each lecturing about one region of the world. While some of those lecturers are experts in their area, a few of them were way better than the others at telling the stories in an interesting way. Since it was separated by region, a few times this had a stretch of uninteresting stories. But even those stretches had at least one or two interesting chapters in the middle, so that's a plus for them. The latter part of this, in my opinion, is what suffers a bit more at this - and since this is a bit heavy with content, the fatigue of listening to everything before doesn't help a lot.

In my opinion, this would be much, much better and palatable if they separated the course in a few courses, by region - the chapters are already separated like that, it's just it would be a bit less overwhelming to listen this back to back. If you can, intercalate another audiobook between the parts here, to clean the palate. It will probably be a much, much better experience.

Lucia Bradley says

Type: Audible

Length: 31 hours 36 minutes

An incredibly brief but informative journey around the world!

This was a great series of lectures of mythology from around the world. I wouldn't say it is the most in depth, but it covers so many cultures that it surprised and entertained me.

As someone who has read a lot of Greek, Roman, some other European and Egyptian mythology there was nothing surprising. I have heard all these before and in more depth, so it was a disappointment. However, this is an overall view so of course they would skim the surface not dig deep.

The beauty of this was in the other Middle Eastern myths, Southeast Asian myths and African myths. I am sure they are much like the Greek and Roman mythology covered. They are probably the very basic myths and not connected well between them. However, they were brand new to me and have inspired me to check them out closer.

The one problematic area were the Native American myths. Most of them were great, I enjoyed listening to them. The problematic myth though involved what seemed to be a tale about a child watching her father be with what seems to be a two-spirit or possibly transgender lover and in the end that lover killed her father.

What bothered me greatly about this was his constant reference of that being/person/creature being a transvestite and how it was wrong. I do admit it felt personal and in full disclosure I am transgender myself, but his CV indicates no professional experience with Native American subject matter (that isn't anything he is listed as being a specialist in) and it felt like a personal conservative viewpoint with an agenda. The rest of his myths seemed fine, but his personal observations on that one are what bothered me a lot and is why it only gets a four.

Like many of their courses, I definitely recommend this course in mythology. It is well worth the time, money and effort to get through almost 32 hours of courses. Or at least it was for me.

Gary Beauregard Bottomley says

Myths are never myths to those who believe.

Our myths are the themes and the images for which the reflective mind orders the pieces that make up the whole by the encoding of our hopes, fears and aspirations. Not all the myths covered kept my interest.

After having listen to these lectures, I don't believe in universal common archetypes (structuralism) that Joseph Campbell advocated could hold any validity at all. Our myths are particular to the culture and to the group that had them and to make our myths more special than they are is just a way to separate us from them and act to divide us. The best is to learn the myths of all cultures, but don't believe your groups myths make you better than others just because it is yours. Patriotism, the belief that your group, culture, clan, or country is superior just because it is yours will lead to division, racism, sexism or bigotry.

Joe says

I had to stop listening the audiobook about 25% into the lecture series. The speakers are so incredibly boring and don't even seem interested in their own material.

As a listener, how can you expect me to engage your lecture if you, the expert, don't show any passion?

The great humor here is that the subject matter involves exciting narratives that are legendary for appealing to mankind as a whole.

Narrative is the language of the human brain, and this audiobook's boring delivery is so bad that even my natural human instinct to find and embrace narratives cannot overcome the monotony.

Avoid the audiobook. This was a real disappointment since I really enjoyed my last two Great Courses audiobooks.

Sarah says

This was really a very interesting survey of international mythology - loved the Spider Tales of Africa (Thanks Aunt Nancy?).

Naj says

I have finally completed this 31 and a half hour monster of an audible course. The last two stories in this course were more interesting than all of the last third of the book combined, in my opinion.

Anyway if you are looking to start this audiobook, know that every chapter is one story and you could probably skip chapters to go to the stories that you like but in some sections, they refer to earlier stories told of the same region... so if you're like me and you **have** to know everything, I wouldn't recommend skipping individual chapters.

Another way I could have gone about 'reading' this was to go by region. You have some greek myths, some oriental ones, some arabic ones, some native american and a little bit of various regions here and there. So you have a nice spread in front of you that can be jumbled up. Tip for you is to go to the Great Courses website (that is, if you bought this book from Audible you probably didn't know that), you can get a glimpse of what each chapter will hold from the audiobook details page, even if it's just the title of the chapter.

Morgan Blackledge says

I just couldn't get enough of this AMAZING program. It's thirty-one-derful hours long. And I have to say, I didn't want it to end.

This GREAT course covers just about every major mythological system you can think of.

From the western classics e.g. Greek and Roman, to the Norse and Celtic stories, on to Babylonian, Persian and Egyptian, through to the Indian Epics (I really love those), to African mythos, of which I was (of course) unfamiliar, why? because America, and then off to Chinese, Korean, Japanese (which we're off the chain freaky BTW), to Polynesia, Philippines, Native American myths (which I enjoyed even more than I had expected) to the Maya, Aztec and Inca.

I learned a lot and I had a blast listening to the different schooler lecturers do their thing. This course is fully worth the time and \$.

If you think you'd be into it, and you're not afraid to learn some surprisingly rad shit, and you have the attention span for a REALLY LONG thing, than go ahead and do it.

