THE MAGICAL ARTS AND ASTROLOGY

This course will deal with a wide range of bizarre, obscure and some would say dangerous material. A good bit of the course will be dedicated to figuring out why this stuff seems, and has long seemed bizarre and dangerous and why it has become so obscure. We will uncover many emotions, some in the original texts, some in modern writings about them, and some in ourselves.

Until the birth of our "modern, enlightened and secular" world, most human beings lived and believed the sorts of things that we call magic, alchemy and astrology. If you don't believe me, check the card catalogue under these headings. Many (most?) still do. The debate about magic and religion - their similarities, differences and connections - is one of the oldest and deepest in the history of Western civilization; it reaches well back into the time before the birth of Christianity. Indeed, early Christianity itself was part of the debate in that Jesus and his followers were widely known and charged as practising magicians. We will not attempt to resolve this debate, only to become familiar with it.

We will read four types of material:

1. Original materials - in translation from Greek, Latin, Coptic, Demotic, Aramaic and Hebrew - directly from those who held and practiced these beliefs in the Greco-Roman world.

2. Secondary accounts of these beliefs and their practitioners, written by ancient outsiders, whether sympathetic or (mostly) hostile.

3. Modern accounts of similar beliefs and practices from other periods of Western history (mostly the time of the Protestant Reformation) and from cultures quite different from Western culture.

4. Modern studies of these beliefs and practices from a variety of perspectives - anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and psychology.

Much of this material is not readily available in affordable paperbacks; some of it is no longer or not yet in print at all. Thus I have had to prepare a large package of photocopied handouts (see the attached list). Each student must purchase a package.

Most of the books have been put on reserve in Firestone.

The following books have been ordered at the U-Store:

G.Luck, Arcana Mundi
J.Frazer, The Golden Bough
H.D. Betz, ed., Greek Magical Papyri
THE OUTLINE

Sept.17/25  What You See Depends on Where You Stand: Magic, Astrology and the Question of Popular Religion

- *Frazer, Golden Bough, 1-59, 795-808
- #Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Remarks¼"
- #J.Z. Smith, "When the Bough Breaks"
- #RL Gordon, few pages ("Mithras¼")

Sept.28-Oct.2  "You Can't Cure the Body Without Curing the Soul"- The Background in the Ancient World

- Luck, 61-88
- #curse-tablets
- #J. Winkler, "Constrainsts of Desire¼"
- Betz, GMP. Pp. 44-47
- #Nock, "Paul and the Magus," The Beginnings of Christianity, vol 5
- #Pliny, Natural History 28.10-21; 30.1-13

Oct.5/9  Second-Hand Magic: Literary Accounts in Greco-Roman Writers

- Lucan, Pharsalia (Luck, 194-204)
- #Lucian, Lover of Lies
- #Levi-Strauss, "The Sorcerer and his Magic," Structural Anthropology

Oct.12/16  Straight from the Spirit's Mouth: Original Papyri and a Revealing Life-Story

- Betz, Greek Magical Papyri (all!!)
- #The Making of a Magician: Thessalus Becomes a Magician

Oct.19/23  There Must be Something to This! The Ancient Pro's and Con's of Magical Theory

- Luck, 117-131
- #Origen, Against Celsus 1.24-27
#Hippolytus

-#Patricia Cox Miller, "In Praise of Nonsense"

Oct.26/30 Jesus Was a Magician!

-"M. Smith, Jesus the Magician
- Gospel of Mark (NT)

Nov.9/13 So Was Moses!

-Sepher ha-Razim/Test. Sol.
-J. Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition, 1-43
-Exodus 7-9
-J. Goldin, "The Magic of Magic and Superstition"
-Philo, Special Laws 100-103
-Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 156a-b

Nov.16/20 Magic, Politics, and Power

-Apuleius, Apology [you can get it on the following Web-site, with links:
<a href="http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/apuleius/">Apuleius/</a>
-Macmullen, Enemies of the Roman Order, ch.3
-E. Shils, Center and Periphery...

Nov.23/25 "Les mots et les choses..." Amulets, Bowls, and Other Things

-Bonner, Amulets!4
-Shaked and Naveh, bowls and amulets
-Malinowski, "Magic, Science and Religion,"
-69-90
-check out this Web-site:
[http://www.hti.umich.edu/exhibit/magic/]
Nov.30-Dec.4  From Lead (=Body) to Gold (=Spirit): Alchemy, the 'Science' of External and Internal Transformation

- Luck, pp.361-378
- #C.G.Jung, "Zosimus"
- #Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, pp.227-254

Dec.7/11  Theory and Practice of Stars...and Some Real Horoscopes

- #R.Hachlili, "The Zodiac in Ancient Jewish Art"
- Luck, pp.309-358
- #Ptolemy Tetrabiblos, selections
- #Macmullen, ch.4
- #horoscopes (Neugebauer selections, etc.)

Dec.14/18  I'm Star-Struck: Astral Science and Piety

- Luck, pp. 309-358
- #M.Smith, "Helios in Palestine"
- V. Flint, The Rise of Magic¼
- #Geza Roheim, Magic and Schizophrenia, 3-85

# = handouts
* = on reserve

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be no mid-term or final exam. There will be one final paper.

Of course, it goes without saying that all students are expected to be prepared for precept. Being prepared means not just having read the material but also having thought about it and having something to say.