I dare ya!

Five Stars!!!

Nichole says

I appreciated the narrator's expertise, but I wasn't as enamoured with this course as I expected to be. The first narrator was great, but she focussed on Classical mythology, and I already had a lot of background knowledge on that subject. The last narrator was very engaging as well, although some colonial language

slipped into his tellings. A note: using the past-tense when discussing Indigenous people implies they are dead and gone. And using the term "Native American" to refer to all Indigenous people in the Americas is just rude. A bit nit picky, if I were talking to a layman, but this is a specialist and he should know better.

I think I wanted both more story and more analysis. I wanted a proper storyteller, and then a dissection, like a passionate literature teacher. Instead, it was anthropologists, and I just wasn't as charmed.

Megan Dees says

I listened to this book over many months. Since it is 31 hrs long. It was so worth it if you enjoy understanding mythology. The four narrators are actually subject matter experts which made it for me, more enjoyable. They really do cover the majority of the world's mythologies and dig into the similarities and differences across cultures and even within the same culture.

Nilesh says

The lecture series suffers from an uneven and directionless treatment of the subject matter. In the end, there is a lot of information, which for most people could prove excessive with little in the form of conclusions (which is most obvious when the book ends - which just happens to be the last Chapter while it almost could have been any other).

Myths matter. As many anthropologists have rightly argued, myths are what led to the homo sapiens' cognitive revolution. Myths made it possible for small groups to come together to perform team actions that separated our species from other forms of humans and animals. Myths provided common purposes, rationales or collective targets to various societies all the way from pre-historic times to now.

The lecture series spends no time to expand the roles played by myths in our development - at the broad theoretical level or in explaining differences between various cultures. In fact, no explanations are provided on the selection criteria as well - why certain periods are chosen for various different regions.

While various professors allow the series to travel to almost all parts of the world, the selections are almost completely random. For European societies, for example, the discussions are up to the beginning of the common era while almost mysteriously stopping before the rise of Christianity. In the middle-Eastern sections, the Judaic myths are avoided. However, the Indian section involves discussion on Buddha but the Chinese Daoism and Confucianism are avoided. For some societies, the discussions include myths developed in the early parts of the last millennia while for some others discussions end way before the Common Era.

All the professors have myriads of stories. In most cases, every lecture tries to summarize almost a dozen different tales. One often wonders why as stories zip by. Stories are rarely developed sufficiently for any enjoyment. And they are not analyzed for their meaning to the society around in most cases. The geographical categorization prevents any classifications of myths that permit discussions on their similarities and differences across continents or eras.

Without a doubt, there is a lot of information. In one series, the listeners go around the world to realize how different groups reasoned the creation, death, the misery or injustices of daily lives, the environment, other

animals and other vagaries of our existence. The scope of the series is absolutely breathtaking as professors make us travel to almost every corner of the pre-modern worlds.

Vikram X says

The book does not do justice to the sheer scope of the subject at hand ; the authors go over a plethora of ancient geographically disparate mythologies which spawned across the globe ; Myths from ancient civilizations like Greek , Sumerian , Nordic , African etc which are now form the archetype belief systems of current Abrahamic religions like Christianity , Islam etc due to geo-political consolidation and conquest ; which present day theists mindlessly spout as the “truth” .

One can easily find certain prophetic “end of the world” patterns in all civilizations such as floods , fire or virgin births etc – which gives one a glimpse into the mind of humans who tried to make sense of their environment .

Ali AlGarawi says

Great course!

It provides a very good introduction to the world myths. Do not expect it to cover everything about each myth, otherwise it will be a very long course. In addition to providing an introduction it provides an analysis to these myths and how it sometimes explains how people lived before. It is fascinating how humanity has been trying to understand its role in this universe, where we came from, why we are here and what is our relationship with the cosmos. What I liked most about it, is that it helped me out to figure out what I really want to start reading next.

I don't think that I will read it again, but I might revisit some of its chapters. I totally recommend this book.

Karlene says

In this series of lectures, various experts present the mythologies of cultures from around the world, both ancient and more recent. Starting with the cultures of the Egyptians, Romans, and Greeks (which are perhaps the most well known), going through Europe, Asia, and finally the Americas. While the stories that were represented in these lectures only scratched the surface of the mythologies, it was a great overview and gave the listener a sense of these stories meant to those who originally told them. Perhaps the thing I liked most is how the lecturers connected the stories to today's society, whether it be through stories that are still told today, to perhaps phrases or long lasting aspects that still influence culture. I particularly liked the lectures on Australian mythology, which is an area of the world that I know little about. While this is a long listen (over

30 hours), I feel like it was well worth the time and I feel as though I have a better grasp and understanding of world mythology. It has even inspired me to look into learning more about some of the mythologies that I found to be the most interesting.

Mirjana **DTR - Down to Read says**

*****2 Stars*****

This audiobook was quite disappointing. There was no sense of direction to the flow of information, and many of the stories had glossed over details. The mythological stories were grouped together by region...and that's about as much cohesion as you're going to get here. There was no following a timeline or a family line or a common theme...just too scatterbrained for my liking.

I was hoping for something meatier.....especially for an audiobook that's 30+ hours!

Natasha says

I really loved most of this, but the narrator for the Africa section was painful. Bad to the point that I had to skip most of that lecture series.
